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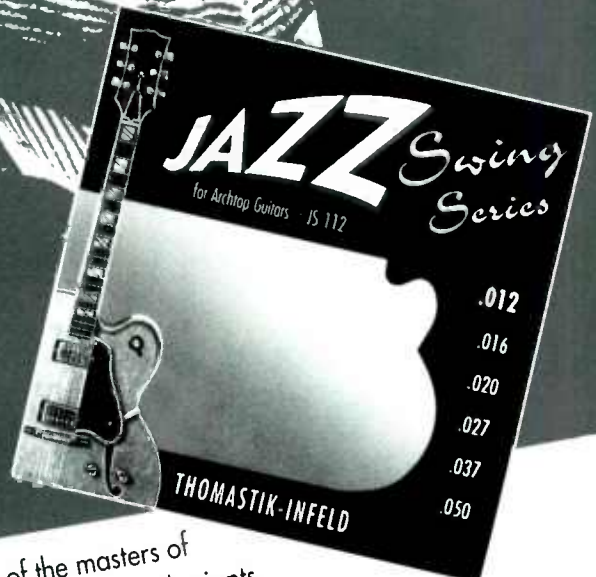
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Photograph by Neil Cooper; Pearl Jam in London, July 1993

# Joe Satriani



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# LEONARD COHEN

You're publishing an anthology of your lyrics, prose and poetry, *Stranger Music*. What were your feelings, going back over all of your past work?

Well, I've been struggling with this collection for many years, and really could never get around to confronting the various dismalities that were presented me, just the meagerness of the whole thing. But I think I'm glad to have this period of my work over and documented. It kind of cleans the drawer. You know, the devil laughs when you make plans, but I think I can start now. It's nice to have this work out. It goes from my very first book, *Let Us Compare Mythologies* [1956] to the 1992 album, *The Future*, and I feel that brings to conclusion a certain cycle of work.

*A long cycle!*

A long cycle, yes. But don't forget, the Hindus believe that Krishna appears once every 8 billion years in human form. So, compared to those kinds of clocks, this is a very swift-moving pace.

*Did you feel proud?*

I'm not disgraced by it. I don't think that pride comes into it after a certain point. Because if you examine the matter with any kind of understanding, you know that you're up against Dante and Homer, and Shakespeare and Auden and Yeats and Ginsberg—you're up against some pretty heavy hired guns who have taken this on. But I think it deserves to be collected. And how much of it deserves to live is anybody's guess.

*How do some of the lyrics compare, then, with more contemporary songwriting—say, the last 30–40 years?*

Well, it's always interesting to speculate on how important you are, y'know. Or if, indeed, you have any importance. And each generation so radically revises the opinions of the generation previous to it that it's pretty hard to survive in this racket at all. So, as I'm fond of saying, my work has lasted about as long as the Volvo: 30 years. And whether it will go on, like some of those old Ford trucks you see in certain parts of the country where someone has taken care of them since 1922... I don't know how long I'll last. It's been my best shot so far, I never played with it, I never fooled around with it. I always thought I was in it for the long haul. And I never deliberately—once or twice I weakened and let a line go by that probably needed another year of incubation. But not in my last few records.

*Has songwriting become easier or more difficult?*

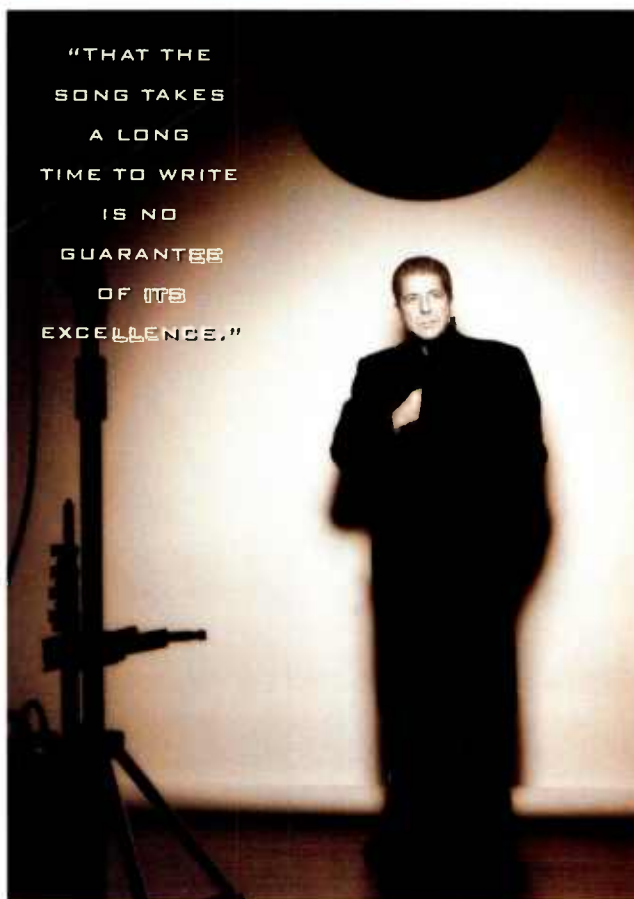
It remains difficult. And even though you get a little bit slower—I guess matadors, hunters and fishermen will tell you, you *do* get a little bit slower, but you learn a few shortcuts. But it's the same risk, and the same time, and it doesn't get any easier. And I must always make this caveat—the fact that the song takes a long time to write is no guarantee of its excellence. You know, people write great songs in half an hour, 20 minutes. There's two tribes: There's ones who do it like that, and ones who do it like me.

*Do you still view songwriting as a "heroic enterprise"?*

Only for myself. I think if anybody hangs in there long enough at whatever they're doing—whether it's fishing or journalism or cabinet making—it represents a kind of heroic *attention*, because almost everything in the world conspires to whisper in your ear, at increasing volume, "Sit down and shut up." So, anybody who continues to *show up* at whatever they're doing deserves a certain kind of applause.

*Who currently blows you away as a songwriter?*

## FRONT MAN



"THAT THE  
SONG TAKES  
A LONG  
TIME TO WRITE  
IS NO  
GUARANTEE  
OF ITS  
EXCELLENCE."

This isn't quite the moment to ask me, because I've been on the road for a long time and one's *disinterest* in music becomes Himalayan in proportion. But, you know, if I hear George Jones singing "Grand Tour," it can blow me away. If I hear Otis Redding singing "These Arms." But your interest in music diminishes *dramatically* when you're on the road. In fact, we've created a "music crime" on the bus, which is, y'know, if you play music...

The first time was the night before last, when we actually listened to some bebop, some jazz, some Miles, Bud Powell. It's been a long time since anybody dared to play a note of prerecorded music on the bus. [laughs] We're coming to the end of the tour.

*How about kindred spirits—do you feel you have any out there?*

Innumerable. Numberless. Way beyond this tiny enterprise in which I'm involved.

*Any thoughts on what you want to do next?*

Again, the devil laughs when you make plans. But I feel that with this last album and this compilation and the reissuing of my novels, a big space has been cleared which, God willing, I'll be able to repopulate with some interesting creatures. And I look forward to being able to do that, God-given the time.

*What is the most rewarding aspect of what you do?*

Love is the reward for work. Norman Mailer said that and I thought it was very, very good.

DEV SHERLOCK

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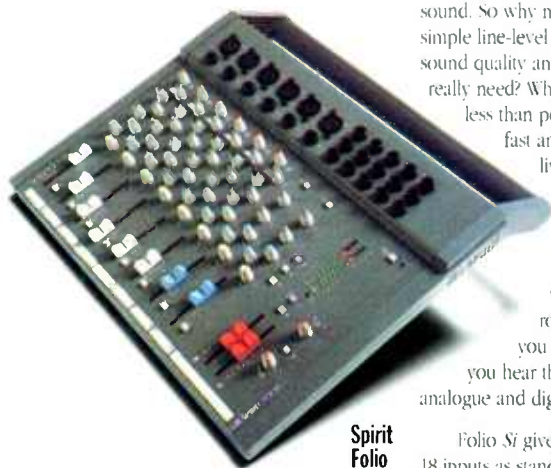


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**SPIRIT**  
By Soundcraft

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Your feature on Steve Vai (Aug. '93) was downright sizzling. Thanks for keeping us abreast of Vai's deep thoughts, piercing wit and choice little tidbits about his new band, as in "everybody's got cool hair and clothes, and that's a big part of the presentation. If someone wants to go grunge that's great, but I happen to like the stylistic *look* of a rock band." These are hard times for bold conceptual forces, and lucky for us, Vai's no boob when it comes to accessorizing with style. Please run more stories on guys with nails in their nipples.

Brett Wakefield  
Sherman Oaks, CA

Thank you for the excellent Steve Vai interview. I was as usual floored by the brilliance and humility of a man who is truly the most gifted musician in rock 'n' roll today.

Kelly Cruz  
Kansas City, MO

The idea of mentioning Steve Vai's name in the same sentence as Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Carlos Santana, Jeff Beck and Allan Holdsworth is ridiculous and ludicrous, not to mention blasphemous! The role of Satan that he played in the film *Crossroads* was perfectly suited to his talents, and one that he is only perpetuating with his "music." There is no coincidence that his sixth birthday was 6/6/66, and there is no coincidence that he has become a millionaire.

*A fan who loves the guitar*  
Greenwich, CT

## TOUR OF THE ZOO

The Zoo TV tour (Aug. '93) was a modern masterpiece and an appropriate examination of humanity in this garbled techno age. Zoo-

## LETTERS

*ropa* is, despite what many of my peers believe, a wonderful album; whether you like it or hate it, you have to respect the band for making it. While many U2 purists got lost somewhere around *The Joshua Tree*, those who have rolled with them are being treated to the fruits of their trailblazing.

John D. Knutsen  
Stockton, CA

Once upon a time there was a great rock 'n' roll band called U2. Then they began to assault our ears with worthless, soulless junk called *The Joshua Tree*, *Rattle & Hum* and *Achtung Baby*, and true to form in this worthless, soulless world the albums went straight to the top of the charts. Now these same men have seen fit to give us *Zooropa*, quite possibly the worst album I have ever heard. This too will go to the top of the charts, I'm sure. Bono claims that rock 'n' roll has always been inspired by technology; he's right, but good musicians always knew how to use technology to enhance rather than consume the music. Does anyone remember A Flock of Seagulls, or Soft Cell? This is what *Zooropa* is about, tape loops and studio tricks, as opposed to musical integrity.

Dean Gavney  
Ringwood, IL

Please, no more U2 articles. No Bono articles, no Edge articles. Please, no more guitar articles. At least for a little while. Don't get me wrong, I love U2 and guitar, but enough is enough. No more about the 100 greatest guitarists either. There is no such thing as a better guitarist, just different.

Dan Dellaro  
Oceanside, NY

## MORE SIGNINGS

I have always regarded business relations with a record company as a pit of ordure at the end of an equally painful long road of touring and self-promotion. Thankfully, your article "Getting Signed—The Day After" (July '93) helped assuage some of my fears. By discussing some of the inner workings of record company relations, you revealed record companies to be less demonic musician haters and more businessmen who happen to have music as their product.

Thanks for a great article.

Rob Houghton  
Pompton Lakes, NJ

I enjoyed the article about "Getting Signed—The Day After." Just to set the record straight, it was my decision to leave Arista—I was not dropped from the label.

Willie Nile  
New York, NY

## FRONT PAGE REVIEW

I read the brief interview with Jimmy Page (Aug. '93) with total disappointment. Not only is there another repetition of his insipid relationship with David Coverdale, but to intimate that they are "two heavyweights with high standards"? Gimme a break! Coverdale-Page ain't nuthin' but Led Zep lite! I was also annoyed to read Jimmy's slagging of Robert Plant. I'm fed up with Page's totally immature attitude toward his former bandmate. I wish these two legends of rock would stop bismirching their past talent with their lame tries at creating "new" music. They need to stop puffing up their chests while bragging

about what they can do, and just do it already, or they should sit down in their rockers and make room for the younger generation of rockers.

Kim Andrews  
Jersey City, NJ

As a longtime fan, I find it disheartening that Jimmy Page holds so little regard for Robert Plant. This is quite a switch from the nostalgic tales of unity and respect he told two years ago when he had a Zep boxed set to sell. Friendship and loyalty seem to be little more than promotional tools for whatever product needs to be sold. After years of believing Zeppelin was more than money-making hype, it's discouraging to see the critics may have been right all along.

Madeline Chin  
San Francisco, CA

## RUMBLES

So your article on *Rumble Doll* (Aug. '93) states that it "is securely [Patti] Scialfa's album." Fine. So how come your sidebar piece on the instruments/equipment used in the recording focused almost solely on her producer, Mike Campbell? It's all about the microphones that "he" chose; all about "his strings...his basses." What about "her"? It's Scialfa's album but she didn't play a thing!? Every time I've seen her in concert (with that husband of hers whose name I can never remember) she'd be playing keyboards and/or guitar. Why do I have the suspicion here that if her name was *Patrick* Scialfa you'd have included info on which guitars and strings *he* used?

You guys are usually pretty good on these things, but this time...

Joe Nowlan  
Boston, MA

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# FACES

PHOTOGRAPH BY DON LEWIS



## MELVINS: DUKES OF DIRGE

**W**HEN KURT COBAIN was still a screwed-up teenager growing up in the Twin Peaks logging town of Aberdeen, Washington, his life was saved by rock 'n' roll. More specifically, his life was saved by Melvins.

A Sabbath-meet-Black Flag-meet-Flipper drone of a power trio, Melvins was formed by guitarist Buzz Osborne and drummer Dale Crover in 1984. Bassists have included Mudhoney's Matt Lukin, Shirley Temple Black's daughter and current addition Mark Deutrom. Cobain's success helped them land their first major-label deal (on Atlantic) after six indie albums and more than a dozen singles and EPs. Still, the godfathers of flannel they're not.

"Don't blame us," says Osborne, whose Afro suggests a

resemblance to MC5 singer Rob Tyner. "We don't care for those bands. We moved to San Francisco before any of that stuff happened. When we lived in Seattle, nobody liked us."

While recording *Houdini*, Melvins brought in Cobain "for input on song structure." The result is a slow-motion barrage of buzzsaw noise apocalypse, with tracks like "Pearl Bomb" achieving a formal brilliance that slams together the Ramones, Stooges, Glenn Branca and Rhys Chatham. And while Melvins may have prefigured the punk-metal crossover, their blitzkrieg leaves small room for fine distinctions. "I just do what I do," Osborne claims. "Stupid people are stupid regardless of what they're into. When I'm onstage, all I can see is the spit flying out of my mouth." **ROY TRAKIN**

## Me'Shell NdegéOcello

**I**'M AN OLD-FASHIONED person with hip-hop values," explains bass whiz Me'Shell NdegéOcello ("free like a bird" in Swahili). On *Plantation Lullabies*—plantation being "a metaphor for ghettos and shanty towns"—she handles most instruments, while rapping and singing with authority. Dense, moody pieces echo such old masters as Nina Simone and Curtis Mayfield, as well as today's MCs; this debut blurs the lines between hip-hop, jazz and soul.

But NdegéOcello's ambitions extend beyond style. "I'm sick of this 'bitch this' and 'nigger that,'" she notes. "I'm trying to reconstruct the image of the black person. I can articulate what I'm angry and hostile about."



"Soul on Ice," for example, takes black men to task for "lettin' sisters go by" and preferring white standards of female beauty.

"I have friends in interracial relationships who've heard the song and haven't spoken to me since," she says. "Some black people have even told me we shouldn't discuss these kinds of things. That's sad." Asked if she was influenced by Arrested Development's outlook, NdegéOcello responds, "Not at all. My biggest influence was U2's *War*, where they talked about Irish politics and divisions between people."

NdegéOcello admits it's frightening to go solo. What now? "I want Eric Clapton to hear *Plantation Lullabies* and ask me to play with him," she laughs. "Or I want Stevie Wonder to hear it and say, 'That's slamin'!'" **JON YOUNG**

PHOTOGRAPH BY ACCELERATOR

# FACES

## Walt Mink



OUR NEW record runs a half-hour," notes John Kimbrough, guitarist and singer for Walt Mink. "The next one will clock in at 20 minutes, and we'll keep whittling it down until we create the perfect note. You'll press 'play' and one inspiring, beautiful note will be struck, then it'll end. Yet in that one note will be an entire record's worth of material."

Seriously, folks, sonic reduction does play a major role in the strategy of this agile Minneapolis-based threesome. Considering their debt to the big guitars of Page and Hendrix, last year's *Miss Happiness* and the recent *Bareback Ride* display amazing



L to R: John Kimbrough, Candice Bellanoff, Joey Waronker

restraint. "I'm not a fan of long-winded squealing," confirms Kimbrough. "I've always been predisposed to trimming."

Despite their accessible licks, it's hard to get a handle on this genre-spinning band. "Nobody's really succeeded yet," he observes proudly. Though happy to be linked with classic power trios like Cream, Kimbrough's

quick to add, "The thing that drives me nuts is the comparison to Rush. I find it heinous and offensive!" He readily admits his high-pitched singing is responsible. "Absolutely. People say I sound like Geddy Lee. I'm tortured by my voice. I'd change it if I could, but I've gotta make do."


Named after a Macalester College professor, Walt Mink is preparing to leave the indie-label ranks, having signed with Sony. Can mainstream adulation be far behind? "I think we play music that can hold people's attention, if that's what mass appeal means. But I don't know about striving for it. We're still gonna make the records we wanna make."

"Someone was trying to be diplomatic and said, 'Your music's not for everybody.' It's kinda true, I guess." JON YOUNG

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every wild cry,  
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## EMMYLOU HARRIS COWGIRL'S PRAYER

Emmylou Harris has never sounded so sweet or so strong as on her *Cowgirl's Prayer*, the new album featuring "High Powered Love," "You Don't Know Me" and "Crescent City."

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## ANNIE ROSS

**S**INGER ANNIE ROSS has long trod a tight-rope between jazz and popular song. In 1952, for instance, she wrote lyrics to fit a jazz solo by saxophonist Wardell Gray and came up with "Twisted"; two decades later, Joni Mitchell made the song famous on *Court and Spark*. So it's fitting that Ross should portray a nightclub lifer in Robert Altman's film *Short Cuts*, backed by a jazzy quintet assembled by Hal Willner and singing songs by courtant pop tunesmiths Elvis Costello, Gavin Friday and the Edge.

"I loved the choices," Ross says, in a voice that's richly suggestive of the dives high and low she's experienced in her remarkable career. "Elvis Costello's 'Punishing Kiss' was a challenge," she adds wryly. "I wasn't sure what it was about, at first. But by the time we recorded it, I understood."

Ross wouldn't be the first to be flummoxed by Costello's intentions, of course, but her shrewd

wit and effortless swing prove more than equal to the task. Ditto her rendition of such instant standards as "To Hell with Love," which she delivers with the nuances of a singer who knows plenty about both places.

She certainly knows about the nightclub milieu portrayed in *Short Cuts*, having co-owned Annie's Room, one of London's hottest jazz spots, back in the '60s. "My club was a little more high-class than the one in the film," she ventures, "but I was impressed by the set. You could practically smell the smoke and the whiskey. And it had to be just right," she points out with a sigh, "cause I've done so many."

Ross will reprise her songs on *Short Cuts* at the Bottom Line in October, with many of the musicians who backed her up in the movie. After that? "I go where the work is," Ross answers plainly. "Like a wandering vagabond. Or a minstrel." **MARK ROWLAND**



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**A**MONG THE ODDITIES surrounding Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* is the existence of two classic scores—the memorable melange of classical pieces that was actually used in the movie, and the one Kubrick commissioned from composer Alex North. The latter music was jettisoned by Kubrick without warning—North himself only discovered it when he attended the premiere of *2001*, in 1968. For the last 25 years it has survived only as an exciting rumor among fans of North, whose dramatic arrangements and memorable melodies (including the theme from *Spartacus* and “Unchained Melody,” from the 1955 prison yarn *Unchained*) helped garner 14 Oscar nominations over the course of his career.



North died in 1991, but in accordance with his wishes, his score for *2001* has finally been recorded, by the National Philharmonic Orchestra of London under the direction of Jerry Goldsmith, North's best friend and, arguably, his successor as Hollywood's preeminent composer. Coinciding with a premiere in Seville, the score will be released on Varese Sarabande Records, marking the silver anniversary of the movie for which it was intended. Listeners will be struck by thematic parallels between the two “scores”—to what degree pure coincidence only Stanley Kubrick could reasonably answer—but the vitality and grace of North's *2001* are of a standard with the finest Hollywood film scores, and a fine coda to his career. The Jupiter mission is complete.

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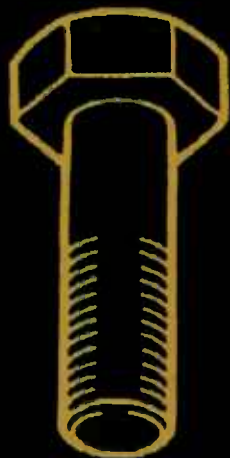
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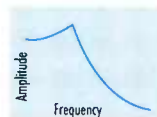
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World Radio History

# BARRON OF THE KEYBOARDS



performances begin the following evening, adding, "Please be on time." He is not without humor: He often leads into a set with a hokey, purposely amateurish rendition of "Tenderly," recounting how he once heard a pianist in a hotel lounge play it just like that, night after night. He is reserved. But when he plays, the impact is like a tidal wave. Barron's interpretation of a ballad like "Darn That Dream" or "But Beautiful" is so touching that listeners sigh collectively, helplessly, afterwards.

The seeds of his talent were sown in Philadelphia, where Barron, 50, was born and raised. Piano lessons, which he commenced at age five, were his mother's idea, but by the time Barron reached his teens, he'd learned to appreciate jazz. His brother Bill played tenor sax professionally; radio and records added another dimension. When he heard an LP featuring Tommy Flanagan one day, he was a goner.

*Jazz pianist Kenny Barron is the smoothest of the smooth*

Classically trained—Vera Bryant Eubanks, Ray Bryant's sister and mother of Kevin and Robin, was one teacher—Barron gigged from his early teens. After a short spell in college, he followed Bill to New York. He catalogs the musicians who lived on his block: Elvin Jones, Lee Morgan, Spanky DeBrest, Reggie Workman. It was 1961 in the East Village, where jazz was *happening*. Certainly it happened for Barron, who began working with James Moody and Roy Haynes, the beginning of a list which currently includes Yusef Lateef, Freddie Hubbard, Milt Jackson, Stanley Turrentine, the Sphere quartet—with Ben Riley, Buster Williams and Charlie Rouse—Stan Getz and dozens more.

Barron's three-week residence at the Vanguard was owner Lorraine Gordon's idea. "The idea I had about Kenny and Ben and Buster," she says, "was that they are such a superb background *and* foreground, they should be allowed to show all the aspects of the music, with different guests, so that you could see how far this group has advanced. They have such a rapport, it's like ESP. And when a guest artist comes in, they just flow into that artist, or vice versa."

The "front men" for these engagements were tenor saxophonist David Sanchez, vibist Steve Nelson and alto and soprano saxist Gary Bartz. "It was interesting," Barron says, "because we

**H**IS SCHEDULE IS EXHAUSTING TO CONTEMPLATE. HE WROTE SEVEN tunes for his most recent record, *Sambao*, which is out on Verve; its successor is in the can. He returned from a month-long tour of Europe and the following night began a landmark three-week engagement at the Village Vanguard. He is a full professor at Rutgers University, where classes ended just in time for him to travel to Japan for three weeks as part of Takao Ishizuka's "One Hundred Fingers," a 10-piano series of performances. He estimates that he's played on about 10 or 15 CDs in the past year, "not that many," he annotates. Does he feel overwhelmed? "Not at all," says the smoothest of the smooth, sipping a coffee and cognac during an interview which has been slotted into the hour between soundcheck and the start of week two at the Vanguard.

It would be uncharacteristic for Kenny Barron to answer otherwise. On or off stage, the great pianist exhibits an almost disconcerting composure which can be mistaken for aloofness. He may be juggling 10 things at once, but he never appears rushed. He is punctual; he makes a point of reminding his audience what time the

BY KAREN BENNETT

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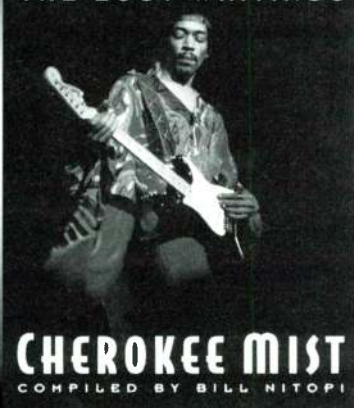
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got somebody very young, David is 24; somebody in the middle, Steve is 38; and Gary is 52—Gary's our peer and we all love playing with him."

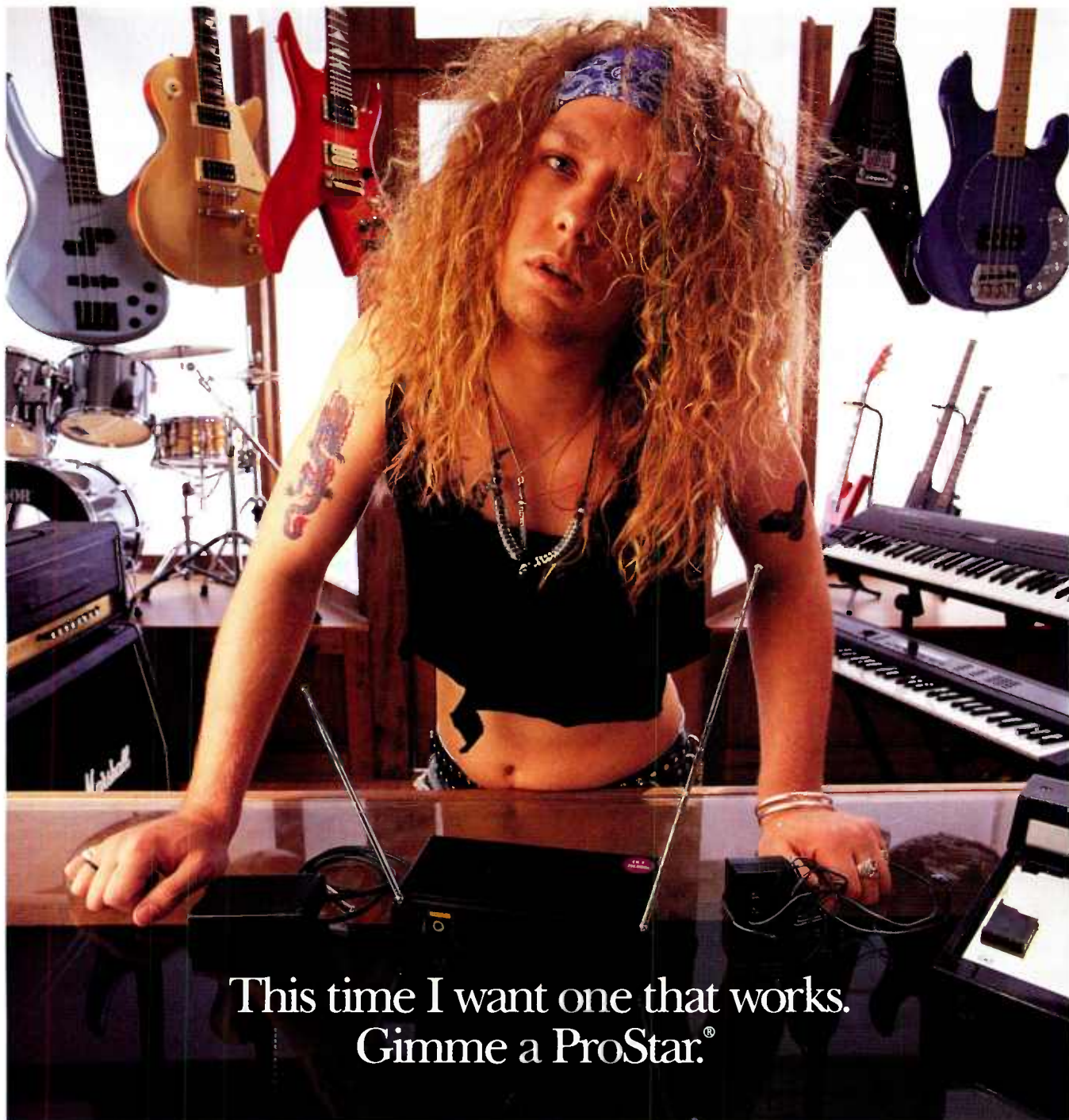
As for the rhythm section, "I think the three of us individually have grown, and when we come together, that's even more for us to work with; no matter how long we've been away from each other, when we come back it's right there." So it was. Sanchez dug for new depth on the tenor, as Riley propelled him; Nelson crafted an exquisite, bell-like solo on "I Thought about You," then swung into Barron's next call, "Blue Monk," wherein the leader wove entire passages from "Centerpiece." The third week had Bartz tearing into "Mr. P.C." with a vengeance, delivering a mini-clinic on alto improvisation; Buster skated along behind him with uncanny grace.

Since Barron's helped spawn three decades' worth of serious players, an assessment of the current scene seemed in order. "Basically, I hear a lot of technique," he observes. "There are exceptions, some younger players who tell stories when they play. But it's rare. When I was coming up, telling the story was the primary thing, and not technique. I could recognize Trane, or Clifford Brown, or Sonny Rollins or Miles or Dexter. Just by their sound! I could recognize Tommy Flanagan by his touch, or Horace Silver. And so could millions of other people who weren't necessarily musicians—they would listen. It used to amaze me to walk into a bar with a jukebox and Miles' 'Bye Bye Blackbird' would come on, and everybody in the bar would sing the solos. That's one of the things I don't hear now. I can't remember anybody's solos.

"A lot of the young musicians are university-educated, they put prime importance on reading and chops, so some of the other stuff about your heart, feelings, goes by the wayside. Everything is 'right,' but this"—he taps his chest—"is glass. It's about having the music someplace other than in your head. Gotta be in your heart, too. As they get older, it will happen," Barron adds, philosophically. The maestro knows.

### SPHERE GEAR

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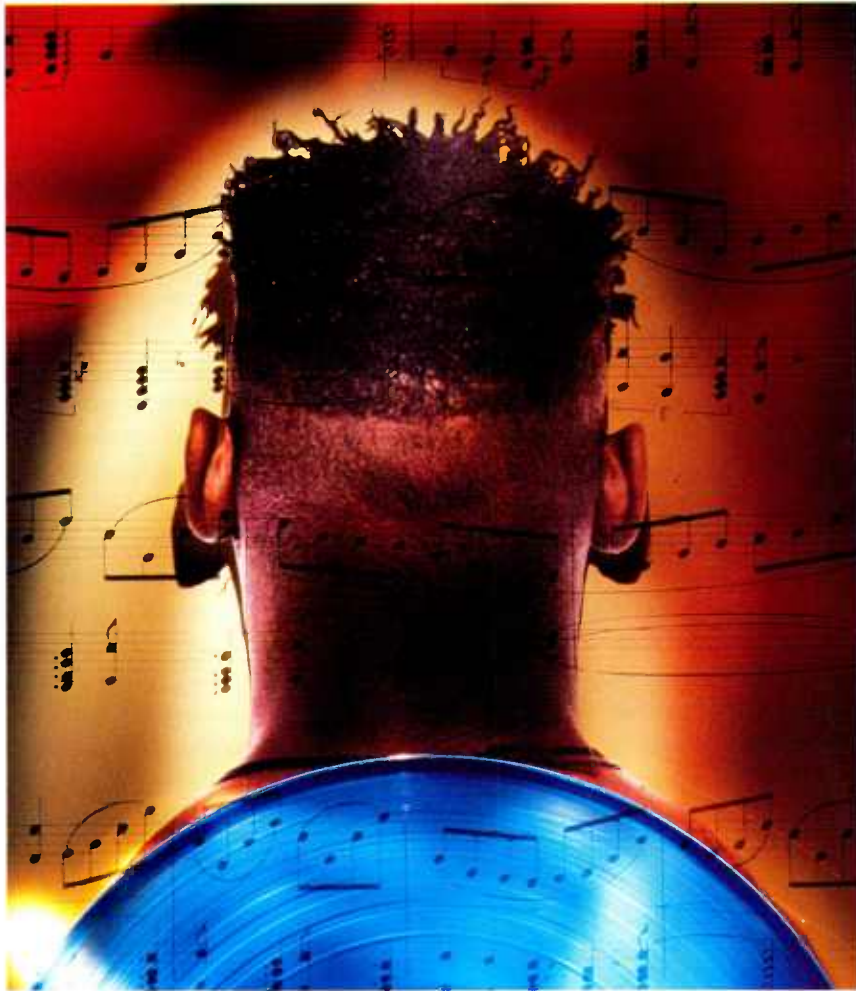


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# THE BLACK ROCK COALITION MISSION



**O**N A RAINY NIGHT JUST BEFORE THE FOURTH OF JULY, THE STREETS OF downtown Manhattan are virtually deserted. But inside the Wetlands Preserve, a popular dive near the Holland Tunnel entrance, no one is whining about getting moored in New York for the long, sticky weekend. As an eager crowd gathers around the bar, Robert Fields, publicity director for the Black Rock Coalition's East Coast chapter, bounces onto the small stage, where a group of musicians and singers—members of the BRC Orchestra—has assembled to pay homage to a fellow who used to tell us his name was Prince. “This is a tribute to the one and only symbol man,” Fields announces. A delirious set follows, as a three-piece rhythm section, two funky horns and a posse of singers perform soulful renditions of classics and less familiar gems from His Royal Badness’ oeuvre—from

BY ELYSA GARDNER

“Purple Rain” to the lovely, lyrical ballad “Sometimes It Snows in April.” Singer Gordon Chambers delivers the latter song with enough conviction to make the patrons forget, if only for a blissful moment, that it also pours in July.

Prior to this performance, the BRC Orchestra, a variable collective of coalition members, had honored such great black musicians as Curtis Mayfield, Sly Stone, Fats Waller, Chuck Berry, John Coltrane and Arthur Blythe. The wealth of musical history and diversity represented by this list should give credence to the sort of frustration that engendered the BRC. “In terms of what the music industry sees as commercially viable for black artists, either you play hip-hop or R&B, or they don’t wanna hear from you,” Fields explains a few days after the Wetlands show. “Whereas white artists can expropriate any type of black music, and have access to markets and airwaves and audiences all over the world.”

*Breaking  
down barriers coast  
to coast*

The Black Rock Coalition was formed in 1985 by writer Greg Tate, artist manager Konda Mason and Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid. “It didn’t start out as an ‘organization,’ really,” Reid recalls. “It was just a bunch of friends, musicians and people involved in music, getting together to discuss our individual frustrations.” BRC member Janine DaSilva, who served as treasurer of the coalition between 1988 and 1992, describes its makeup as “musicians, writers, cartoonists...people who support the idea of alternative music, which can mean rock or jazz or even R&B and hip-hop, though hip-hop is becoming more prevalent now.” The BRC uses the term “alternative,” a tag often associated with white college rock bands, to encompass black music that for whatever reason—racist preconceptions on the part of radio and the record industry in some cases, lack of popular interest in others—doesn’t reach a mass audience.

One fundamental goal of the organization, according to Fields, has been to independently promote, produce and distribute such music. Towards that end, the organization has just released on its Black Rock Coalition Records label a compilation album called *Blacker Than That*. The successor to 1991’s *The History of Our Future* (on Rykodisc), *Blacker* includes the

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thrashing hard rock of D-Extreme, the delicate, groove-ridden acoustic pop of Sophia's Toy and the slamming funk of Menace, whose track gets added support from guests like George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, Bernie Worrell and Maceo Parker—artists who Beverly Jenkins, the coalition's East Coast executive director, identifies as "forerunners of the type of music we're trying to get proper exposure for these days. Those people were doing it long before others decided that we Africans weren't supposed to."

Not all musicians in the BRC are black, adds Jenkins. "Any individual can join the BRC. But because of the music and people we're here to support, we do have restrictions—or preferences, as I prefer to say—concerning bands. A band can have white members, but the *leader* has to be black, or Hispanic." Musicianship also comes into account, adds DaSilva. "The bands have to be evaluated by a booking committee, for quality and originality. And there's a fee—that's something I really worked on, making sure that we had more *paying* members." Bands contribute annual dues of \$75, DaSilva says; individual members pay \$25.

Some of the money raised by the coalition is channeled into education. "The BRC isn't just about getting people signed," Fields stresses. "It's not like, join us and we'll get you a record deal." The organization attempts to increase awareness and understanding of black music and its rich history, in hopes of enlightening the music industry and the general public. "One of the things we wanna do right now," says Bruce Mack—who, in addition to being the coalition's president, is in a BRC band called PBR Street-gang—"is go into schools and prisons, and generally get in touch with youth, be they black or white. We need to educate them about where music comes from, popular American music and music in general."

Adult education is also a priority. A couple of years ago, the BRC held a series of public panel discussions in which topics such as artists' management and marketing procedures were hashed over by industry executives and journalists. Recently, the coalition has revived this strategy, with panels whose agendas have ranged from providing information about the record business to controversial topics like homophobia in rap and reggae. "We need to generally promote understanding," Mack points out, "because that's what eliminates stereotypes and racism."

"People see the color of a musician's skin before they hear the music," Jenkins observes. "Even if a black musician is making the same sort of music as Van Halen or Guns N' Roses,

that musician is still assigned to the 'black music' department of its label. And since the radio stations that department deals with are more interested in R&B and hip-hop, the album can wind up falling through the cracks." As BRC musician Steve Coleman points out, the problem extends beyond the industry. "It has to do with the culture of Western civilization," says Coleman, a jazz saxophonist signed to Novus/RCA. "The industry is, after all, made up of people."

Bill Toles, who has taken the BRC Orchestra to perform in countries like Italy, Finland and Austria, points to some encouraging signs there. "Europeans don't draw the same sort of distinctions between pop and jazz and rock and blues, and they don't have the same ideas about who can or can't do what. And the European tour circuit isn't as tied to major-label distribution as ours is." Toles laughs. "We can take our music to Finland more readily than we can take it to St. Louis." Fields adds that British rock artists have often been more diligent about acknowledging the impact of black musicians on their craft. "A lot of the British rock folks that came up in the '60s, like Eric Clapton, have always said, 'Well, gee, I'm just basically playing stuff that was created by some black guys down in Mississippi, you know?' Or something to that effect. But I don't know to what extent that message has gotten through."

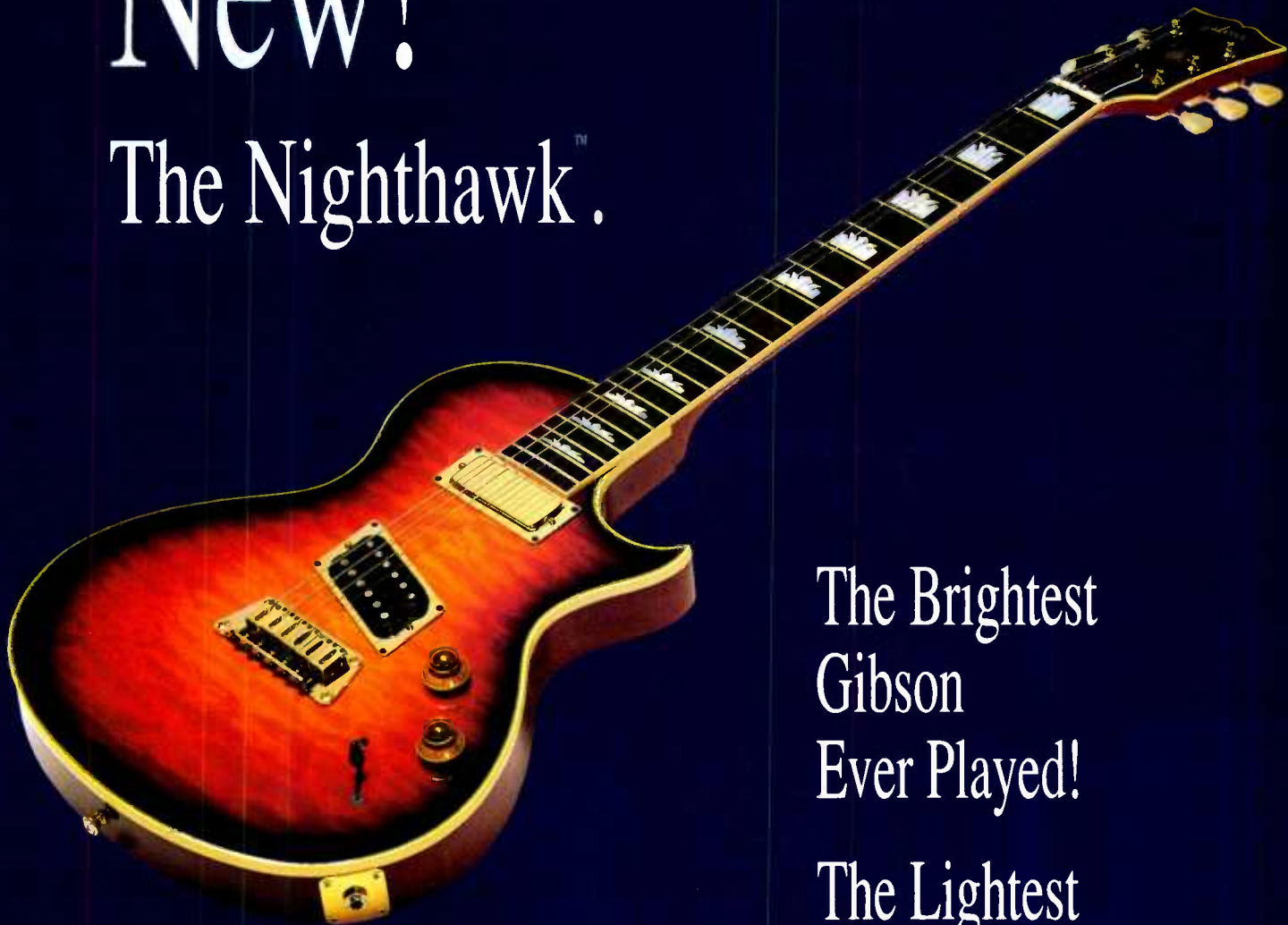
As a co-founder of the coalition, and a member of the band that has become its most celebrated success story, Vernon Reid is in a unique position to speculate how far the BRC has come since that first phone call was made eight years ago, and the distance to be traveled. "I think that the landscape of contemporary music is a lot different than when we started out," Reid says. "You couldn't have predicted the success of a Living Colour back then, or an Arrested Development. Have we affected playlists across the country? Only to a certain degree. I mean, there are a lot of fantastic bands that come and go—bands like the Deed, the Uptown Atomics, Eye & I. But, as underfunded as it is, the BRC has by its existence emphasized that there are a lot of different people working in black music. And the organization's leadership is as great as it's ever been; these people are really, really committed. They're trying to save creative lives. For me, it's about the survival of an *idea* of making music, you know? And I'm optimistic."

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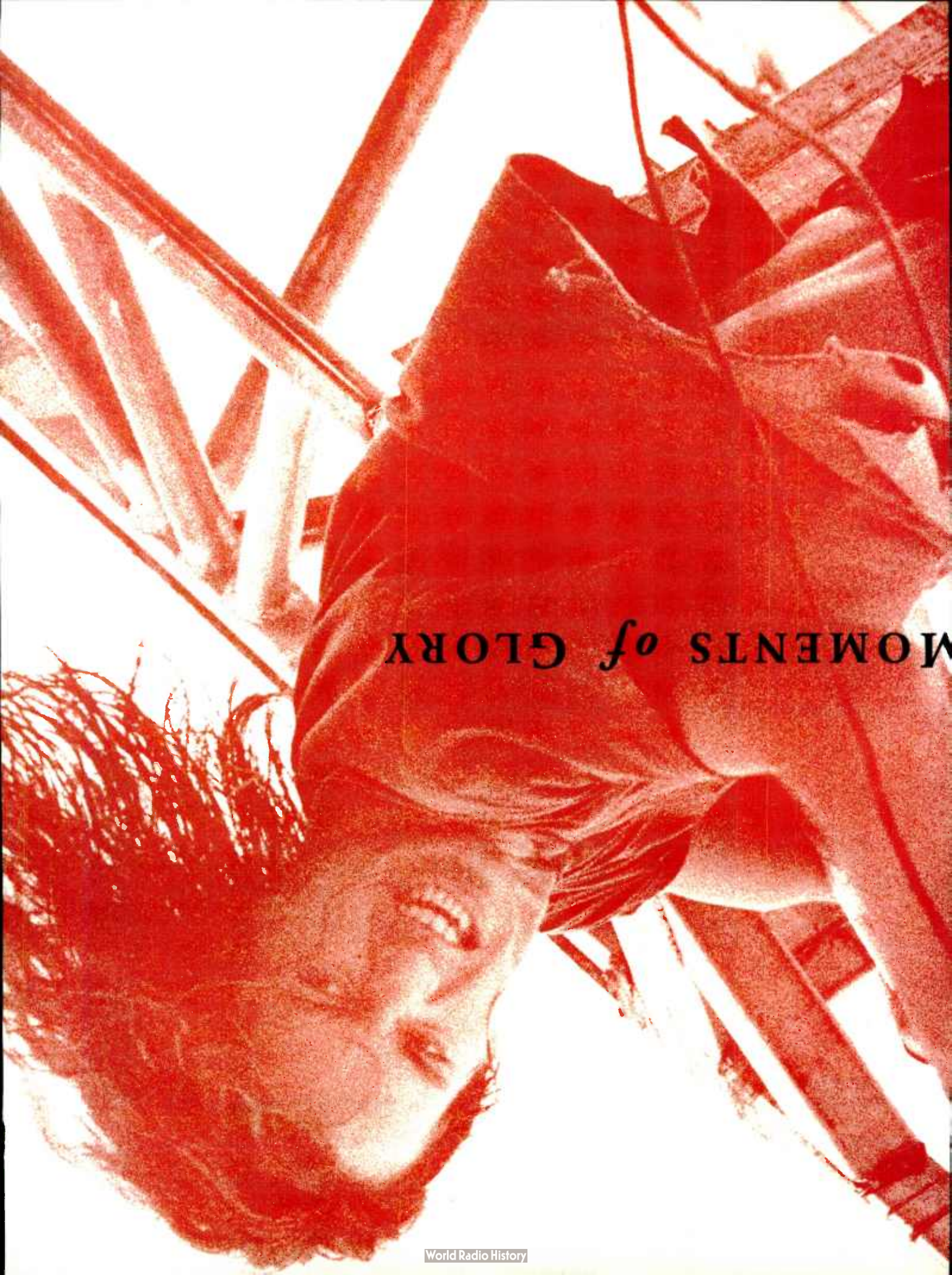
PEARL JAM'S

*Interview by MARTINA WIMMER IN SEATTLE*

*Color & Commentary by BILL FLANAGAN IN ITALY AND CALIFORNIA*

*Photograph by CHARLES PETERSON* World Radio History





MOMENTS *of* GLORY

never had this lifelong dream to be a rock star," Eddie Vedder says at home in Seattle in June, "or have all the attention and have girls. I've had the same girlfriend for nine years. It's just a problem being bothered by infatuated kids. It's lost on me. You picked the wrong guy to give all this stuff to! I'm into playing music and that's it."

As the summer of '93 begins, Eddie is reluctantly getting ready to jump back into the rock 'n' roll machinery that made Pearl Jam the most successful new band of the 1990s. The Seattle quintet's debut album, *Ten*, has sold more than five million copies in the U.S. since its 1991 release. Their recently finished followup, *Five Against One*\*, should do better. It's a stronger record, with songs both harder and subtler than the songs that made Pearl Jam stars and singer/lyricist Eddie Vedder spokesman for the Lollapalooza generation—a role he will do anything to ditch.

"If you think too much about that stuff, it can really change you from a normal person into what everybody thinks you are," Eddie says. "And it makes you crazy, because you start trying to *be* what everybody thinks you are. I try not

to pay too much attention to it. And we try to balance each other out, so that it doesn't get too much out of hand. We try to stop being abused or being overexposed.

"There's a trick to it: You ignore it all. You wake up in the morning and just be a normal person, ride your bike, and look forward to playing music, writing songs, getting into your guitar and getting together with the band. But that's a problem, too, because all of a sudden just getting together with the band has a reason. You have to write songs because people are counting on you. The business side of it..."

Pearl Jam have been remarkably strong about keeping the business side at bay. They quit doing interviews a year ago, just as *Ten* was reaching its commercial peak. They are now being dragged back into the spotlight with all the enthusiasm of kids going to the dentist.

"We don't do any press," Eddie explains, "not because we think we're above the press, but it separates you from what you're doing. When you get home and you've been through all that stuff but you feel like the experience has been stolen from you, you realize that you have to make some changes. Since I was 13 years old I lived through and for music. I'm not going to let some record company or

media people destroy my love. This is what I love and live for and suddenly it left a bad taste in my mouth. I'm not going to let that happen again.

"There's a lot of requests coming in and it gets hard to start picking. It makes you feel bad, so you just want to say, 'We're not gonna do anything.' But then you start worrying that people will not understand why you're doing this. They'll think you're just a bunch of assholes that got famous too fast.

"Sometimes a radio station comes up to you and asks you to get on the air for a second. You say sure, and then three other radio stations complain. It's a huge ordeal, because of companies and money and politics. Then they say, 'How could you have done that without asking us?' Look, I don't know what your deal is, I understand the business and I don't say that you don't have the right to be upset, but I can't make every personal decision—like, am I gonna talk to this friend—based on

the business world. I refuse to be part of that, I'll quit the whole thing altogether, it doesn't matter. I'm gonna play music in my life. Right now there's enough people, if I made tapes out of my house and sold them for a buck apiece, I could keep my house, could keep my rent paid. I could get music out there, be real and could still be in control of the artwork. All the important things would still be there."

A lot of successful musicians talk that way when there's three meetings and a photo shoot looming. Eddie Vedder is one of the very few who you could imagine really walking away from stardom and being just as happy.

"You play music for your living and share it with a lot of other people," he explains. "Even if you have the right attitude as a band, other people have other

attitudes towards you and make you do this and make you do that. And there's other bands setting standards: You do one big record and work the fuck out of it, you play a tour for two years, shoot six videos..."

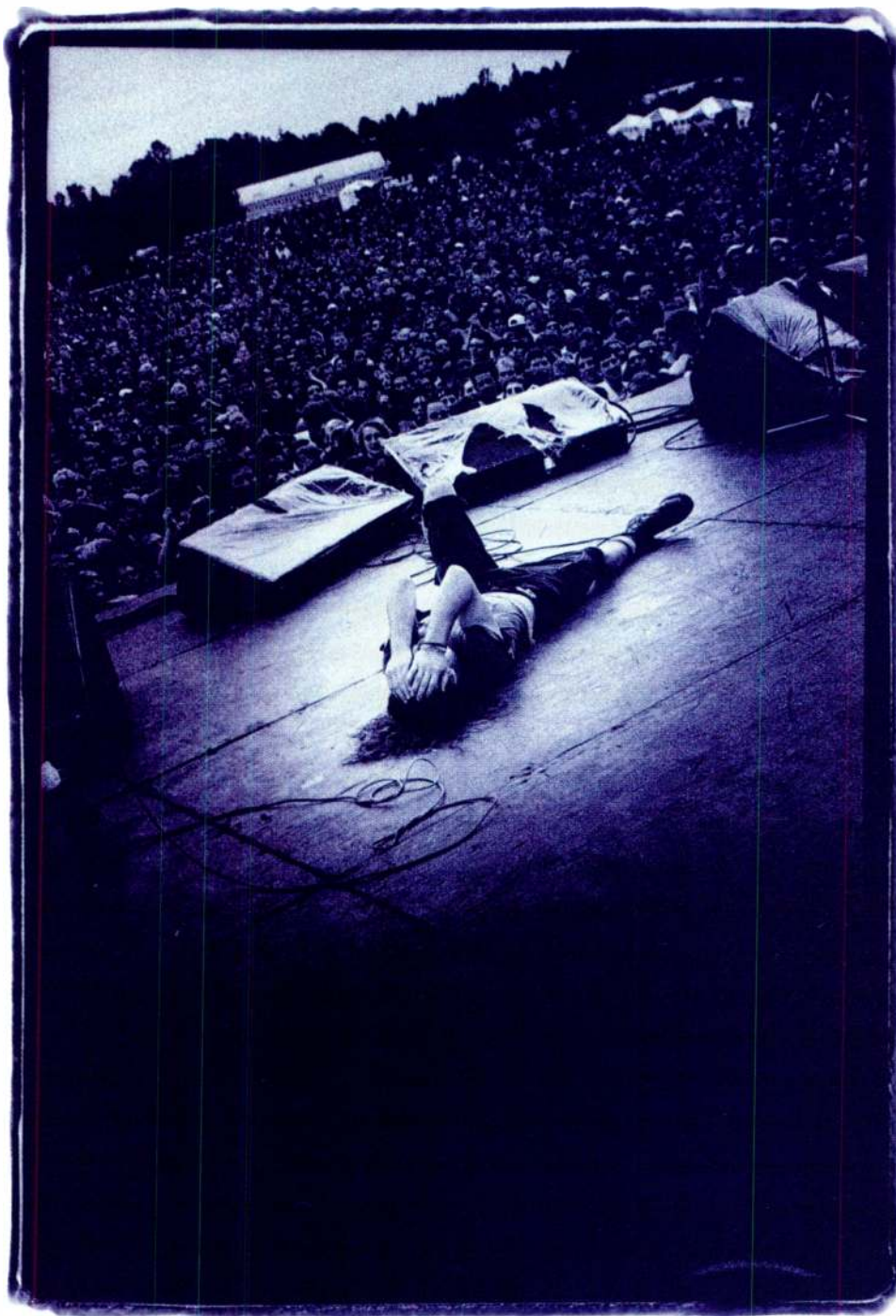
"It's too bad, because choosing at a young age to be a painter, for example, part of the decision is that you don't have to be on a schedule. And that was part of the decision of becoming a musician for me. Now suddenly you're a famous musician and you're being pulled back towards what you never wanted to do."

**"IF I MADE TAPES OUT OF MY HOUSE AND SOLD THEM FOR A BUCK APIECE I COULD KEEP MY RENT PAID. GET MUSIC OUT THERE. CONTROL THE ARTWORK...ALL THE IMPORTANT THINGS."**



In July Pearl Jam are on tour in Italy, opening for U2 in a series of stadiums in southern Europe before moving up to Britain and Ireland to support Neil Young. It is unusual for such a popular band to accept opening-act status but Pearl Jam have done it consistently, building their audience and paying homage to musicians who have influenced them at the same time. On the 1992 Lollapalooza tour they

\* At press time, the album title was changed to *V*.



came on in mid-afternoon, preceding Ice Cube, the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Ministry. On New Year's Eve they opened a New York club show for Keith Richards—for the honor of sharing his stage. When Eddie and Pearl Jam guitarist Mike McCready played at the Bob Dylan tribute concert at Madison Square Garden last fall, Eddie spent the entire rehearsal sitting in the front row of Madison Square Garden taking photographs of the rock legends on the bill. He has called on Bruce Springsteen and Pete Townshend, and was reportedly nervous to enter Pearl Jam's dressing room after one show because Elvis Costello was in the room. Costello, it turned out, was a Pearl Jam fan.

At the U2 concert in Verona, Eddie looks out at the stadium full of faces and says, "I can't wait till we can come back and play in a place where we can see you. This is a big place for such a little thing like music." Attempting to break through to the somewhat passive crowd,

him play is tremendous. It was the same thing with the Doors. There are Doors cover bands who travel the world, but to actually walk into the room and hear that one drum and that one keyboard is something different. My voice is in the right register, it just fits right in, that's why they had chosen me. And it's always fun to play with other musicians. But I didn't take it too seriously and I tried not to think of Morrison. When we actually did it that night it was a little bit spiritual but before and after it was nothing."

Pearl Jam has caught flak, most notably from Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, for being mainstream rock in an alternative package. But that criticism misses an important point: For the generation of kids who grew up with classic rock on one radio station, alternative on another and MTV at the end of their remote control, all of rock 'n' roll is equally accessible and, potentially, equally influential. The old

he introduces stage diving to northern Italy. Climbing back onto the stage, his clothes ripped by the crowd, Eddie sings the first two lines of U2's "I Will Follow," all of Young's "Rockin' in the Free World" and a slowed-down "Sympathy for the Devil." It feels as if Eddie is at once identifying himself as one of the fans and trying on the role of rock star.

"It's nice to be able to learn from these guys," Eddie says of the famous musicians who made the path Pearl Jam is following. "Also from those who killed themselves and their bodies by drug abuse. We're pretty lucky to be here 10 years later and be able to say, 'I do it different.'"

Eddie never got closer to walking in a legend's snakeskin boots than when he filled in for Jim Morrison with the surviving Doors at this year's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremonies. "They needed somebody to be in the band and we played just one night. They called me and asked me what songs I wanted to do. I said, 'I don't care, it's your band. I'll just show up and sing.'"

"I drove down with my girlfriend in the car from Seattle to Los Angeles. It was raining and it was really a crazy drive. We just listened to Doors music and knowing that these guys were just waiting to play with me... It was really cool that way, just to show up.

"One really great thing about music is that it's a singular experience every time. If I go see a Firehose show, there is only one guy in the world that can play bass like their bass player does and seeing

“generation gap” lines between Sinatra and the Beatles or between the Beatles and punk don’t mean anything to most of the audience—and most musicians—under the age of 25. They’ve heard the ’60s groups, they’ve heard rap, they’ve heard punk, they’ve heard Madonna and Duran Duran, R.E.M. and Guns N’ Roses—they’ve absorbed it all, the total vocabulary is available to them. The only relevant question is, what are they going to make out of it? The style police hear Pearl Jam mixing up elements of the Replacements and Clash with elements of Foreigner and Rush and scream, “Stop! You can’t do that!” But Pearl Jam know what their fans know: They can do anything they want.

All of which does not explain why, in Verona, Eddie is wearing a red Satan mask while singing “Sympathy for the Devil.” Or why, when he whips it off, he is wearing a head-covering fly mask underneath. Some of the U2 fans take it to be a reference to Bono’s onstage characters, the Fly and MacPhisto. Eddie claims (maybe seriously, maybe not) that since his face became so famous he has started wearing masks for anonymity.

“At the Lollapalooza Festival,” Eddie says, “they had these spoken-word tents, where Mark Arm from Mudhoney, for example, explained how his fuzz-pedals worked. I was just gonna show some images there, and one of them was a mask of a fly, a big fly-head. I was walking around downtown with it. It was so cool watching all these people’s reactions. Especially homeless guys, they were just laughing and smiling. They also liked my girlfriend’s purple hair. One guy stretched out his hand and I gave him a dollar and he said, ‘Man, the human beings don’t give me money, but the flies do!’ I should walk around with my fly mask more often.”

In Rome, on a sweltering July afternoon, Pearl Jam plays Neil Young’s “Fuckin’ Up” with a frenzy that breaks through language barriers. They also play “Daughter,” a song from the new album that returns to one of Eddie’s frequent themes—the casual suffocation of children by a world run by grownups. “She holds the hand that holds her down,” Eddie sings. From the suicidal boy in “Jeremy” to the deceived child in “Alive,” Eddie has stuck up for children with the passion of one who felt out of place as a kid—but who found connection through music. Now his music is reaching out to other kids in the same way.

The letters he gets from young people spilling their guts to him are another responsibility Eddie did not expect when he started writing songs. “They’re writing because they think we have something in

common. Something I’ve written is exactly the hell that they’re going through. And that means for them that I must be going through it, too. They’re expecting someone who’s treading water to save them. But I’m the same as they are and what gets me through it is music. Other people’s music has saved me in the past. And they can get all the strength they want from the music, that’s where I get mine from. But if they want it from me, there’s nothing I can do. I can barely keep myself together.” He pauses and adds for emphasis, “I’m serious.”

What made these kids find such an intimate connection with Pearl Jam? “I don’t know if there’s something to put your finger on,” Eddie says. “There are all kinds of other people trying to do the same thing or trying to use the same formula. That’s the thing with record companies—it’s a business to them. They look to exploit kids just like advertising does. When they hear that they wear plaid shirts, or that there is something called a ‘grunge look,’ advertising or TV shows start using that. So, if you ever would figure out what it was, what makes us special, the next thing you know everyone would be trying to do that.

“We try to be honest, free with our emotions and make uplifting music. We just play what we feel, you know. As far as music goes, you can’t put on an act in Seattle and play. Even if you’re just a rock band, people see through your bullshit.”

Talking of the fans who write to him baring their souls, he adds, “Even if I give what they need and if I write, there are some people that want more. There’s nothing I can do. I never wrote to Pete Townshend when I was little, hoping that he would save my life. I got strength from his music and realized that maybe this is one of the ways that I can

save myself. I’m not saying playing music to be successful and make lots of money. It was more spiritually. I thought I’d work a job and play music and still be happy.

“For me, as a kid—I don’t know what made me realize this—I knew that I had to put that feeling from seeing a band *towards* something. I was leaving my friends, who were going someplace else—I was going home after shows and wanted to just play. I wanted to think about that music and I wanted to write. I was so inspired to do shit with my life that I was actually going to make a plan. I’m going to start working this out, rather than going, ‘Oh, that felt so good,’ and then coming down and just needing to see that band again. That’s not doing anything for you. You have to make some decisions there and say, ‘I really love music, so I’m

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**“PART OF THE DECISION TO BE AN ARTIST IS YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE ON A SCHEDULE. SUDDENLY YOU’RE FAMOUS AND YOU’RE PULLED TOWARDS WHAT YOU NEVER WANTED.”**



*Clockwise: David Kroesen, Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Stone Gossard, Mike McCready*

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gonna start working in a club, or I'm gonna do sound, or learn how to play guitar.' If music gets you off more than anything else has ever gotten you off before or gives you this strength or this sense of spiritual energy, the important thing is doing something for yourself.

"And there's so many different ways to go. I was with some friends and we had taken some acid. At one point I realized that we were all doing these different things—I was in this outdoor shower, another friend was on his back listening to music, another friend was

standing naked on this rock, and I thought it was really interesting how everyone took his own little path, and that's how life is. There are so many things you can do, the options are pretty wide open. I think even if you're from some kind of nasty background there are some ways to overcome it. If you don't let it beat you. I'm not saying that anybody can do anything, but you can do something."

When night falls in Rome, Eddie does what he always does after Pearl Jam opens a concert—he goes out to watch the main act. U2's *Zooropa* show this evening is remarkable, a

multi-media spectacle that has the audience, many of whom had been indifferent to Pearl Jam, going wild. Tom Freston, the head of MTV and one of a number of VIPs watching from the soundboard, announces, "This might be the best concert I've ever seen." All the bigwigs agree except Eddie, who votes for Henry Rollins in a 500-seat club.

**E**ddie is the sort of guy who wonders why the same music-biz types who talk about how great concerts were in the old Fillmore days when everyone played 3000-seaters are so anxious to push Pearl Jam into huge venues. It's the kind of question agents and promoters aren't used to being asked. It's a crucial question to Pearl Jam, though, as the road is where they have spent most of their professional life, and it's to the road that they are now returning.

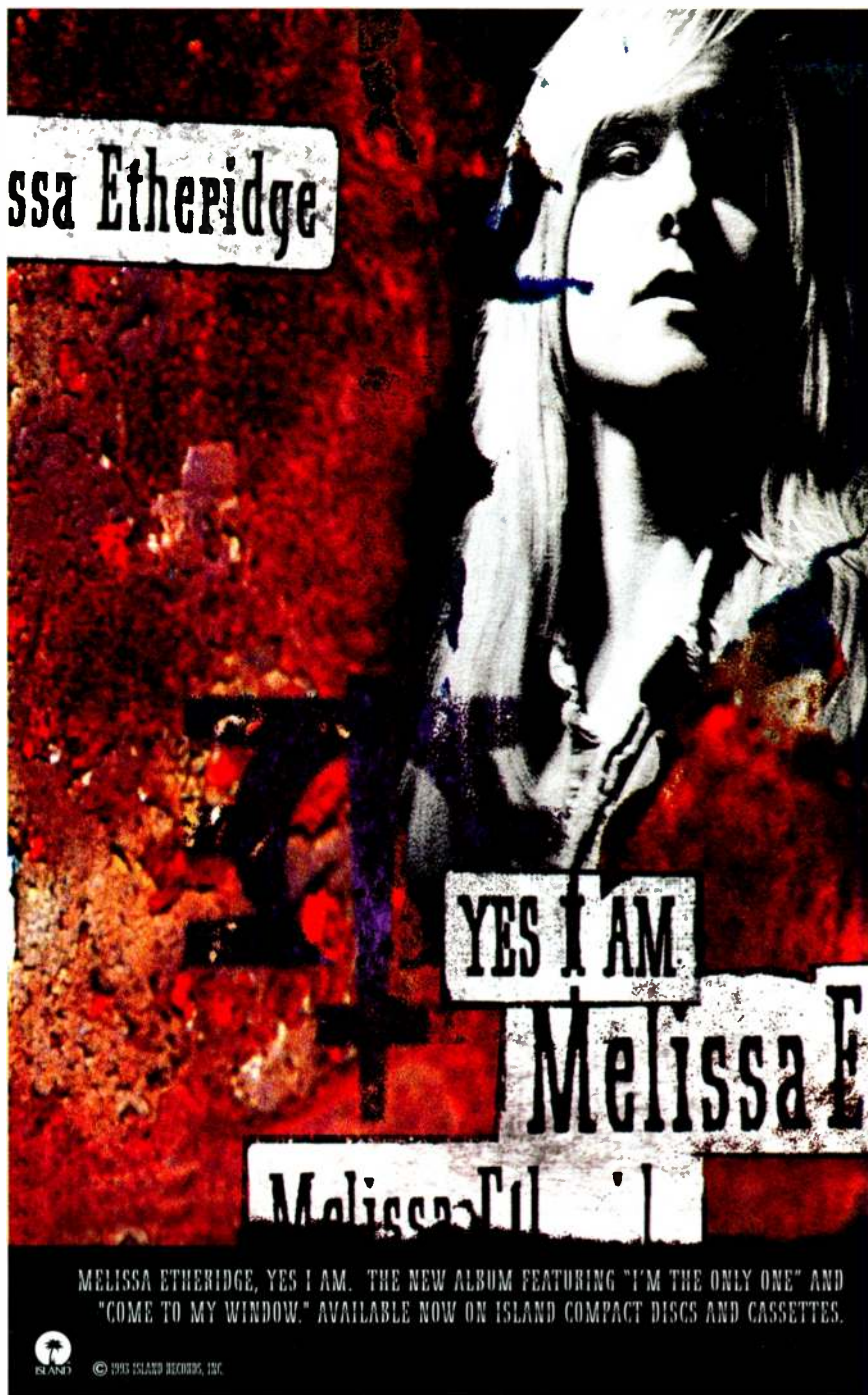
"When you're on the road and you're doing this thing," bassist Jeff Ament says, "you're 10 times yourself, you're this other thing, this machine, this inhuman person. And when you're not doing that anymore, you really enjoy being completely alone. And that gets frightening."

Eddie adds, "When I come home, my girlfriend looks at me as if I was a stranger, at least for the first four days. I sit in the corner with a book and a paper and I scrawl on it, or I keep walking through the room. This sounds funny now, but it's not good when it happens. That's another reason I don't want to be part of that lifestyle. Even with a relationship as solid as mine, we've been together nine years and we were going through all kinds of shit together, to think of even that being threatened by all this stuff..."

What sort of stuff, Eddie?

"Somebody could be writing a real nasty letter and it's ending up in my mailbox. And then it's in my house. And you have no idea—who is this girl? But it's something that gets between us. And if all that attention was on my girlfriend, if she had this kind of life, maybe I wouldn't want to be part of it. I wouldn't blame her if she didn't. I mean, I'm still the person I was through all these years, but I'm not to all these other people."

If Eddie is a reluctant hero, he does not back down from heroic gestures on Pearl Jam's new album. *Five Against One* finds Pearl Jam grabbing rock's ragged banner and hoisting it high. The music ranges from thrash that would honor Black Flag (on "Blood") to a song so far into R.E.M. territory ("The





Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town”) that you’d think it was a spoof if it wasn’t so damn pretty. The rhythms on “Go” and “Animal” would do Led Zeppelin proud (as would the guitar riff on “Glorified G”)—though on repeated listenings one realizes how much funk there is in Pearl Jam’s rock. Behind “Blood”’s thrash is a “Shaft”-like wah-wah, and “Rats” is a truer marriage of rap and rock than any of the more studied—and self-conscious—crossovers to which we are regularly subjected. When you get beneath the surface, Pearl Jam has less to do with the grunge than with “The Crunge.”

Eddie’s lyrical targets have expanded along with his audience. On “W.M.A.” he takes on bullying cops with the anger of one who has been subjected to routine harassment. On “Glorified G” he shoots at gun lovers. “I was standing in a shop recently,” Eddie recalls, “and there were these five guys talking about guns. One told a story about sitting in a rocking chair with his gun and accidentally shooting himself in the foot. Everybody was laughing, including himself. These guys are idiots.”

The new album was written in Seattle and recorded in San Francisco in a concentrated burst last spring. How concentrated?

“About one month recording and we mixed it at the same time,” Eddie says. “As soon as we recorded one song, we mixed it.” Pretty quick for the followup to a multi-platinum debut, but Eddie figures that if the song is well-written, the recording should be easy.

Did Pearl Jam set out to make *Five* different from *Ten*?

“No,” Eddie says, “we didn’t analyze anything, we just played music. It’s nice how it turned out, ’cause on the first record we didn’t put ourselves in a box and say, ‘This is our one style.’ It was a little open, there could be a slower song that sounded like us and there could be a faster song that sounded like us. And that’s how it is with the new stuff. We took advantage of the fact that we didn’t have to do this one thing. And there was a new power there. I think we opened it up and it’s even better. Who knows where we will be going with the next record?”

Jeff Ament pointed out that the fierceness in “Blood” represents a part of Pearl Jam that developed during their heavy touring. Eddie agrees. “A song like ‘Blood’ really happens live,” he says. “It felt strange to listen to the old record and realize that there’s nothing on it that represents this side of the band. And it was absolutely necessary to show this side. There is a

song called ‘Black’ on the first record; we never wanted to release it as a single because it is too soft. But they started playing it on the radio and it started to really scare me, all these old people...” Eddie’s voice drifts off in contemplation of finding himself in the middle of the road.

Asked if they’ve picked a single from *Five Against One*, Eddie says, “A single? It would be nice to have some radio stations who would play the whole album through. Sting said an interesting thing about singles. He said when he wrote ‘If I Ever Lose My Faith in You,’ he thought, ‘Okay, now I have a flagship. Now I

can do whatever I want to do with the rest of the album.’ Probably you have to have one song that’s a little bit easy to swallow.”

If there’s one quality that makes even Pearl Jam’s hardest songs relatively easy to swallow, it’s the pure honesty conveyed by Eddie Vedder’s voice. People trust the guy, they want to hear what he has to say. The unexpected shock of such mass intimacy might have sent Eddie, this time out, into either vocal affectation or lyrical obscurity. It’s a credit to him as an artist and as a person that he has gone neither way. If anything, his new

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lyrics are even more direct, his singing even more authoritative. Eddie Vedder may see himself as barely keeping together, but when he steps up to a microphone he knows who he is and what he can do.

The climax of *Five Against One*, and the emotional highlight, is "Indifference," a barren, almost folk song in which Eddie declares his public intentions:

*I will hold the candle till it burns up my arm  
I'll keep taking punches till their will grows  
tired*

*I will stare the sun down until my eyes go blind  
I won't change direction and I won't change  
my mind*

*I'll swallow poison until I grow immune  
I will scream my lungs out till it fills this room  
How much difference does it make?*

To those kids who feel disconnected from their families, schools and towns, and who look for connection in music, as Eddie Vedder did, it's probably safe to say it will make all the difference in the world.

Attention spans are getting really short," Eddie says. "Kids watch fast videos and play fast video games, eat fast food and then they go to see a U2 concert."

On September 2nd Pearl Jam convene in Los Angeles to perform at the MTV Awards. The show's being televised from the Universal Amphitheatre in Universal Studios, and as Eddie and his girlfriend Beth stand outside Pearl Jam's trailer in the afternoon sun, the trains of big golf carts that make up the Universal tour go rolling by them. Eddie dutifully smiles and waves—and then pitches an apple core at the receding tourists.

Flea from the Chili Peppers comes up in a baseball cap and an agitated state. "You gotta be honest with me," Flea tells Eddie and Beth, "I just got a haircut and you gotta tell me how it looks." Flea pulls off his cap to reveal a new crewcut and a high forehead. Beth and Eddie assure him it looks great. Flea seems relieved—he's about to go on TV. Then Eddie, smiling, tells Flea it makes him look like Sting. Flea rushes off to get a mohawk—but not before Eddie's reminded him to wave to the next tour bus.

Pearl Jam go in to rehearse just after R.E.M. finish. Peter Buck watches Pearl Jam from the empty auditorium and says, "If their new album is good, they're going to be the biggest band in the world."

During the broadcast a few hours later Neil Young joins Pearl Jam onstage for a version of "Rockin' in the Free World" that runs overtime, wins the night's only standing ovation from the jaded industry crowd, and is—by wide acclaim—the high point of the show. Pearl Jam also clean up the awards portion of the evening, winning four trophies, including "Video of the Year" for "Jeremy." Eddie is not joking when he tells the audience that without music, he might have ended up like Jeremy in the video, shooting himself in front of the classroom. On a lighter note, he weighs MTV's moonman trophy in his hand and observes, "It looks like Bono."

Hardly a cutting remark, but coming backstage Eddie worries that if Bono was watching he might have hurt feelings. He finds the Edge and asks if he can have Bono's phone number so he can call and make amends. "I just hung up with Bono," Edge replies, deadpan. "And, Eddie, he was crying."

Eddie and Edge stare intently into each other's eyes for a few moments—then they start laughing.

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**P**earl Jam probably are about to take their turn as biggest band in the world. And all the lessons they've learned from Pete Townshend, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, the Doors, U2 and whoever else might at one time have occupied that spot are not going to be enough to make it easy. Eddie Vedder, who is Pearl Jam's frontman, voice and face, is going to have it toughest of all. How does he feel about being the Next Big Thing?

"That's exactly the thing you don't want to be," Eddie says. "The Big Thing. We're just playing music. People obviously like to hear it and hopefully they can get it in the store. Probably we are the big thing here. I'm not complaining, I'm happy that people listen to our music. But being this big does nothing for you. It causes problems. It removes you from being who you are."

The strong emotional quality of Pearl Jam's music brings out great loyalty in their listeners. Jeff Ament once said that Pearl Jam's music makes you feel like jumping out the window—and pulls you back when you have one leg outside.

"Yes," Eddie says, "the music saves it, because it's somehow uplifting, and the lyrics always give in to the celebratory mood in the end. The bottom line is, no matter what your life is, to be alive is certainly something to celebrate. Hopefully there's always something you can find in a day, even if you're just a bum underneath a bridge, there's something you can pull out of a day that makes it worth living."


"It's a pretty intense thing, the tenacity with which people approach living. Jeff, who is a very active person, seems to get a lot out of a day, certainly more than a homeless person. But even these people refuse to die. Life's a pretty incredible thing."

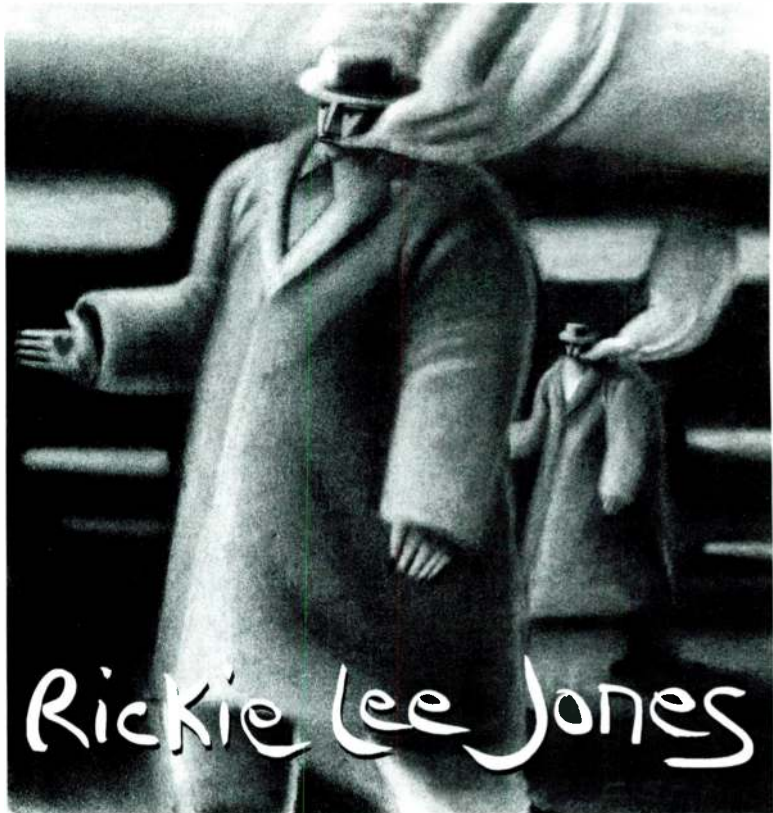
Jeff Ament says, "Sometimes, in those moments where the band's really uninhibited, it's not even anything you can talk about. It's not like, before the show, you sit down and think, 'God, I've got all these problems and now I'm going out on the stage and release them.' It's kinda like, you just have the stuff, and some nights it feels really good. You feel really light after the show. You feel like whatever it was that was weighing you down is gone. You have a smile on your face, and you're tired, you go to sleep and you have a great dream. That's the beauty of it right here."

"And every once in a while you'll be playing and maybe your eyes are closed, and

when you open them and you look out and see somebody, you see them moving... It'll be like a mirror. You see this look in their faces that looks exactly the way that you feel. That to me is an incredible thing. After the show you're light. And you think, 'Music and its energy in this room just did something to me that is inexplicable.' That's the most incredible therapy that exists."

Eddie Vedder says something similar: "For all the shit that you deal with and all the baggage that I carry around with me, playing is the one thing. You play with your four

friends and you share it with all these other people. And from the looks in their eyes, you can see that they're sharing it with you. They're right there, it's live, it's happening. It's not a video, it's not a movie, it's not a big screen. You're there in this one room together and you don't think about all these letters and adorations or what this night means to single people. The playing, the music, is the thing that saves you all. It might save some of them, it certainly saves me." Eddie sums up the faith of the true believer: "It gives us a reason to live." 



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◆

HAT PEOPLE TALK ABOUT

when they talk about Liz Phair is first and foremost guy stuff. How her scrappy, provocative debut *Exile in Guyville* (Matador) is an 18-song, track-by-track dissection of the Rolling Stones' 1972 *Exile on Main Street*, and how that semi-splashy career move, plus how completely great the record is, guarantees critics will love her. It's hard for them not to. As Sue Cummings has pointed out in a cover story on Phair in the *L.A. Weekly*, "she has made a meta-album: a feminist critique of a standard in the boomer rock canon, a record that reviews another." ◆ The other boycentric angle on *Exile* is that it marks the 26-year-old Phair's definitive break from "guyville," a nickname coined by fellow Chicagoans

BY KATHERINE DIECKMANN

Urge Overkill to describe the insular, male-dominated indie rock scene there. This "guyville" line has a disgruntled Phair responding to years of being frowned upon by a judgmental club

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM MADAY



World Radio History

of boy hipsters, some of whom she dated, and all of whom seem to have their doubts that a woman can “rock,” let alone not become an impure sell-out while doing so.

*Exile* does possess the blast force of a major unmuffling: Phair is breaking silence, even as she sings, with an indelible sneer, “I lock my door at night/I keep my mouth shut tight/I practice all my moves/I memorize their stupid rules.” She is fearless in confronting all manner of noxious guy behavior, from casual but wounding put-downs to bad bedroom manners to arrogance that needs taking down a peg.

What complicates Phair’s witty wrath is her ability to lob some sexual grenades back the boys’ way. “I want to be your blowjob queen,” she murmurs in the brilliantly lustful “Flower.” She’s also more than willing to concede female complicity, even sadness, in the gender wars. “And it’s true that I stole your lighter/And it’s also true that I lost the map,” she sings to a disenchanted (and disenchanting) lover in the splintered road movie of “Divorce Song,” “But when you said that I wasn’t worth talking to/I had to take your word on that.”

Of course Phair has invited the male comparisons with her *Exile* model. She studied that album with the zeal of a grad student, both to figure out some prime womanly retorts to the songs’ malecentric perspective and to learn how to structure a double LP. Yet you don’t really think of the Rolling Stones while listening to Liz Phair, save the stray riff or inversion. Instead, you’re seduced by the rawness and pith of her lyrics, the stripped-back production and Phair’s urgent yet deadpan vocals.

Phair has pried open a uniquely indelicate but accessible space for her sisters in indie music. More palatable but no less impassioned than Polly Jean Harvey, Phair tempers her ferocity with a quirky guitar-pop sound common to rising bands like the Juliana Hatfield Three, Bettie Serveert and Velocity Girl. But she’s also given to experimental dabblings with spooky piano and atonal vocals. She can tackle everything from crudely conveyed romantic resignation (“I can feel it in my bones/I’m gonna spend another year alone”/“It’s fuck and run”) to borderline hysteria (“I clean my mouth”/“Cause froth comes out”) and still stun you when she mutters the word “wife” against the breathily sung word “Gunshy,” tightening an oblique connection with a curling guitar line.

A first listen to *Exile in Guyville*—and it’s a record that keeps unfolding its pleasures—calls up the image of a cool, brainy chick with a major “don’t mess with me” tude. Yet the booklet art paints a different picture. There’s the black-and-white porn pose on the cover, showing Phair peering out from under a Stevie Nicksish black veil,

her mouth an inviting O-gape, necklaces dangling down her bare chest, a glimmer of nipple exposed. And there’s the Polaroid sequence inside, which includes stripper-like shots of a woman with bleached, slicked-down hair flaunting it in a tiny bikini and dark lipstick.

Adding to the confusion is that Phair is shockingly not what you expect. Small, slight and genial, she’s an ash-blond with startlingly blue eyes and a bow-shaped upper lip whose long dress and studded black clogs seem more a matter of comfort than a concession to style. Her background is upper-middle-class normal. Dad is a doctor who does AIDS research at Northwestern, Mom leads groups of gifted high school students in art appreciation classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. Of her parents (Phair was adopted at birth), she says, “I just like them better than I like almost anyone on the planet.” She rebelled slightly—“moderate degeneracy,” she calls it—and graduated from a

liberal arts college, Oberlin, where, she explains, “everything was so heavy and serious, it sort of destroyed laughter for me for a while.”

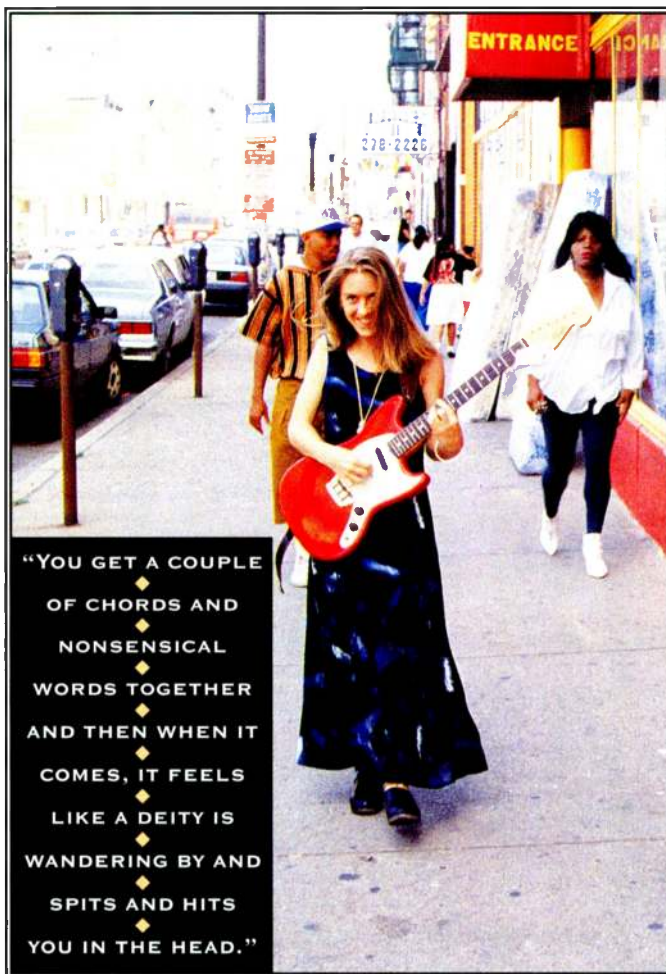
Phair’s the kind of person who asks you sincerely whether your backpack is too heavy to hold on one shoulder (“I’m trying to work out how to carry stuff”) and stops dead in her tracks during a walk down lower Broadway to peer into a shoestore and determine if some nubile type inside has breast implants. “Confirm something for me,” she demands. “Those breasts don’t belong on that body. Am I right?” In short, Phair is more girl than grrrrrl, and proud of it.

As for the sexed-up stance, she’s convinced it’s a good way to get her ideas over. Hard-line feminists might not dig it, but that’s too bad. “If they don’t realize that they need more people like me speaking the message, then they’re really out of touch,” she states. “There are many variations on womanhood, and some are tougher

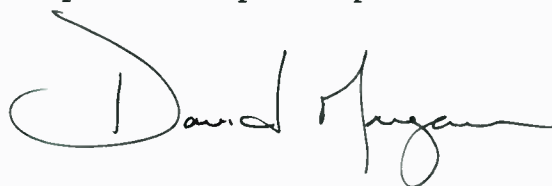
than others.” Should the “M” word be flashing wildly—well, bingo.

“If it wasn’t for Madonna I wouldn’t be sitting here,” says Phair, spearing a leaf in her endive-walnut salad. “Madonna is responsible in one way or another for my legitimacy,” she continues emphatically. “People know who the fuck they’re dealing with because she’s gone around offending everyone for so long that they understand there can be this commercialized embrace of sexuality that can be played with in many ways and get very big.”

Actually, it seems more likely Phair would identify with someone like Sonic Youth’s Kim Gordon. (The people she’s dying to meet are Susan Sarandon, Jodie Foster and Queen Latifah, of whom she says, “I’d bow down and suck her toes.”) “I used to idolize Kim Gordon,”



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Phair replies, "but it was clear early on that it wasn't a game to her, it was deadly serious, and she's very uncompromising. I will never be like Kim Gordon, though I have the utmost respect for her."

But Phair will never be like Madonna, either, a point made glaringly clear both in her video for "Never Said," in which she awkwardly thrusts herself at the camera sporting a variety of outfits, and at a show at New York's Irving Plaza where, clad in red jeans and a white T-shirt, she plays a painfully short, stiff set. Occasionally Phair musters a glimmer of anger or melancholy for the audience, but mostly she just winces and stares at the ceiling for deliverance. Refusing cries for "More!" by saying that she doesn't mean to be "a prick" but encores should come as surprises, Phair seems arrogant rather than petrified, which is more to the point. She's performed about 15 times in her life, and she hates it.

"It's deadly terrifying," she offers. "It's like in school, I could speak in class but if I had to read something aloud I nearly fell apart. It's that thing about being too aware of people's expectations, and the pressure's too great. Plus if you haven't been out playing a guitar and singing into a mike in front of a lot of people, it's not easy to stand up, play, sing, stay on the beat and emote."

There's something reassuring, even charming, about Phair's inability to put across a calculated image in an arena that thrives on them. Even if she perceives pop as the best way to work out her "strong, cerebral woman" agenda, Phair is too intelligent to buy into it with total conviction, which is one reason why her CD packaging for *Guyville* feels so strained. She may revere Madonna's manipulative smarts, but Phair's talents lie elsewhere. Her gift is for concocting lyrics with intelligence and directness, and for wrapping them in infectious melodies that haunt your sleep.

"I've always thought of myself as an artist, in the sense of a visual artist," offers Phair. "I come from that mentality, where this is a craft I'm learning, and this is how I want to tamper with it. I don't see myself within the rock world, band-wise, as in 'I am in a band.' I see myself constantly struggling to figure out ways to get back to my private life and write more songs." She lets out a giggle, something she does often. "I'm going to try and work in a ski resort this winter—y'know, cleaning up bedrooms?—so I can be somewhere where I might write some songs again."

There's resonance (if a touch of class confusion) in this notion of cleaning up bedrooms, since they are precisely where Phair's work began. When she was five or six, her mother would sing her to sleep at night, and she would hum along. Soon she was making up tunes at the piano. Phair spent a lot of time up in her room, imagining the adven-

tures she might have, but that conventional teen culture disallowed.

When she was in her early 20s, Phair recorded her first songs, again in her bedroom, making a tape on a four-track and a dare. She would accompany herself on guitar, endlessly overdub vocals and let songs sprawl for days. "Some were so indulgent you would vomit," she says. "I would tag on extra verses pointlessly, like 'Oh, now I'll flip it around to a male point of view,' then 'Now they move to Nebraska!'" She called the finished tapes *Girlysound*, and passed them on to a couple friends in bands, who copied them for other friends, until the tapes circulated into a state of nearly inaudible dubfrenzy. But the *Girlysound* work also reached Matador, who tracked Phair down and offered her a deal, turning an almost hermetically private practice into a public one.

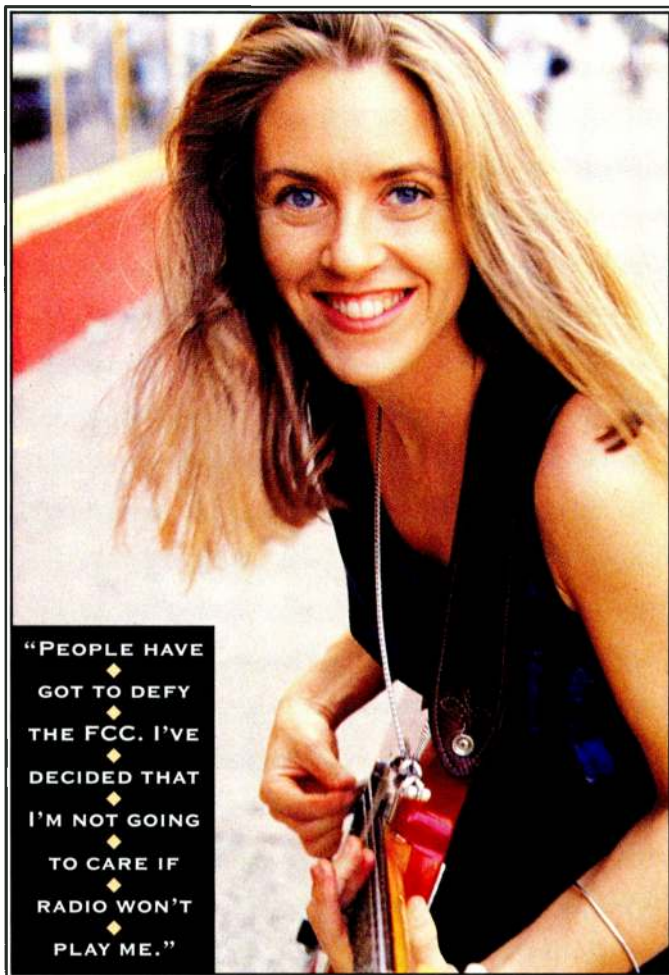
It is Phair's do-it-yourself aesthetic that makes her the musical equivalent of Sadie Benning, the 19-year-old filmmaker who's caused a sensa-

tion for the grainy, raw shorts she's made at home with a child's Pixelvision camera. Phair is unembarrassed by the homey model and talks about her work in noticeably domestic terms. She describes her early writing as "like a patchwork quilt, layering my voice and coupling songs together or putting a song inside a song." She also has some unique metaphors for creation: "You'll get a couple chord structures together and be humming nonsensical words trying to get at what's right, and then it comes, and it feels like a deity is wandering by and spits and hits you in the head. It's really like this little saliva ball. Ping! Ahhhh."

Phair's semi-divine inspiration is another way of saying that she's abandoned a diaristic female songwriter persona and taken up one of a conceptualist. No matter how much bad-girl expertise she may possess, and despite her allusions to winter depressions and bouts of hating herself for being a "bogus white suburban girl,"

the dark undertow on *Exile* isn't strictly autobiographical. Phair attributes her roster of aching, angry women's voices to "a big imagination and a lot of schooling."

That fictive impulse will drive her next album, which she's currently recording, again for Matador because "they leave me alone and let me do what I want," and again with ingenious *Guyville* producer Brad Wood (also the LP's drummer and bassist), because "he's the bullshit-ometer, he knows how to pull me back from my indulgence and to translate my mega idea into something that works." Phair describes her new record as "12 stories." She says the songs will be far less sparse instrumentally than the ones on *Guyville* because "production's a fun game, and it's boring not to try new things." She admits she's a little





A close-up, high-angle photograph of a guitar's bridge and strings. The bridge is white with a black pickguard. The strings are yellow and run across the bridge. The background is dark, making the white bridge and yellow strings stand out.

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nervous about it, because "I don't have a structure I'm aping anymore, and I was speaking out of a sense of loss and frustration on that record, whereas this one's going to be more upbeat." She raises a brow. "Who knows, it could suck."

Phair's main goal, however, is to make her next effort "ultra-catchy and unplayable." By that she means that nearly every number will be radio-friendly and contain an obscenity. Not that the songs don't organically generate them, she explains, but "people have got to defy the FCC. I've decided I'm not going to care if they won't play me until I have to." She pauses. "And when I have to, I don't know what decision I'm going to make."

These are fighting words for a woman intrigued by the proselytizing power of fame. Then again, part of what makes Phair fascinating is how uneasily she fits the norm of music-biz ambition. Only a couple of years ago she was just beginning to record her songs. The whole thing's been a little rushy and strange.

Phair says she's learning to play the media-buzz game, albeit slowly. Take when she went to England, and the British music press was so disarming that she found herself rambling on and on. "They just say, 'Great, well, let's chat, shall we?' and suddenly you're like, 'And then my mother told me when I was eight that if I don't grow up and be famous, she'll never love me.' I blabbed away. Then I came home and my voice was all raw."

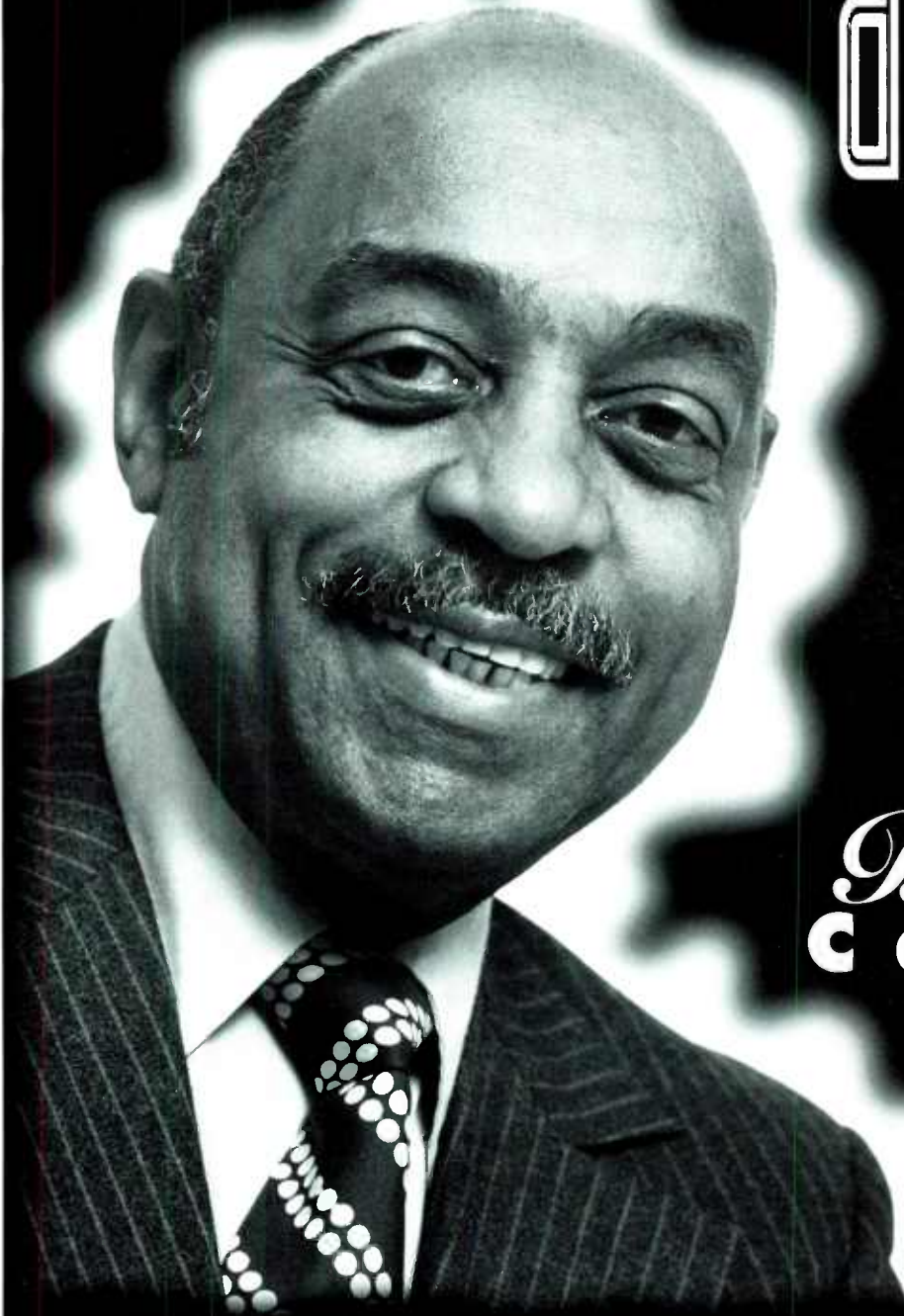
But did she give anything really embarrassing away? "No," Phair says quickly. "I mean, I make blunders like anyone would, but I've always been... well. You can't grow up as an introspective person and not be a little bit aware of how you come across." ❧

### PHAIR'S FARE

**L**IZ PHAIR plays a pre-CBS Fender Stratocaster (circa 1958), as well as a 1962 Fender Duo-Sonic and a 1963 Fender Musicmaster. The guitars plug into a Fender Twin and a Peavey Encore 110, augmented in the studio by a Hiwatt Custom 50 and a cabinet stuffed with 12s by JBL, Celestion, plus a "generic" cone for extra crunch. She sings through a Sennheiser 441 onstage, and in the studio a 1963 Sony C37P solid-state and a 1949 Telefunken U47. Liz also plays on "any piano I can get my hands on, which is another way of saying that I have no brand to plug for you."

*“I don't want to think about where the music industry would be without*

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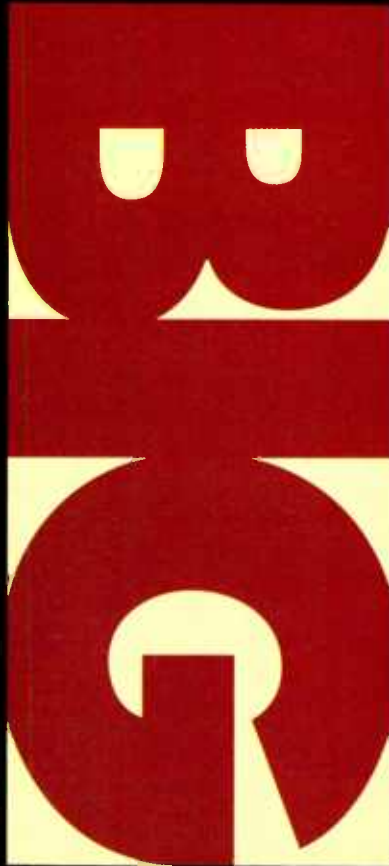
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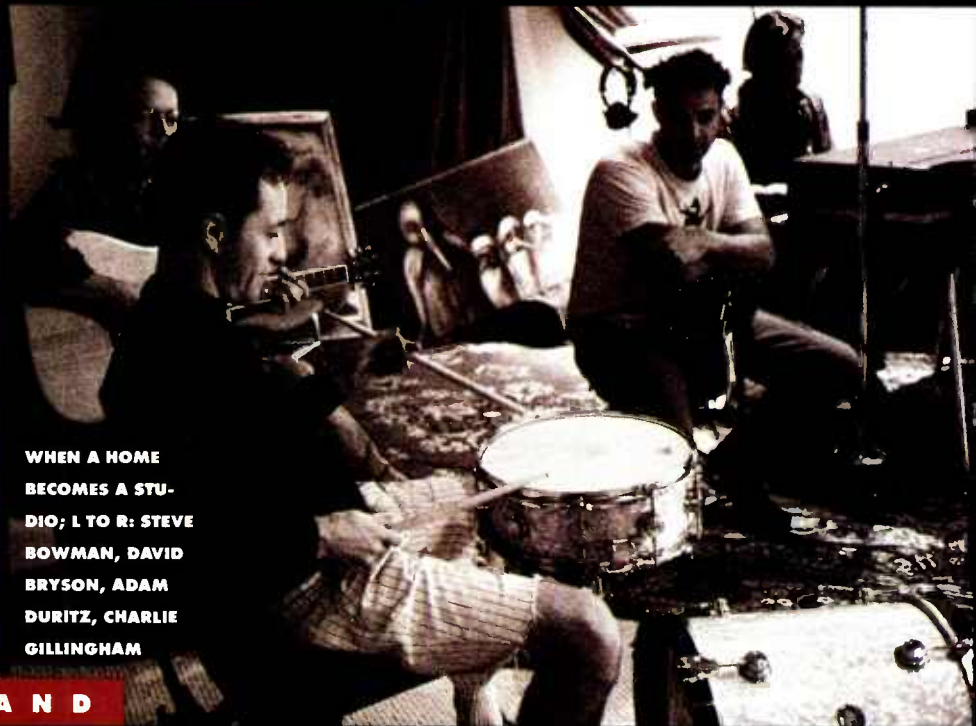
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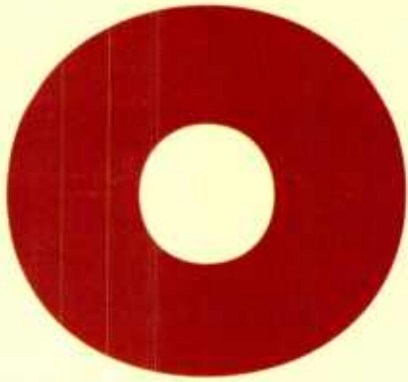
# ORANGE

COUNTING  
CROWS  
SOWS  
SEEDS OF  
ROMANCE  
IN A  
WINTER  
OF  
DISCONTENT



WHEN A HOME  
BECOMES A STU-  
DIO; L TO R: STEVE  
BOWMAN, DAVID  
BRYSON, ADAM  
DURITZ, CHARLIE  
GILLINGHAM

BY MARK ROWLAND



ON JANUARY 12, 1993, the eighth annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame dinner took place at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. The event, featuring the Hall of Fame “induction” of such icons of popular music as Cream, Van Morrison, the Doors, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Sly and the Family Stone, promised to provide an unusually memorable evening; with tickets priced from \$750 upwards, the thousand or so stars

and industry executives buzzing each other’s tables in an otherwise nondescript convention room could be expected to anticipate something more than boilerplate food and atmosphere. There were rumors—well-founded, it turned out—that a Cream reunion performance would take place that night; could the appearance of such famous recluses as Van Morrison or Sly Stone be any more far-fetched? About the only thing relatively certain was that Jim Morrison wouldn’t be showing up, though a few literally die-hard fans probably had their antennae tingling.

Two nights before the bash, Adam Duritz got a phone call at

his home in Berkeley. It looked like all the invited honorees would be attending, except one—Van Morrison. Robbie Robertson would be giving Van’s induction speech. After that, how would Duritz feel about getting together with some members of his band Counting Crows and, you know, play a Van Morrison song for the crowd?

Not the kind of invite usually extended to singer/songwriters working on their first record. Not the kind you turn down, either. So Duritz called up the Crows’ bass player, David Bryson, who was in L.A., and tracked down unofficial band member David Immerglück and told him to pack his man-

GUITAR PLAYER  
DAVID BRYSON

## PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL TIGHE

KEYBOARD PLAY-  
ER CHARLIE  
GILLINGHAM



dolin. Then they were on a late-night flight to L.A., and figuring out what song to play—they settled on “Caravan”—on the ride to their apartment. Learned it between one and two that morning, went to sleep, got up, ran it through again and drove over to rehearsal. A casual scene: Cream’s up there rehearsing “Sunshine of Your Love.”

When Counting Crows’ turn came around, the other members of the Doors were sitting at one table in front of the stage, yakking with Eddie Vedder. Off to the right stood Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce. On the other side, Robbie Robertson was hanging with Bruce Springsteen. The mike wasn’t working and the mandolin strings were breaking—“and I’m singing my ass off,” Duritz recalls with a laugh. “To me that *was* the show.”

And after that? “After that, the next night was like candy. To have those guys in the audience was like a bonus in a way, so by the time we got to the show I was jacked. The only thing was that my hat kept falling off my head. When I’m singing I get lost, and I didn’t know enough to just take it off. But I could see Bruce out there, going like this—he nods enthusiastically—“he’s diggin’ it... and we could see who else was out there. So it was fun! I was getting God right there.

“But the one thing I kept thinking,” Duritz confesses, “was that Van was going to ruin it. He was gonna show up and say, ‘Hey—shut up and get off the stage.’”

HUNDREDS OF BANDS make their recorded debuts each year on labels huge and small. Most arrive like bolts from the blue, and their effect dissipates as quickly. A fortunate few manage to spread their electricity around enough to lay the gridwork for album number two; every now and then, against all odds, a Nirvana or a Pearl Jam sets the forest on fire.

But Counting Crows’ first album on Geffen, *August and Everything After*, arrives with the rock ‘n’ roll version of a pedigree. Not that the band—which in addition to Duritz and Bryson includes Matt Malley on bass, Steve Bowman on drums and Charlie Gillingham on keyboards—are familiar names beyond their base camp in San Francisco.

It’s more a matter of who’s routing their praises: how semi-legendary Bay Area radio host Bonnie Simmons passed their demo tape on to T-Bone Burnett, who became their producer. How they managed to get squeezed in among the stars at last year’s Victoria Williams benefit in L.A., and then the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame dinner, at the behest of Robbie Robertson. How Adam Duritz remained the houseguest of Geffen’s A&R whiz Gary Gersh even after Gersh left



BASS PLAYER  
MATT MALLEY

Geffen to become president of rival Capitol. How Duritz and Maria McKee became friendly enough for her to lend a guest vocal to the record.

Why the big deal? “When you’re a producer you get all these tapes, and you very seldom hear a good song on them, let alone 15,” says T-Bone Burnett, offering one perspective. “And Adam is a fantastic singer. He’s got a lot of soul, and he puts himself as far over the cliff as possible.”

It is Duritz’s talents as a singer and songwriter, of course, that have most to do with eliciting this kind of attention. The music of Counting Crows brims with dark and saddening romance, with lovers and lost souls aching to connect but lacking the means to do it—a feeling brought across to a great degree by the passion and tenderness in Duritz’s voice. Without bringing any particular influence to mind, the Counting Crows’ “sound” suggests aspects of the Band, R.E.M., Fairport Convention and, yes, Van Morrison. It’s beautiful, graceful, soulful stuff—and decidedly melancholy.

But Duritz doesn’t seem that way at all. He has an engaging, friendly look, with dark alert eyes behind round spectacles overhung by a loose fan of dreadlocks. Hanging out on the deck of a bustling coffeehouse one crisp summer day in Berkeley, he’s darn near effervescent.

“Well, you know, I don’t usually write on days like today,” he smiles. “I’m kind of having this romantic thing going on right now, so I’m having a pretty good week.” He digs into a knapsack and unearths a small pile of CDs. “And I just got all these Otis [Redding] records. How bad can it be?”

How bad indeed? Here is a guy head over heels about his band, his album and his record company, not necessarily in that order. “It’s certainly a position of luxury,” he observes. “My friends have been in very different positions, where the record company didn’t care at all, where you’re spaghetti, and if you stick to the wall... But I’m very happy with the way the whole thing turned out.

“I think it’s a very moving album,” he says, sounding more earnest than immodest. “We had good songs and I knew we could play, but it’s another thing to be moving. I get very moved when I write, but before this I’d never actually come out of a recording session and liked it. It

**“WE HAD  
GOOD SONGS  
AND I KNEW  
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had always seemed clean and well-made, but essentially a gloss.”

Duritz radiates the friendly, literate surfaces of what his friend Maria McKee calls his “nice Jewish boy thing.” Below, the aggravated sense of dislocation so characteristic of his generation roils with surprising force. “I have a lot of confusion about how to live,” he says at one point. “I don’t derive a lot of satisfaction from things. I don’t take the rewards home with me. Considering how well our concerts are going lately, I should come home from them and feel great. Instead it feels strange—you go from being with 700 people to being with yourself in the dark.

“My songs are like that a lot; they’re about the inability to bridge the gap between people. Most of life is miscommunication and brutality. You don’t mean to, necessarily, but in your attempts to take care of yourself you brutalize other people, because you can’t understand them. You can’t give them what they need to get through a day. Or maybe you end up taking away what they needed, their self-respect or their confidence...

“Part of the problem in any given day for a lot of people, I think, is just feeling anything.”

Duritz, 26, was born in Baltimore but grew up in a variety of locales dictated by his doctor father’s changing residencies. At a boarding school in Connecticut he began writing poetry, spurring the muse with generous quantities of alcohol and pot. “My hero back then was Jim Morrison—a particularly poor choice of hero, I might add.” He took a few piano lessons—his father had once been a radio singer—but mostly focused his energy on listening. “I had thousands of records. I’ve always been fascinated by pop songwriting, singles, the Jackson 5. And I was into the Band, I was so blown away by their organic quality.

“But I don’t necessarily listen to music I love over and over. I learn things more from a philosophical level—my mind will be opened to doing something. Like when I heard the Band, I heard what you could do if you had a band that could instinctively hear each other and move with each other. Or with R.E.M., that you didn’t have to be the best musicians in the world; if you were all tied in to the same idea, that was all you needed and it could be very impressionistic. I couldn’t tell you what the hell Michael Stipe was singing about on those early songs, but it works! It was a real revelation, because it was so structured, but on a different level than what I had heard before. It opened my mind to how impressionistic songwriting could be.”

His own writing began to take shape at college in Berkeley, where a piano was conveniently lodged across from his dorm room. One day in chem class he got to thinking about his younger sister—“we were very close, and I don’t think there’s anything more difficult in this world than being a 16-year-old girl!”—and he got the vision for a song.

“I wondered, if I sat down at the piano, if I could figure it out. It took me three hours. I mean, it was really simple, like C/F/C, but when I figured it out, the walls came down. I knew I could write a song, which is a huge change from *not* knowing that. The floodgates opened, and I started writing all the time.”

Inevitably he gravitated toward the San Francisco band scene, and in the way of such things intertwined with the musicians who would eventually comprise Counting Crows. But it didn’t work out right away—“I wanted to be a leader, but at the time I just wasn’t good enough at it.” He left to bum around Europe. Following a broken romance there (chronicled on “Anna Begins,” one of the album’s wounded ballads), he was coaxed back to town to give it another shot, and this time the pieces—and the players—seemed to fall into place. “We just all got a lot better. It was a group of people we’d all wanted to play with. We put together the band one week and then all these record companies came pounding at our door.”

Didn’t that throw you a little bit? “It was weird,” he agrees, shaking his head with lingering disbelief. “But when you take the weight of hopelessness away—like, not only can I create, but there’s gonna be a forum for it!—stuff just started pouring out. It’s like you’ve been waiting to talk to someone for the longest time and then someone says, ‘You can talk to me.’ Next thing you know, you can’t shut me up.”

Gary Gersh, who signed the band to Geffen, introduced the musicians to label-mate Robbie Robertson, who’d liked their demos. He suggested that instead of a recording studio, the band find a house to live in while putting together their album, à la *Music from Big Pink*. Taking advantage of the glut of white elephant real estate in Los Angeles, Counting Crows took residence in one of the many overpriced homes available for lease and settled in. Besides, as T-Bone was wont to observe, “recording studios stink of despair.”

“It was a horrible house in a way,” Duritz laughs, “really stupidly built, lots of dumb mistakes. The air suction thing over the stove was in the middle of the kitchen and the edges came out



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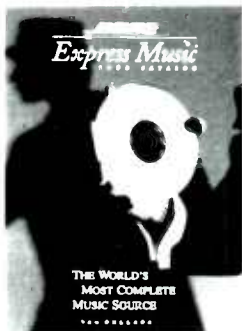
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too far—you'd walk by and gash your fore-  
head. Stuff like that. But it became our place  
to live and make our songs, and the music  
came to life."

Down-home didn't mean casual. Many of  
the songs on *August and Everything After*  
were painstakingly rearranged from their orig-  
inal forms. "Omaha" went from pop-electric  
to folk-acoustic, with Steve Bowman turning a  
small bass drum on its side and using it as a  
crash cymbal, and stroking brushes on a frying  
pan for a snare. Meanwhile, Gillingham found  
himself playing Richard Thompson-style licks  
on an accordion to counterpoint Duritz's har-  
monica—"an instrument I can't play," Duritz  
points out. "I was reading an article where  
Michael Stipe said that on every R.E.M. record  
they'd pick a new instrument and just go at it. I  
thought, why not? I'm not sure any of that is  
left on the record," he adds. "But that song  
went through a drastic change."

As did others. "Perfect Blue Buildings"  
devolved from an anthemic rocker to a spare,  
meditative lullaby. "Time and Time Again"  
grew out of a jam while waiting for one of the  
band members to show [cont'd on page 95]

### CROW MAGNUM

**D**AVE BRYSON plays a '68 Gibson ES  
335, a '69 Les Paul goldtop with P90s  
and a '69 Fender Tele through a '92  
Matchless DC30 amp. He also has a '93  
Martin acoustic. Effects include a  
ProCo Rat distortion, an MXR limiter and a  
Boss analog delay. He prefers D'Addario  
strings. DAN VICKERY plays a '90 Fender Tele-  
caster and a '75 Les Paul Standard through a  
DOD preamp and a Fender '65 Vibrolux black-  
face. He also employs an MXR Distortion Plus.

**MATT MALLEY** gets down on a '92 Music  
Man fretless StingRay bass and a '60s Hofner  
hollowbody—full size, not a Beatles bass—  
which he used on most of the record. He uses  
an SWR900.

**STEVE BOWMAN** plays on a DW kit, with a  
22" bass, 8", 10", 12" and 14" toms, a 4x13  
and 5x13 piccolo and a Ludwig 6 1/2" snare.  
Cymbals are mostly Zildjian, along with a Sabi-  
an fusion hi-hat, Vic Firth SD2 Bolero sticks  
and Gibraltar throne. And of course, the occa-  
sional frying pan.

**CHARLIE GILLINGHAM** plays a Hammond D3  
organ (through a Leslie) and a Yamaha 88-key  
digital piano. ADAM DURITZ used AKG C12  
microphones to record and a Shure Beta 58 on  
the road.



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# BRIAN ENO

**I**HATE PHOTOGRAPHY!" Brian Eno fumes. "It's a total intrusion. It's all based on some 19th-century idea about the romance of the artist's personality. *Artists are fucking tedious people, and people should realize that sooner rather than later!*" ♪ Eno is having something of a tantrum, albeit a quiet one—perhaps the only kind one might expect from one of rock 'n' roll's great thinkers. In a career that spans textbook rock stardom as a founding member of Roxy Music, production work for some of the most respected names in the business (U2, Talking Heads, Bowie, John Cale) and a string of solo records that recontext-

tualize the basic materials of pop, Eno is often identified with aloof abstraction, with arcane concepts and "oblique strategies." But as much as anything, it's sober practicality that characterizes his approach to production, tempered by an extraordinary enthusiasm for aural adventure. Eno is a master of creative problem-solving, finding ways to satisfy material constraints of budget, schedule and instrumentation while introducing creative vectors that tend to explode the artistic scope of the project at hand.

Once dismissed by a prominent critic with the aphorism, "sometimes still waters don't run so deep," Eno is, at the moment, proving himself neither still nor remotely shallow. He is simply annoyed. The crux of the matter is that he loathes photo shoots. They feed the music industry's obsession with personality and lifestyle, obscuring the truly interesting aspects of artistry: the ebb

BY TED GREENWALD

and flow of ideas, processes, sensual experiences. And, one suspects, they bog down an otherwise productive day: While he has little use for photographs, Eno keeps recordings of every interview he gives. They make handy fodder for a book he's been writing.

Having proposed a compromise that would have allowed him to avoid sitting for the camera—the photographer, he suggested, could snap away while the interview is in progress—he has just learned that the shoot will happen separately, in another suite in his posh lower-Manhattan hotel.

“Why is everyone so bad at this sort of thing?” Eno sounds genuinely pained. “It’s all so simple. I said I didn’t want photographs as a separate thing. Now they’re going to be—but they aren’t, because I shall leave soon”—the interview/photo shoot is sandwiched between breakfast and a recording session with Laurie Anderson—“so there won’t be any photos, unless he does them soon.”

It’s difficult to square this disdain for photography—for rock ‘n’ roll iconography—with the fact that Eno is a visual artist of some distinc-

This fascination with the unmediated creative event can be heard in his recent production work for erstwhile Brit-pop dandies James. “Their previous album *Seven* was a bit of a mess,” Eno observes. “It took seven months to make, and it was really overcooked. There was no freshness to it.” Like U2 during the making of *Achtung Baby* and *Zooropa* and, more recently, Canadian chanteuse Jane Siberry during *When I Was a Boy*, James invited Eno to throw a spanner in the works.

The producer’s solution was to overload the band, to have them make “a very long album in a very short time” so that they would become absorbed in the big picture rather than obsessed with the details. “I got them to accept six weeks as the recording period for what I said should be 15 to 18 songs,” he recalls. “Then, as soon as I realized they might actually be able to do it, I thought I’d better up the ante a little bit. So I suggested making two albums.”

Not a two-record set, not a pair of complementary releases à la Springsteen and Guns N’ Roses, but two records of entirely different conception, designed to sound as though they were created by entirely different bands. Record One is *Laid*, a dreamy collection of neo-folk-rock meditations. Record Two, currently untitled and scheduled for release later in the year, is a spontaneous invention, a suite of in-the-raw improvisations (right down to the lyrics), their tracks processed by Eno’s gizmos in a series of one-take mixes.

The producer refers to the latter record as “the jungle version—the tropics, you know, where there’s such a lot of variety and all of these little life possibilities being tried out. By the time it gets to the northern hemisphere, it’s settled into a few successful modes. So they’re sort of northern hemisphere and tropics, the two records.

“As far as I was concerned,” he continues, “the culmination was that the two records would come out together, to show the very exciting possibility that a band can encompass both of these directions at once. I was so excited about this idea. I thought it would be a real coup for James because they would have gotten so much press.

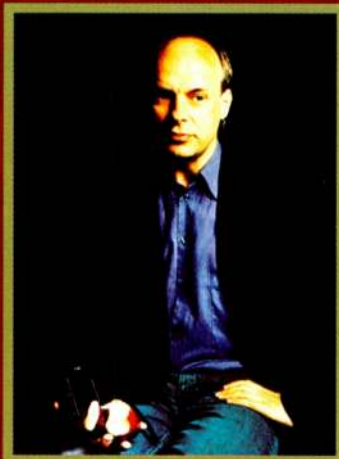
And it would have been so controversial. Some people would have loved one album and despised the other.” Alas, the idea proved a bit much for James’ label, Polydor. “I argued and argued for this,” he laments. “But record companies are so incredibly conservative about this kind of thing. Such stupid conservatism.

“Somebody’s going to do it one day,” Eno adds with a certainty most people reserve for discussions of politics or religion. “And then all the record companies are going to be doing it—you watch. For a year everyone will be bringing out two albums at once, and it will become incredibly brave to bring out just one!”

But for the time being, entrusting Eno with a prize artist must be regarded as an act of bravery for any self-respecting record company. Although his creative indulgences strike paydirt at least as often as not—witness U2’s *The Joshua Tree*—his mission is to prod artists into taking risks, an attitude that rarely sits well with record company executives.

“I always make sure to meet with the record company at the beginning of a project,” he explains, “and I suppose it frightens them a bit because I always say, ‘Look, it’s about time these people changed direction. They’ve got to do something different. There’s no use in them carrying on doing what they’ve been doing.’ And, of course, people are always a bit unnerved by that because the past, even if it hasn’t been

*“Record companies are so incredibly conservative: The process stamps out imaginative moves.”*



tion. His installations, which he refers to as “quiet clubs,” have been shown in 15 countries during the past decade, and a few years back he undertook a tour of lectures that dissected Marcel Duchamp’s infamous appropriated urinal, “Fountain.” In fact, the visual arts do much to inform his understanding of music, especially given his legendary self-description as a “nonmusician.”

“If you go into an art gallery and look at the work of any 20 contemporary painters,” he points out, “you’ll see 20 different ways of dealing with surface. Some will be ultra-glossy, sleek, flawless, with no sense of brush or human touch; some will be extremely rough, with tin cans and cigarette ends stuck on in great globs of glue. The range that visual artists work with is much greater than that of musical people.

“But I believe this will all change very soon. For instance, we’re now used to seeing, on television news, film shot with home video cameras. Not only are we used to it, but we trust those images more than the ones that are more glossy—they seem more like reality, whereas the other did in the past. I believe this will also happen in music. And I think it is happening. Certainly the movement called ‘grunge’ represents a change. It’s a shift toward confidence in things that apparently haven’t been through the studio filter, the technical mill, to turn them into something tamer.”



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that successful, is at least reliable. But I don't have an enmity with labels or anything like that. I just think that the process stamps out imaginative moves, because nobody really wants to take responsibility for a failure."

As it happens, that's something Eno is perfectly willing to do, and do in a big way: "If you're going to fail," he insists, "it's best to fail very, very badly."

"I'll tell you why: Because a real failure cleans the slate. You're fresh. You can start again. Actually, that was the way James felt after *Seven*, and the way U2 felt after *Rattle*

*& Hum*. This is often the point when people want to work with me.

"I often think that my job as a producer is to persuade people to put their confidence in new places. Everyone else—the record label, the public—is going to encourage them to put their confidence in old places."

When it comes to going new places, one major route is Eno's stock-in-trade, familiar to anyone who reads the small print on his album jackets: "treatments." Treatments is Enospeak for processing recorded tracks in any number of ways, from standard digital

effects to complex patches involving analog synthesizers and tape loops to piping sounds through plastic hoses in order to take advantage of their resonant properties.

Lately, one of his favorite vehicles is the Eventide H3000-SE UltraHarmonizer. "One of the things I've been doing with that is take one instrument, preferably a percussive instrument of some kind," he explains, "and send it to a series of very short tuned delay lines, so that I can change it into a pitched instrument. Then I can control the pitch, so I can introduce a sort of chord sequence via the kick drum, or something like that."

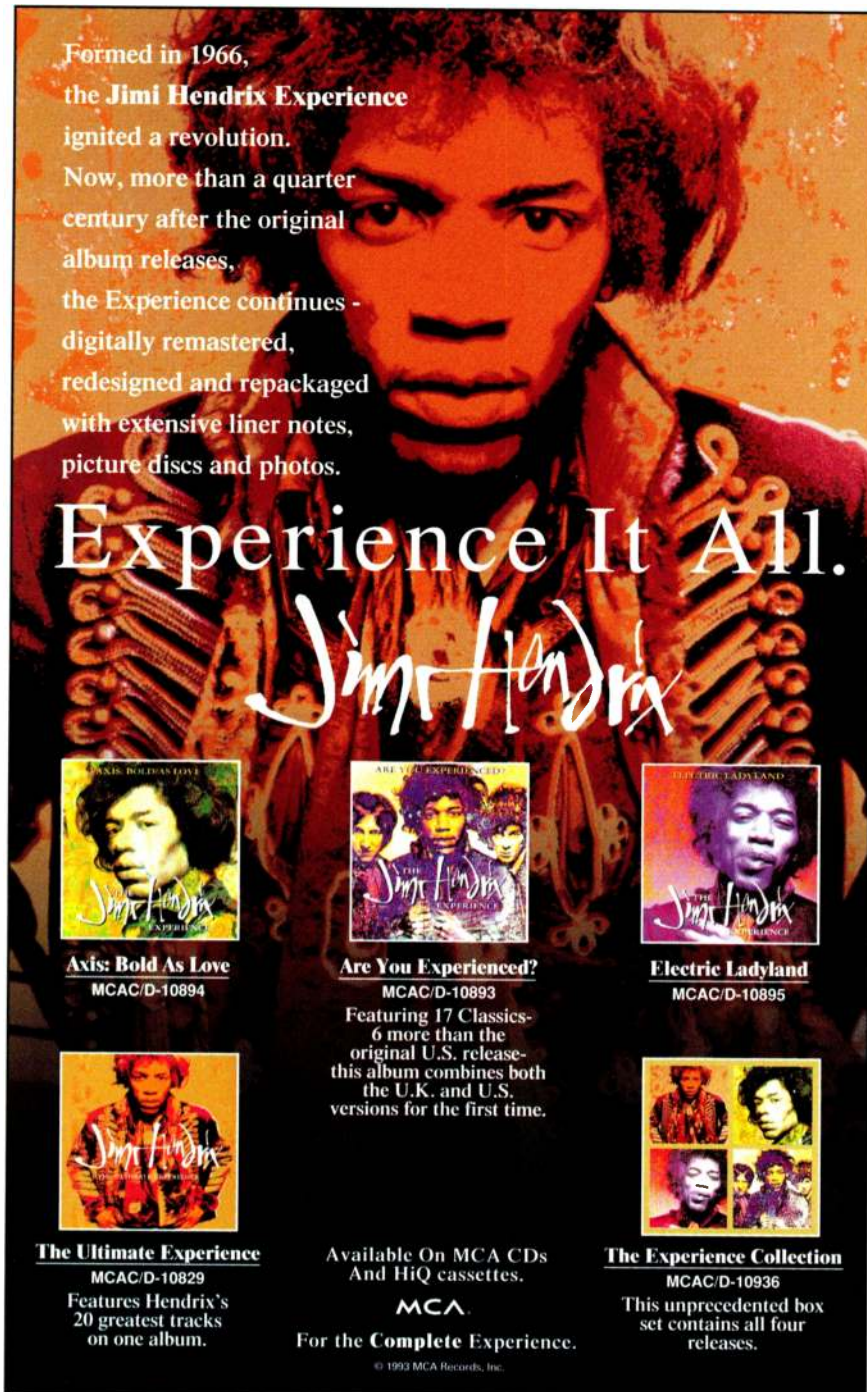
Eno is a wellspring of similarly convoluted notions, most of them developed during solo projects such as 1992's *Nerve Net*, which he regards as "R and D" for production gigs. What isn't generally recognized is the extent to which his production techniques depend on psychology and astute observation of the creative process, rather than high tech.

"I often take extreme positions in the studio," he says. "I try to push opinions as far as I can, even to the point of saying, 'This is potentially the best piece of music I've ever heard in my life! And here, next to it, is possibly the worst.' It gets people's blood going, gets them fighting to defend something. I want to find out what they really want from it, what they like about it, what they believe is special about it. If you can figure that out, you might be able to take that aspect and get rid of all the baggage that's coming along with it."

There's a knock at the door. Eno stops in mid-sentence as an assistant pokes his head in to remind us of the impending photo shoot. This occasions more grumbling, but Eno is a good sport. One gets the impression that he had hoped the interview would slip into overtime, leaving the hapless photographer empty-handed.

Upstairs, he poses graciously and does his best to continue the conversation, taking time out occasionally to inform all concerned that he's due at a session momentarily. Considering the studio clock will soon be ticking whether he's present or not, Eno is remarkably calm.

Perhaps he's become accustomed to needing to be in two places at once. "I've started to enjoy the idea of having two studios going at once," he says. "We do it always now with U2. That way, somebody can get left alone to focus on something without having to worry about other people waiting, and the others don't sit around getting bored." Another benefit is the opportunity to step into a new



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piece of music after hours of working on the same piece. "It's like a whole new world," he marvels. "You can hear all sorts of things that are obvious after you've been listening intensively to something else. 'Oh, that bass is the wrong part. It's obvious!'"

"Using more than one studio also means that people walk into something in lots of different moods," he continues. "They don't all stay on the same song all day and get in the same mood. You get people walking in saying, 'God! You should hear such-and-such! It sounds fantastic!'"

But the most common (and the most insidious) challenge arises when it's time to record the lead vocal—for which the words invariably don't yet exist. "That's always the bottleneck," he states. "Everyone I know has this problem: Bryan Ferry, U2, Dan Lanois, James, Peter Gabriel—now there's a lyrics bottleneck if ever there was one. When it comes to the lyrics, suddenly it's *bonk!* Everything stops."

The sudden loss of momentum prompts everyone to busy themselves with pointless overdubs while the words are gestating. "It's all down to the singer, so nobody else can really do anything," Eno observes. "The studio is booked. You feel a fool just sitting there doing nothing, so you start dicking around with the material. And, you know, even the best songs get tiring after a time. So you start putting on a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and it gets what I call 'Hollywoodized.' It gets this cosmetic sheen to it, with all these little bits and pieces that really don't make any difference."


The key to uncorking the lyrics bottleneck, he says, is to "separate lyrics from vocals. They are not the same thing. There are all sorts of things you can do with voices other than tell stories. And, in fact, the singers who are interesting are not the ones who tell interesting stories. They're the ones who articulate interestingly."

"What's the difference between one blues singer and another?" he poses. "Articulation and timbre. Blues, basically, is 25 million people singing the same song. What one is hearing is not the lyrics—they're trivial except for a few flashes here and there. It's timbre, the actual way of developing sound as a statement, and articulation, the way one person jumps between perfect fourths and another does Arabic undulations and so on. By focusing on those issues and putting the lyrics in the back seat, you find that they follow along. You stop thinking of the lyrics as things that have got to look good on a piece of paper."


"Pardon me, but I have *musicians waiting*," he interjects sharply for the benefit of the photographer, who is snapping his final frames.

The photo session behind us, we're in the back of a taxi cab barreling up Broadway. "I try to create a climate where people feel happy to change their minds, and not embarrassed that they've defended something for two weeks and now they're going to drop it." Eno enunciates for the benefit of my tape recorder, leaning forward so that the sound of the engine doesn't drown out his voice. "Nonetheless, I want to make decisions as

early as possible, because the biggest problem with recording is dealing with the huge number of options. That's why records take so long. Quite early on, I want to cut a lot of those possibilities out so I won't be needing to fix it in the mix."

Eno looks up. "Is this Canal Street? I'll get out here." The cab pulls over as he slides across the seat and out the door. Before closing it, he offers a vague nod. Then he's off, with hardly a goodbye or a backward glance, dodging across the crowded Manhattan street on his way to another day's work. 

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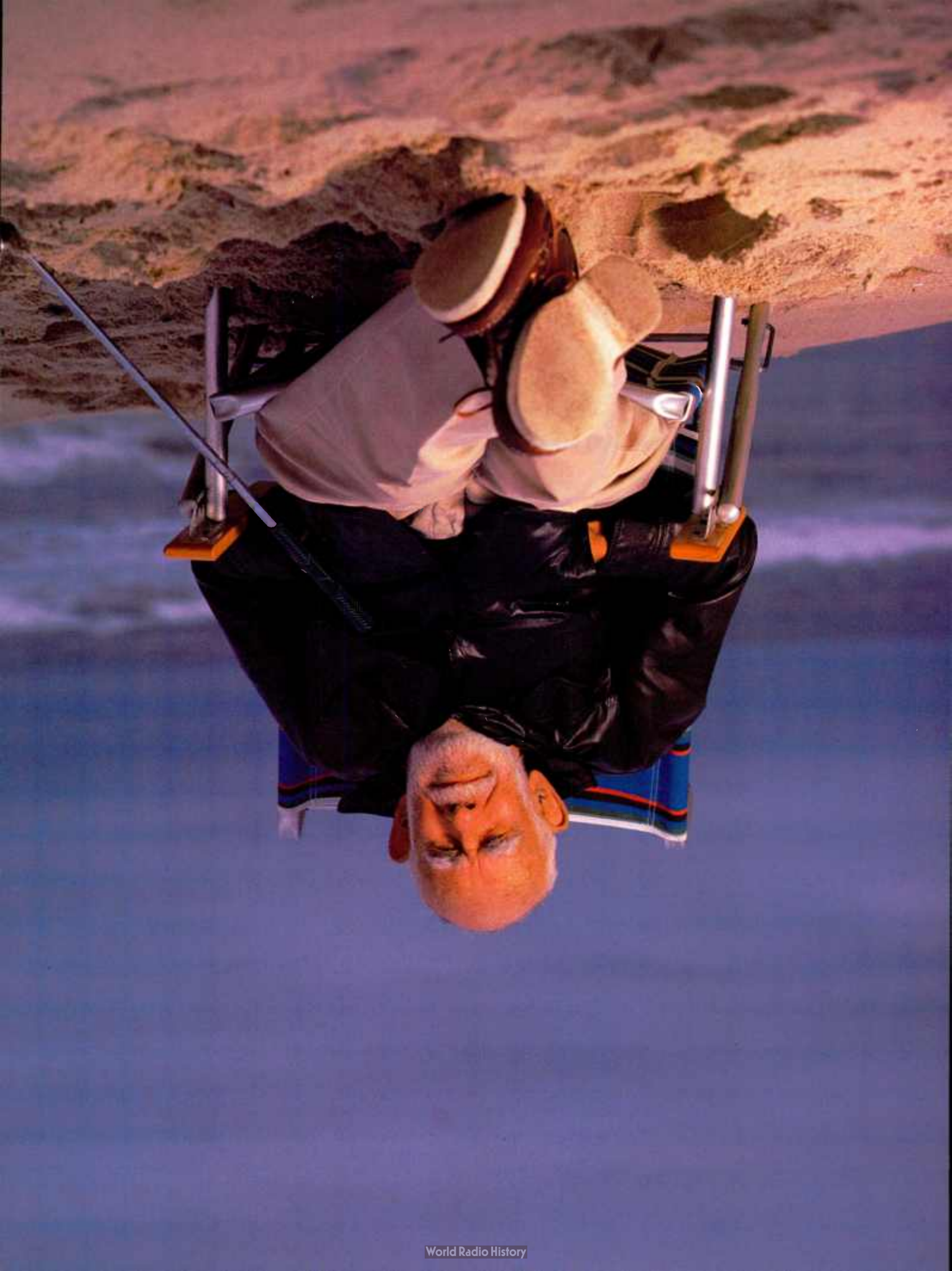
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# JERRY WEXLER

**T**OE TURNER. Ray Charles. Solomon Burke. Wilson Pickett. Sam & Dave. Aretha Franklin. In the 1950s and '60s, Atlantic Records was compiling the dictionary of soul. And producer and label president Jerry Wexler was playing Noah Webster. A former *Billboard* reporter credited with coining the phrase "rhythm and blues," Wexler had a passion for black music that predated his move to Atlantic in the early '50s as president and partner. Over the next three decades, he sat in the producer's chair as a generation of singers and musicians married gospel with R&B to give birth to a new form of black American music. And while Wexler is frank in assessing his contribution to the recordings of Ray Charles ("nothing"), he went about

the business of producing with a cocksure diligence, overseeing arrangements, uncovering material and matching Atlantic's vocalists with a string of incomparable rhythm sections in New York, Memphis, Muscle Shoals and Miami.

As president of Atlantic, Wexler was more than a producer. Fiercely protective of his company, he was the yin to partner Ahmet Ertegun's yang: caustic and fiery, where Atlantic's founder was debonair and diplomatic. His disdain for rock musicians ("rock-oids") is legend, as was his ability to make a tough deal look like a gift. But there was an undeniable magic at Atlantic: When Wexler joined, it was a small independent making black records for black listeners. Wexler, his partners and the coming rock & soul revolution conspired to transform it into one of the world's great record companies.

Yet there is a tragic and cautionary note to Wexler's memoirs, *Rhythm and the Blues: A Life in American Music*. A raging bull, Wexler was just as likely to gore himself as an enemy. And if Wexler succeeded

**BY FRED GOODMAN**

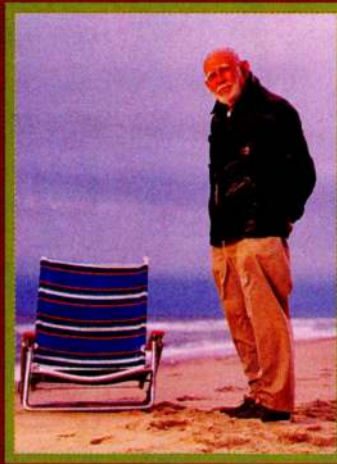
in business because he kept his eye on the ball, he frequently failed the people he loved for the same reason.

Now in his 70s, Jerry Wexler is still making records; his most recent is Etta James' *The Right Time*. And like any self-respecting record man, Wexler considers his last release to be his best. He and his wife, playwright and novelist Jean Arnold, live on a quiet key on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Wexler's study is devoid of testimonials: There are no gold records, Grammys or industrial charity awards to be found here. Instead, there is music: Stacks of tapes and CDs line the bookshelves and the closets. It is the ideal den for a lion in winter.

**MUSICIAN:** *As you describe it, you simply observed the first few sessions on which you were the producer. Obviously you gained confidence and sharpened your tools over time. But your approach hasn't changed much.*

**WEXLER:** I can only do what I can—I mean, I still can't read a lead-sheet. I can't go out there or play a lick on the guitar or piano. But I can dance the groove and sing the phrases.

*"Rock 'n' rollers, until they evolve, have to be taught to play their fucking instruments. You disagree?"*



My strength? Knowing when the groove is there and not getting past it. Sometimes out of inertia, you're at Take 27 and you wonder where everything went. You have to know when it's a good take. And I'm very strong with material and helping to get the best out of the singer.

**MUSICIAN:** *Do you still take an active role in selecting material?*

**WEXLER:** Oh, absolutely. I probably sent Etta James 60, 70 songs. Fed Exes were flying. We'd be on the phone discussing the songs, making changes. I submit, and then she designates.

**MUSICIAN:** *That classic A&R role isn't done much anymore: The pre-rock A&R man found the artist, chose the material, picked the musicians and supervised production. What was the result of the splitting of these functions? Most A&R men don't make records today.*

**WEXLER:** Most A&R men today are monitors of a project. Are they on time? Within budget? In the studio? Are people showing up on time? And I'm also given to understand that these A&R men—so-called—also sometimes can suggest material. But hey, if it works.... Some kid may have a terrific nose for material and be lame in the studio. But if he's able to get off the dime, that's contributory. That's the way it's gone.

When I did this record with Etta, there were no A&R men tracking the thing. I always welcomed people who brought in material. If a kid brought in the pizza and said, "Hey Mr. Wexler, you oughta cut this

B-side that Jimmy Scott did in 1953," I was wide open.

**MUSICIAN:** *Does every artist need something different from a producer?*

**WEXLER:** Some artists need nothing. Ray Charles, just nothing. With Aretha, maybe we could have some input in terms of the groove, sonority and so on, but I never told her anything about her singing.

**MUSICIAN:** *What about arrangements? It's hard to imagine "Chain of Fools" done any other way because it's so strong—yet the arrangement has some unique features.*

**WEXLER:** I think I had Joe South playing the guitar. And we tuned down—kind of like Pops Staples—and turned up the vibrato. That was the secret of that record; that was the hook. Don Covay was a very happy and surprised songwriter, because he'd given it to me for the Sweet Inspirations and I gave it to Aretha.

**MUSICIAN:** *How would you compare working with the musicians at Muscle Shoals or Stax or New York?*

**WEXLER:** By the time I had developed Muscle Shoals, and to some extent, Memphis as a place to record, I was a changed person. Somewhere in the middle '60s, I had an epiphany and learned what a phonograph record was. You have a vision and confidence in putting it together. Until then, it was pretty much haphazard and hope.

**MUSICIAN:** *What did a session cost when you first started working at a place like Cosmo's in New Orleans? Or even in New York?*

**WEXLER:** You'd have to go back to when scale was \$30 a session and you were allowed to do four sides. At Muscle Shoals, I worked so cheap. Same with Stax. First, when I came south, people like Huey Meaux, Shelby Singleton, Jim Stewart and John R the disk jockey were giving people \$5 for an afternoon's work and if it got sold to a major, maybe they'd get a taste more of scale. So when I came to Muscle Shoals and instantly started paying scale, it was like, "Man, you tore my playhouse down." Here I am paying scale. But it was scale with elasticity—they gave me a lot of overtime I didn't have to pay for. But they got the

basic scale, which was incredible—guys were cutting a record and picking up \$100, where before it had been \$10.

**MUSICIAN:** *What did drive you to leave New York?*

**WEXLER:** Entropy. We were using arrangements in those days; we were not doing ad-lib sessions. So we were at the mercy of an arranger—and, I mean, we had great arrangers like Jesse Stone and Howard Biggs and Ray Ellis. But if you needed to change something, it was very awkward. A record like Solomon Burke's "Just Out of Reach"—that was all arranged. Ray Ellis was the arranger. Jesse Stone's "Shake Rattle and Roll"—arranged. People would say, "Oh man! I know you did this in one bite with no overdub!" Wrong. It's called the art of verisimilitude. Making it look natural while doing it with artifice. But dry-rot set in. The arrangers were out of ideas, the players were out of licks. Our ears had become dull and we were making the same record. And you'd go into a session with a dread. *We're going to come up with another turd; another labored piece of shit.* So I stopped recording there for a while.

**MUSICIAN:** *What was the Atlantic Sound?*

**WEXLER:** That's a hard one. I don't know how other people make records, because producers don't go to other producers' sessions. Of course, I have been to *some*, and I've been disappointed to see how some "legendary" people work. [*chuckles*] See, there's two ways: There's the

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inductive building of something, and then there's the deductive: "I don't know what's wrong with this but play it again and give me something different." That can work, but I'm a little contemptuous of it, because all you're doing is waiting for the right streetcar to come along. "I don't like that take." And the musicians will say, "Well, what do you want?" "I don't know—try something else." It's not that I've never been reduced to that...sometimes you get painted into a corner and you just lose it.

One thing that we *were* fanatical about was intonation. We would not accept out-of-tune records. All those a cappella records that are legends hurt your fucking ear. Garbage! Compare early Atlantic records with other records at the time—those records are in tune.

**MUSICIAN:** *But what makes a great record? Clearly it's not always a matter of technical aspects or even the ability to play the tune correctly. On "When a Man Loves a Woman" the horns are out of tune.*

**WEXLER:** I'll tell you something which people have never discussed: What is the main thing about a record? Sonority. It means, "How does this sound impact on your ear?" Good sonority gets your attention and nails you before the groove, before the lyric. In fact, it's gone overboard today with the post-industrial stuff. God, I crack some records I just can't fucking believe.

**MUSICIAN:** *What's your reaction to hearing Michael Bolton rework "When a Man Loves a Woman" or "Dock of the Bay"?*

**WEXLER:** His success may be correlated with the inanity of middle-American taste, but that's not his fault. Man, he broke down the doors and he ran and schlepped and did and made. These records are not to my taste, but the guy made it. The fact that he's a heartthrob and they throw damp

panties on the stage, that's extra. But a guy who slaves like that, I have grudging admiration for. He puts money in people's pockets who need it.

**MUSICIAN:** *You were a partner or mentor for producers like Tom Dowd or Barry Beckett or Jon Landau. Do you hear yourself in anyone else's work?*

**WEXLER:** No, because I have no style.

**MUSICIAN:** *Yet you focus a great deal of attention on drums and vocals.*

**WEXLER:** Drums and bass—that was everything. But that's not a style. It's just a requirement. I don't think it's detectable. Although I always hope that the sound will be clean, deep and have a lot of funk in it. I've been known to start a session by spending 12 hours tuning drums. That's one reason why I liked to be in a set studio where the drums can already be tuned and ready and where I understood the monitors. On this session with Etta James, Steve Ferrone has a drum technician who travels with him. That's expensive, but he and Roger Hawkins and the engineer set up the drums before the session. And when I walked in it was *bang!*—"Let's play music."

**MUSICIAN:** *Were you a partner in Capricorn?*

**WEXLER:** Atlantic was a partner in Capricorn. I never had a personal interest. After we sold Atlantic, I decided I could run the thing from Florida, which was a mistake. And I had a beautiful 46-foot boat courtesy of [Warner chairman] Steve Ross because the bloom was on the rose; the merger was still in its honeymoon and they didn't know how dispensable we were. So Phil Walden and I are fishing for marlin. Phil says, "Could you front me for a studio in Macon?" I said, "I'll do better than that—I'll front you for a label." Because I believed in Phil. I bought Duane Allman's contract from Rick Hall—who owned

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Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, where Duane was a sessionman—for \$15,000, and Rick thought the heavens had opened up.

**MUSICIAN:** *Walden told me Duane and Gregg Allman were both under contract to United Artists Records as members of Hourglass. It cost him \$3000 apiece to buy them out.*

**WEXLER:** I got the Average White Band for \$10,000 including the tape for the first record—but we had to recut it. How about the Woodstock soundtrack recording rights for \$7000?

See, I remember when the majors, in their corporate blockheadedness also wouldn't pay more than five percent. Hey man, I'd bring in people and give them a label and 10 percent—it was a cinch. And I loved it. 'Cause it was fair play.

**MUSICIAN:** *You worked with very few rock bands—Dire Straits and Santana. But you probably would have been an excellent producer for J. Geils or the Rascals, young bands with a feel for the roots.*

**WEXLER:** Maybe. I think the best producer of a rock band is a musician-type who can go in and take the band's guitarist and put his fingers on the instrument and say, "This is the chord."

**MUSICIAN:** *Because you have no faith in their ability to do it themselves.*

**WEXLER:** Of course. Because they're rock 'n' rollers. And rock 'n' rollers, until they become highly evolved and sophisticated, have to be taught how to play their fucking instruments. You disagree?

**MUSICIAN:** *So why did you sign the MC5, whose musicianship had been questioned by critics?*

**WEXLER:** Because we could sell records! I mean, we felt at a disadvantage. The first record I co-produced with Barry Beckett was Sanford

& Townsend, and we made a hit ["Smoke from a Distant Fire"]. But Barry is the one who got the guitar sounds right. And the same with Dire Straits and Santana. Beckett is a whiz at guitar sounds.


**MUSICIAN:** *Phil Carson, who ran Atlantic's London office, said Bill Bruford was dying to play on an Atlantic R&B session—he was willing to pay his own way to the date, regardless of who the artist was. Yes was making a lot of money for Atlantic, yet as the story is told, your answer was "Tell him to fuck off. I've got Bernard Purdie."*

**WEXLER:** That's probably correct.

**MUSICIAN:** *You clearly delineate between love and money.*

**WEXLER:** It's what I call Column A and Column B. When I started at Atlantic, there was no Column B. Anything we wanted to record, it was, "Hey, this sounds good—maybe somebody else will like it." But when it started to split off into rock, there's "Hey, this sounds good, I like it" and there's this over here: "I don't get it but it's going to sell a lot."

**MUSICIAN:** *You're a Northerner, but you've really made your life in the culture of the South. What draws you to it?*

**WEXLER:** Let's say I began as a Jew-boy from Washington Heights with a tropism for black jazz. Take it from there; the closer to the bone you get, the more relevant it is, the more of a pull it has. And you learn, in spite of the standard perception of the South, the racism and so on, the obverse of that is the tremendous closeness of whites and blacks, that Northern people don't begin to apprehend. The speech—the music of speech of the South, the compressed poetry of the South—and the simplicity of daily existence: What you see is what you get. The social artifice, at the level we're talking about, doesn't come into play. 

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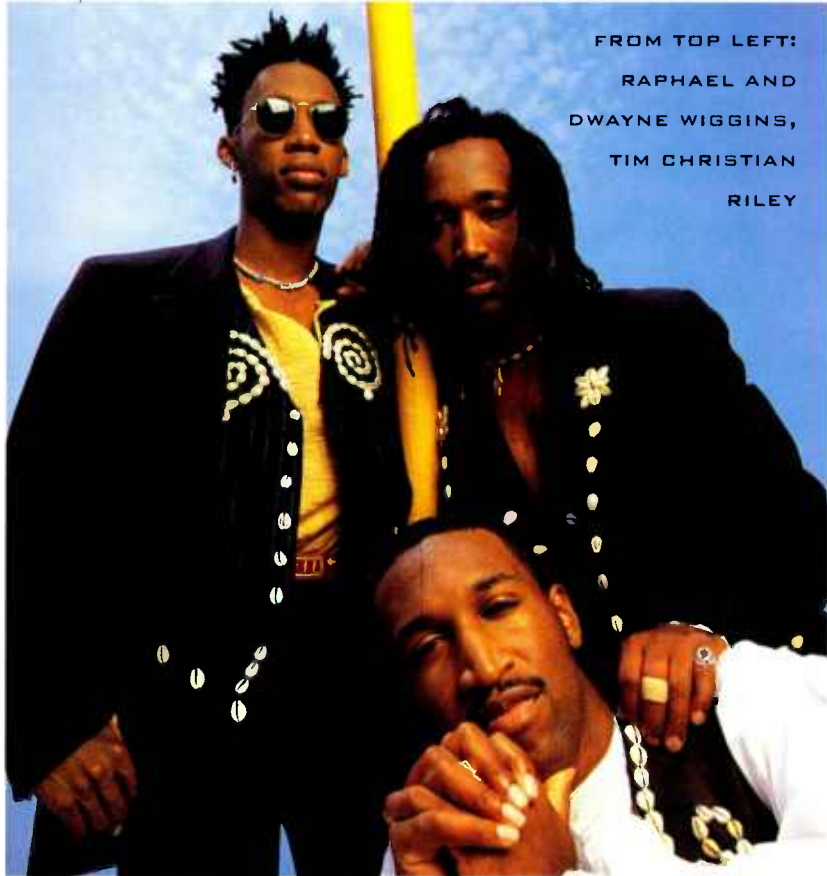
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Hitting the Wonder button with soul's hottest retro pioneers

# TONY! TONI! TONE!



FROM TOP LEFT:  
RAPHAEL AND  
DWAYNE WIGGINS,  
TIM CHRISTIAN  
RILEY

**W**e got one little trick we use when we're making records," says Tim Christian Riley. Tim and his cousins Dwayne and Raphael Wiggins comprise the hit soul group Tony! Toni! Tone! "We

got this thing we call the 'Wonder button.'"

The what? "The 'Wonder button,'" repeats Raphael, who looks like a young, pre-burnout version of Sly Stone. "You hit it and every-

body singing on the mike starts sounding like Stevie Wonder," grins Dwayne, running a hand through dreadlocks that cascade out of an oversized knit cap.

The three members of Tony! Toni! Tone! laugh. They've been asked to reveal a few production tricks they used to create the retro soul sound that dominates their recent hit album, *Sons of Soul*.

When they stop laughing, Dwayne gets serious. "Our production philosophy is 'Less is more.' Put it like that. It's all about making it fun, man. Having fun and taking chances."

Today, the guys have returned to Sacramento, California's Paradise Recording Studio, where they cut the basic tracks for about half of the album. Work was also done at studios in New York, Los Angeles, Trinidad and their hometown of Oakland.

At the studio, Riley takes a seat before an aging Hammond B3 and starts pumping out a funky Booker T. and the MGs kinda groove, as his two cousins stand near him snapping their fingers, rocking to the sound. Not even an interview stops these guys from making music.

"We're musicians first and foremost," says Dwayne. "We played live much longer than we've been producers. We did a lot of jammin'. The stage is where we feel comfortable. The studio is where we weren't as comfortable, but now we're getting pretty comfortable."

That's an understatement. The trio's last album, *The Revival*, contained four hits, including "The Blues" and "Feels Good," and has sold two million copies worldwide. Amazingly, *The Revival* was the group's first stab at production. (Their first album, *Who?*, was produced by Denzil Foster and Thomas McElroy, the masterminds behind En Vogue.) "Ed Eckstine [Mercury Records president] gave the Tonys about \$3000 to go into the studio," recalls Gerry Brown, who recorded and mixed most of *The Revival* and *Sons of Soul*. "They came up with 'Feels Good' and 'The Blues.' That gave Ed an indication that they could get some stuff done."

Asked how they learned to produce so fast, Dwayne says, "Actually, we still don't know how to produce."

"We were forced," adds Tim. "That's the bottom line. We're just musicians. But someone had to do it."

BY MICHAEL GOLDBERG



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*The Sound of the '90s*

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In an age where black music has become dominated by gangster rappers content to shout schoolyard rhymes over drum machine loops and samples from old soul records, Tony! Toni! Tone! are a real anomaly, an old-school throw-back to the days when street-corner harmonizing, real songs and inspired musicianship were key building blocks for any soul band with dreams of stardom.

Each member of the group participates in writing, production and arrangement of their songs. Raphael plays bass, keyboards and sings; Dwayne plays guitar, bass and sings; Tim han-

dles drums, keyboards and background vocals.

Years and years of jamming around the Bay Area have served the Tonys well. Their work in the studio is as spontaneous as a late-night free-for-all. In fact, the studio and all its toys are considered compositional tools. Often one or two of the guys show up with what they call a "concept" and, perhaps, a drum loop created at home with Raphael's Akai MPC60 or Dwayne's Emulator SV12. Against a loop they all dig, Dwayne and Raphael will start improvising guitar and bass riffs, Tim will come up with keyboard parts and before long they'll have not simply a song

but a nearly finished master.

"My Ex-Girlfriend," as in "my ex-girlfriend is a ho," was recorded after Dwayne happened to drive by a popular hangout for hookers in Oakland and noticed an old friend of his on the street "doing her thing." "He didn't even have the music," recalls Tim. "He just came with the concept. We're like, 'That concept is wack.'" Tim then played Dwayne and Raphael a beat he'd been working on. "He had the groove," says Dwayne. "I put on a bassline and a guitar line. I was kinda goofing with the whole track.

"Kind of a Spinners harmony," he continues. "We had a couple of beers and tripped off of it for a minute. 'Yeah, it works. Let's go with it.'"

When they decided to add some horns to "If I Had No Loot," the guys brought in the "Saturday Night Live" horn section. Dwayne and Raphael sang ideas they came up with on the spot to the players, who used them as blueprints for horn parts.

When they talk about record-making, the Tonys often refer to "the vibe." To achieve it, they'll dim the lights, burn incense, light candles, get mellow with a little wine—whatever it takes to create a mood. That was the approach taken when they recorded the very Sly Stone-sounding "Tonyies! In the Wrong Key" at Caribbean Sound Basin. It was 3 a.m. and Raphael was "quite snookered" on a local brew when he started delivering the lyric. "We try to make it real calm and mellow," says Dwayne. "'Cause you want to be able to get into what you're singing. That's for a ballad. [cont'd on page 78]"

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Dwayne played a vintage Gibson LS and a modified Fender Coronado (with Gibson humbuckers). A fairly new Telecaster was used by John "Jubu" Smith for the parts on "If I Had No Loot." Raphael plays a custom five-string bass by Dan Ransom of Brawer Guitar & Bass Repair in San Francisco. On *Sons of Soul* Raphael also played basslines on a vintage Minimoog. TIM used vintage Wurlitzer and Fender Rhodes electric pianos. Mixing was done with an old Neve; original recording was done to Studer 24- and 48-track recorders, then dumped to a Sony digital 3348 for mixing.



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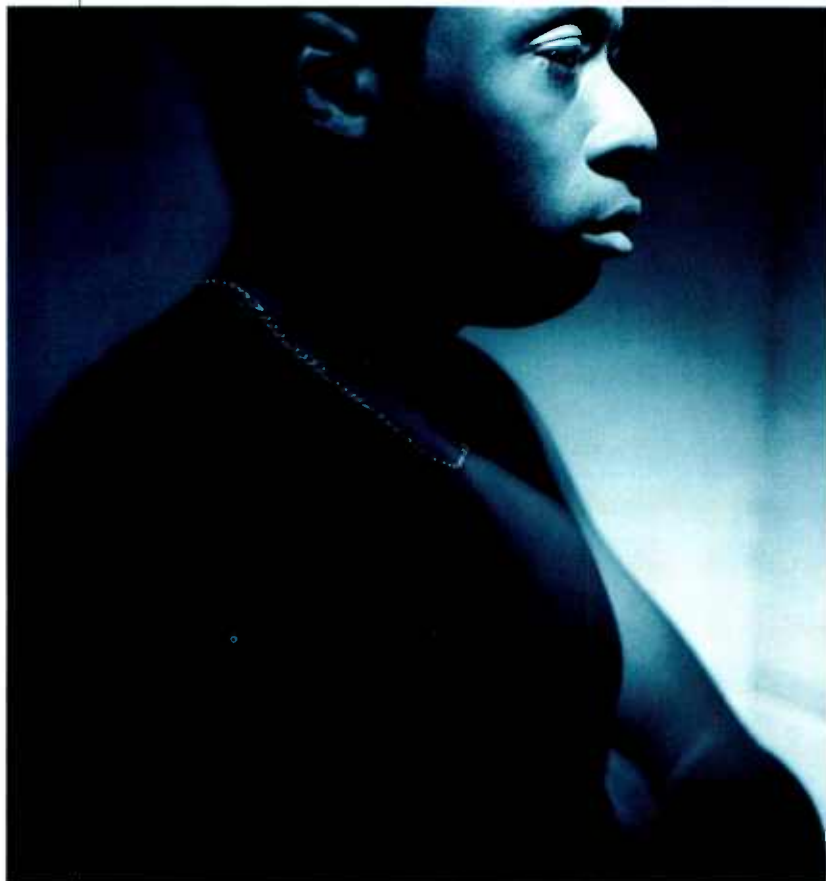
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*Creative hip-hop sampling at home*

# PETE ROCK



# M

oney Earnin” Mount Vernon is what Pete Rock and his crew call their home town. Located just north of the Bronx, it’s a green suburb where kids grow up in modest clapboard two-story houses with garages

and small front yards—well within New York City’s orbit, but hardly the urban backdrop pictured in most rap videos. On the right afternoon, however, you can find hip-hop’s most sought-after producer behind his

mixing board and sampler in the basement (a.k.a. The Basement) of his aunt’s house, two doors down from his parents’ home on a wooded Mount Vernon block.

At 23, Rock has established himself as a rap producer’s producer and about as safe a bet there is for MCs hoping for a creative and commercial boost. He’s produced an album and EP of his own (*Mecca and the Soul Brother* and *All Souled Out*) with rapper CL Smooth, and done album cuts and/or remixes for Heavy D., Father MC, Da Youngstas, Shabba Ranks and, most notably, career-reinvigorating tracks for Run-D.M.C. and Public Enemy.

If you’re expecting a state-of-the-art setup in The Basement, you’ll be surprised. The paint is peeling, the air is damp and Rock works in the corner, surrounded by 20 crates of records. The only sign of his recent prosperity is a small rack containing a digital reverb unit and an extra sampler (“for when I want to go wild”). Except for that, his set of tools has not changed since his not-so-distant adolescence: a relatively antiquated E-mu SP1200 sampling drum machine, an Akai MG614 mixing board, one turntable and a DJ mixer.

“I work how I work,” he’ll answer if you ask about his gear choices. “I like the sound of the SP1200. I like what it does for me. It’s more acrobatic.”

Watch Rock at work and you see what he means. He’s always moving, and with its broad front panel and sliders, the SP1200 suits him better than any rackmount box. His cuts are 100 percent sampled from his record collection, down to the drums, and all of his loops are performed in real time. “My mind is wild while I’m doing my music,” he says. “I think all crazy ways. I just *do* shit. I’m a self-taught person. DJ Eddie F. [Heavy D.’s producer] taught me how to use the SP1200, and I just kept at it, in the house every day, until I got it down pat.”

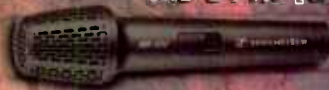
The bond between Rock and the SP1200 is apparent as he lays down the samples. On any song, he generates as many strata of sounds as, say, a Hank Shocklee/Public Enemy record, but without the cacophony. Where Shocklee will reverse a Miles Davis riff into a screech, Rock will play a squawk of feedback backwards, then pitch-shift it into a bass tone that’s in key with his horns. This gets tricky as he piles more layers on, because changing a sample’s pitch changes its tempo. Somehow Rock always manages [*cont’d on page 71*]

BY NATHAN BRACKETT

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World Radio History



*A picker/promoter/producer sneaks up on the music*

# JIM ROONEY



**J**im Rooney had some colorful history under his belt when he showed up in Nashville in the early '80s. From his radio debut as a 16-year-old East Coast cowboy on Boston's Hayloft Jamboree, Rooney went on to become a cornerstone of the early-'60s Cambridge folk scene. As manager of that town's legendary Club 47, the budding musician/entrepreneur worked with an incredible array of artists, from Maybelle Carter to Muddy Waters to Mose Allison, before going on to oversee the

Newport Folk Festival and manage Woodstock's Bearsville Studios, where he worked with artists like Van Morrison, Paul Butterfield and

the Band. In between he found time to release the occasional solo record.

Rooney figured a résumé like that could open a few doors in Music City, but somehow he ended up on Music Row, living out of his trailer in a parking lot. "I basically had to start all over again when I got here," Rooney says. "It was a humbling experience."

But, true to form, Rooney had picked the right parking lot—directly adjacent to the studio of Cowboy Jack Clement. And luckily the legendary producer/engineer/songwriter/hillbilly eccentric was still basking in the success of a string of hit records with Charley Pride, and he liked what he heard when Rooney finally got through the door.

"He gave me a good five-dollar Jack Clement show," Rooney recalls with a laugh. "Jack literally came waltzing through the studio door with a glass of water on his head, singing one of my songs."

Rooney fell under the tutelage of the former Sun Studio engineer, becoming part of an informal, hands-on school whose alumni also include Trisha Yearwood producer Garth Fundis and Garth Brooks producer Alan Reynolds, both of whom currently work in studios formerly owned by Clement. It was in another Clement-owned facility, an old house known as the Cowboy Arms Hotel and Recording Spa, that Rooney hit his stride as a producer, stumbling across a sparse, lighter-than-air acoustic sound that had everything to do with the decidedly low-tech and informal atmosphere of the house.

"That is a wonderfully natural-sounding room," Rooney says. "It's a great big attic, a big volume of space, but the result is that you can set people up in there without a lot of baffling and get reasonable separation. You can play without headphones most of the time."

When Clement dumped a Cowboy Arms bluegrass engineering project in the lap of a totally unprepared Rooney, a producer—and a sound—was born. After completing that record, Rooney spent more and more time in the attic, and with his production of Nanci Griffith's *Once in a Very Blue Moon* a couple of years later, the fledgling producer had found the delicate acoustic balance and core group of players—including Irish guitarist Phillip Donnel-

BY PETER CRONIN

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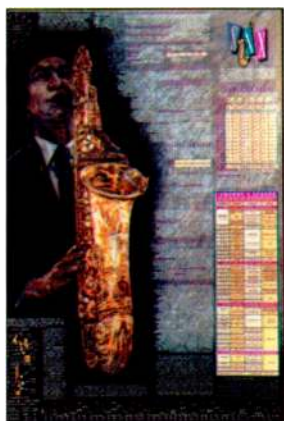


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ly, upright bassist Roy Huskey, Jr., fiddler Mark O'Connor and banjo whiz Béla Fleck—that would serve him so well on subsequent projects with John Prine, Pat Alger and Townes Van Zandt.

"Having been a picker and a singer and a sort of victim in the studio for many years, I knew what I wanted in an engineer," he says. "The basic thing is that you have to be ready when the pickers are ready to pick, so I have everything as set up as I can *before* they get there. I've seen engineers try so hard to get everything technically perfect that they miss

the performance. I also learned to work quickly. I'm not a big long-study guy; I basically think off the top of my head, and I'm not afraid of live performances."


What Rooney lacks in technical expertise he made up for with ears; his proximity over the years to an incredible number of master musicians and songwriters has helped him deal with a new generation of folk-based artists. "It gave me a depth and a background I could draw on when I got to making records," he says. "All I can play is simple, three-chord country songs, but I've got a lot of music in my head, and I feel

comfortable with a wide range of musicians."

An ability to put musicians at ease is key to Rooney's success as a producer, and it's an art he's been perfecting since his days managing Club 47. "I've basically done everything you can do in terms of getting music out to an audience, and I believe if you make the conditions good for the artist—in a club, a studio, a concert hall, wherever—then the artist will give you a great performance. And that great performance will attract an audience and they'll be happy. It's fairly simple."

Well, not *that* simple. There are times when making an artist comfortable involves a little craft. Take Iris DeMent: To avoid what he felt would be a self-conscious vocal performance on her debut album, Rooney asked the studio novice to lay down a guide vocal for the band. When DeMent later asked about recording the final vocals, Rooney informed her that she already had.

"I like to get those performances when people aren't thinking they're making a record," Rooney admits. "Especially someone like Iris, who had no experience whatsoever. I had to sneak up on her, but I was ready to record when she was ready to sing." The final proof is in the grooves, and Rooney has coaxed transcendent performances from artists like Griffith, Prine, Van Zandt, Alger and, most recently, country heartthrob Hal Ketchum.

"I've found this niche where I work with a lot of singer/songwriters making fairly inexpensive albums fairly quickly," Rooney says. "I'm sort of a catalyst. I try to let everybody go as much as I can and then tell them what I like. I guess I just like making up people's minds for them." 

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**ROONEY TUNES**

**B**oy, am I the wrong guy to ask," ROONEY says when asked about his preference in signal processors. "I like the gray ones and the little black ones." At Jack's Tracks, the studio where he's been spending most of his time lately, Rooney employed a Tube-Tech compressor. He's partial to Neumann U87 mikes, but on the latest projects for Nanci Griffith and Hal Ketchum, he relied heavily on the new Sony C800G for vocals ("it looks like it has a radiator on it, and it's wonderful"). On acoustic guitars, Rooney uses an AKG 414 and Shure SM81s, and for "all-purpose" use he often pulls out the Sennheiser "black one" (in tech-speak, that's the 421).

[cont'd from page 66] to keep his echoing horns and keyboard washes in key and in time with the other loops.

"The music Pete makes," says Heavy D., Pete's cousin, "you would swear he's an orchestra conductor or a bandleader. He can take pieces from a million records and make it all fit in one record like it was born there. He used to make me beats with two turntables and a pause-button tape recorder. That's how we made records like 'You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet,' 'Mood for Love' and 'Let It Flow,' from *Big Tyme*. Pete would make pause-button tapes that sounded better than a lot of DJ tapes."

On working with Rock: "He compromises. He loves to listen to ideas, and I love to see how my ideas turn out through Pete's vision."

For non-relatives, the experience is usually more of a one-way street. An MC will often send a multitrack and Rock will do his thing. "I'll work for anybody," says Rock, who is currently in the studio with Donny Wahlberg. "I'll get rid of everything except the vocals when I'm doing a remix, unless there's something I think goes with it."

Indeed, Rock has a way of making records his own, no matter who is rapping over his beats. Run-D.M.C.'s gold single "Down with the King" featured not only his production, but his and partner CL Smooth's rhymes. "[Run-D.M.C.] came up to The Basement and I played them a couple of beats, and 'Down with the King' was one of them. Working with them was difficult in the beginning—they were still caught in the '80s—but they came through."

Like most hip-hop producers, Rock got started as a DJ, scratching up his first record at age seven. He made his name working the turntables for producer/DJ Marley Marl on a New York weekend radio show, and cites Marl and producer Howie Tee (Special Ed/Chubb Rock/The Real Roxanne) as his favorites. His father, not incidentally, was a club DJ in Jamaica and New York, and provided Rock with the

basis of his record collection.

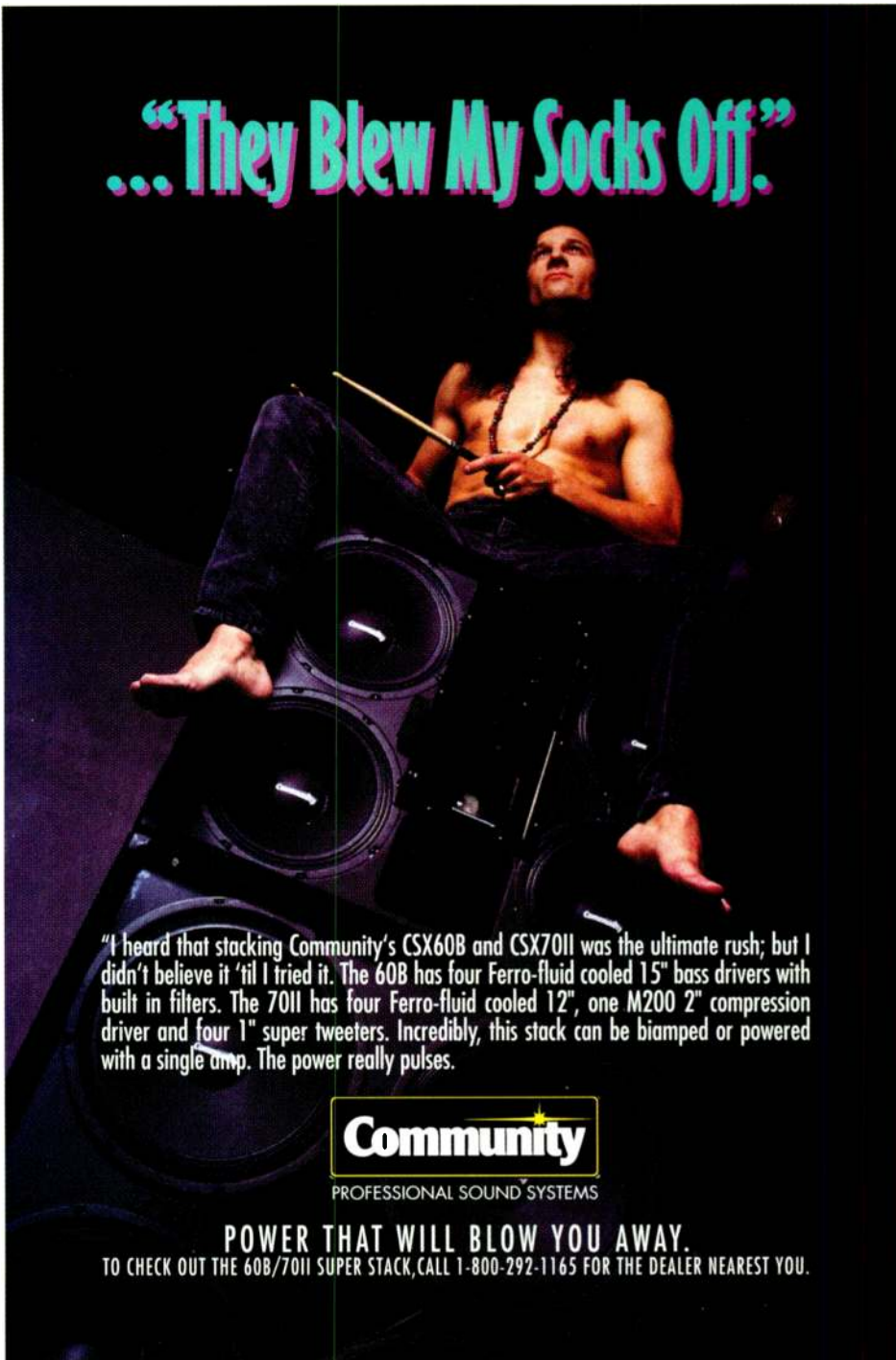
You can hear the breadth of a 10,000-album library in Rock's eclectic style. He's of Jamaican heritage, and has produced for dance-hall reggae king Shabba Ranks, but doesn't affect a ragga style in his own music, though he will sample a vintage rocker's song and put it within a funk context. Similarly, he draws on his enormous jazz collection to make Pete Rock records, not jazz-hip-hop experiments. "I could be anything," he says. "People have their own particular styles. Like, I'll bug out one day and make beats like DJ Premier [of

Gang Starr] or Large Professor [Main Source], or Q-Tip [A Tribe Called Quest]. I'll perpetrate those guys, just playing."

Rock is learning to play keyboard and bass, and has already finished his end of his next album with CL Smooth. Look for him to be starting a label as well. Perhaps the biggest question for Rock now is when he will move his equipment up to his recently purchased house north of Mount Vernon; it's been eight months so far and he hasn't been able to get around to it.

"Still in The Basement," says Heavy D. "He never left The Basement." 

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**Blackfish**  
Afly Bangster

Detroit-State Theatre

Blue Nation  
Bent Lucy  
Psycho Cafe  
**17 Reasons Why**  
The Rainbirds

Cincinnati-Bogart's

**Rottweilers**  
Eponymous Heroes  
Feversmile  
Sound Mind  
Circus Of The Sun

Minneapolis-Mirage

Mood School  
The Laurie Wheeler Band  
Kelley Kelley & Yellosoul  
**Raining Lemmings**  
Les Amies

Indianapolis-The Vogue

**Oliver Syndrome**  
The Elvis Diet  
The Chosen Few  
Angels Ride  
Snakeskin Cowboy

Chicago-Lounge Ax

The Crawdads  
Antoinette & The Lizard Boys  
**The Verve Pipe**  
The Texas Rubies  
Suffer Urtha

### E A S T

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The Willies  
Exploding Boy  
**Jamie Notarthomas**  
Dirty Blond

New York-The Grand

**The Whatnots**  
Flat Out  
Matt Sevier & His Band  
Nasty Ned & The Famous Chili Dogs  
Lorraine Ferro

Washington D.C.-The Bayou

**Vibe**  
No Such Thing  
Stagger Stagger Crawl  
Giant Panda Gypsy  
Naked Lunch

Cleveland-Agora Theatre

**Rust**  
The Janglers  
Underneath  
Thickhead Grin  
The Revelers

Boston-Axis

**Stickmen**  
The Herms  
Gingerbutkis  
Fire Pig  
Ariadne's Thread

Asbury Park-The Stone Pony

Psychic Orgy  
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Trash Mavericks  
Spider Junkies  
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### W E S T

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Liar's Club  
Kilgore Trout  
**Mommy**  
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Dramshop  
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Phoenix-The Roxy

Beggar's Theatre  
3rd Floor  
Star Crunch  
The Hoodwinks  
**Birds & Wires**

Los Angeles-The Palace

Skin  
John Bossman  
Primal Tribe  
Liquid Sunshine  
**Dish**

Portland-Key Largo

The Drags  
Clyde  
Dog Superior  
**The Fat James Band**  
Gene and Victor

Sacramento-The Boardwalk

The Threshing Floor  
**The Biggs**  
The Sketch Olives  
Idle Wild  
Slide

### S O U T H W E S T

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Living Proof  
Power And Fear  
Sheltering Sky  
Walking On Einstein  
**The Sun Sawed In 1/2**

Denver-Bangles

Life Explodes  
Avatar  
X Lulu  
Crazy Ms. Dazey  
**Hippie Werewolves**

Houston-Rockefeller's

The Missiles  
Robert Frith & Third Coast  
Z-Lot-Z  
Plum  
**Global Village**

Dallas-Dallas City Limits

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boot camp  
Spiders  
**Pervis**  
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San Antonio-Sneakers

**Snake Dance**  
Shanghai Steal  
Pirate Salad  
Manic Shuffle  
Wicked Gypsy

Albuquerque-Sunshine Theatre

The Rails  
Flying Apostles  
Paint Me Purple  
**Petting Zoo**  
Dead Leonard

### S O U T H

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Mindhorse  
**Shadowvine**  
Islander  
Cogent Woe  
Letters From Earth

Charlotte-Rocky's

Candy Pig  
**Vertigo Music**  
Riddle  
Orphan  
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Orlando-The Station

The Goods  
**Jesse Strange**  
Third Wish  
Azrael  
The Crowd

New Orleans-Tipitina's

XLR8  
8 Inches of Brass  
The Unemployed  
Smoky Greenwell  
**Peabody**

Atlanta-Variety Playhouse

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The Suspects  
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### E A S T

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Vibe  
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### S O U T H W E S T

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**The Sun Sawed In 1/2**  
Hippie Werewolves  
Global Village  
Pervis  
Snake Dance  
Petting Zoo

### W E S T

The Palace, Los Angeles

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Bad Mood Zeus  
Birds & Wires  
Dish  
**The Fat James Band**  
The Biggs

### S O U T H

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 Charles "Chip" Hart (Drums)  
 Dave Cashin (Keyboards)  
 Tracy Arrington (Bass Guitar)  
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 Since: 1990  
 Credits: Indie cassette, "Mean & Nasty,  
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 Bill Yaeger (Drums)  
 Doug Bobenhouse (Vocals)  
 Dave Farver (Vocals/Saxophone/Keyboards)  
 Jeff Bartholic (Guitar)  
 Style: Pop/World Music  
 Hometown: St. Louis, MO  
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 Credits: Indie CD's, "The Happiness"  
 and "Hot Feet for Monkey God"  
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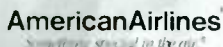
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*Production strategies for project studios*

## HOME + PRO = SAVINGS



**I**t's no secret that personal recording studios now compete directly with professional facilities. Why pay hundreds of dollars per hour when you can work at home for only the cost of the equipment? On the other hand, the cost of the equipment is no small matter. Fact is, most personal studios will never be as well-equipped as a good pro room. You might own a digital eight-track and a DAT machine, but a pro

studio is bound to outstrip your resources in other critical areas.

These days, it's smart production strategy to combine the two. That way you can spend your money where it counts, save it where

you can, and end up with a great-sounding recording at a fraction of the usual expense. Because they tend to have superior consoles, monitors and signal processors, pro studios excel when it comes to mixing. Those with a good-sounding room and a good mike selection are a far better choice than your living room for recording basic tracks (usually bass and drums). Just about everything else can be done at home with minimal sonic compromise, using either rented equipment or gear you already own.

In exploiting the synergy between home and pro environments, your best friends are a MIDI sequencer, a digital multi-track tape deck and a DAT recorder. Currently, the Alesis ADAT (\$3995) is the most common digital multitrack, with the Tascam DA-88 (\$4499) and upcoming, ADAT-compatible Fostex RD8 (\$4795) close behind. Most studios own at least one, which simplifies things tremendously, but in any case they're relatively inexpensive to rent. As for DATs, they're everywhere. The industry standard is the Panasonic SV-3900 (\$2220), but any model with digital I/O is a good bet.

One thing that's best done at home is vocals. The critical factors are the microphone, preamp, EQ and compressor—and, of course, engineering skill. Rent a great mike such as a Neumann U67 (\$4500), and find a solid outboard preamp or preamp/EQ combination such as the Focusrite ISA 110 (\$2800) or Neve 1073 (out of production). Plug the preamp directly into a digital multitrack—or via a high-end compressor such as a Urei LA2A (also out of production)—and *presto!* Instant world-class vocal sound.

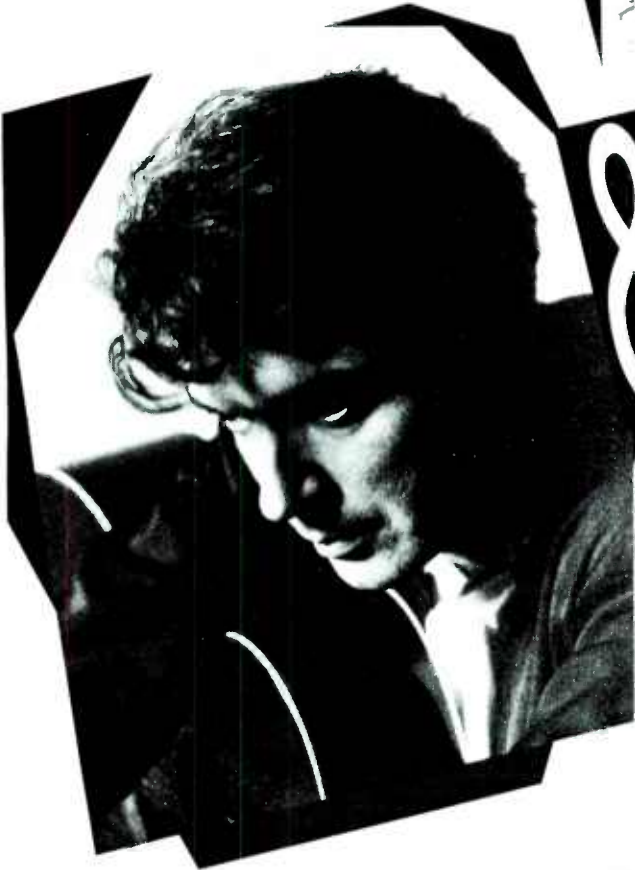
Of course, this goes for more than vocals. You can record keyboards direct, and guitars and bass through a direct-inject device such as the SansAmp GT2 or SansAmp Bass DI from Tech 21 (\$195 each). You might want to play to a drum machine and record real drums later in a pro situation, though. A great drum sound usually requires a good-sounding room, good isolation and a bunch of good mikes.

Part of the magic of the new digital tape formats is that a proprietary sync code is embedded in each track, invisibly and automatically. Since a sync reference is always available, it's easy, once you get into a pro situation, to bounce, time-shift and fly in your home-brew tracks. If one verse or chorus is better than the others, you can clone it to replace weaker *[cont'd on page 79]*

BY DAVID FRANGIONI

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*Blending elements of your music for tasty mixdowns*

# MIXING INGREDIENTS



**A** good mixing engineer is a silent partner. Though he provides the sonic backbone to your recording, he's virtually invisible come playback time. "To me, a good mix is one that I'm not aware of," says engineer Jim Anderson, who twisted knobs for saxophonist Joe Hen-

derson's recent Miles Davis tribute *So Near, So Far*. "It's transparent to the music. Part of my maturing process as an engineer was realizing when to leave a perfectly fine musical performance alone."

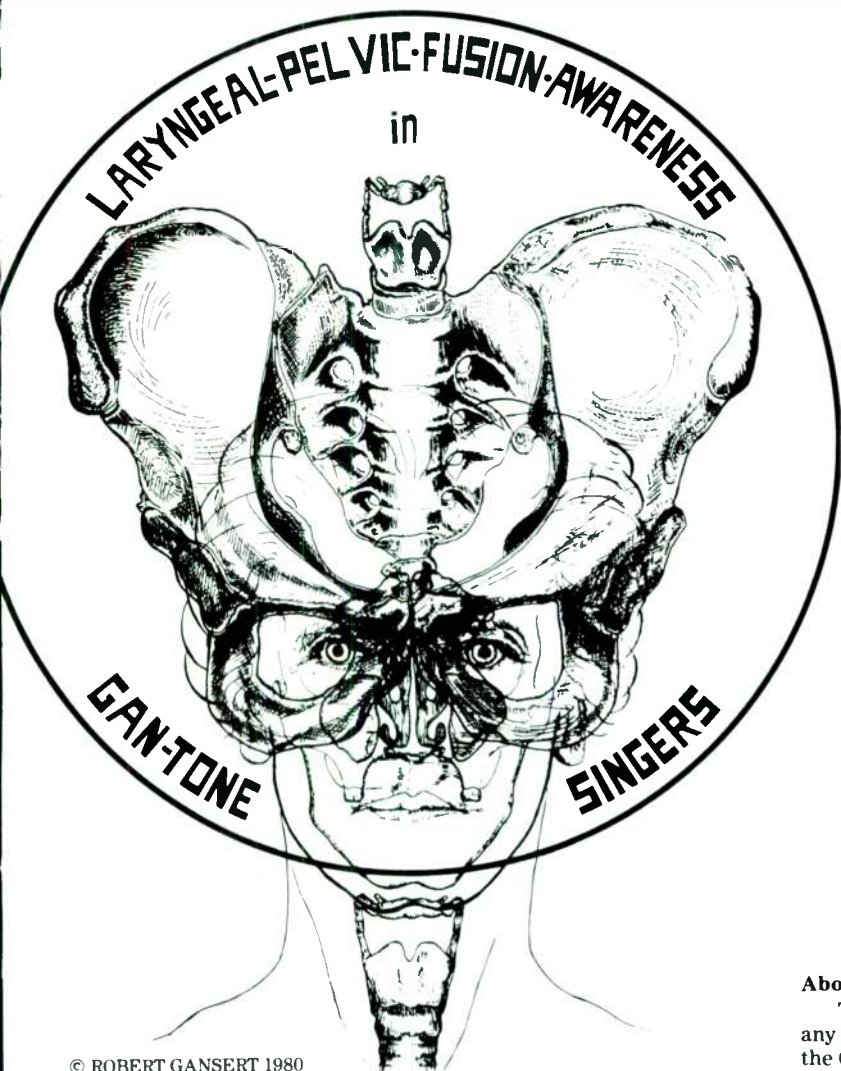
Transparency in the mixdown translates to an engineer's high visibility during the recording of the individual tracks. That's when he experiments with microphone positions, studio-speaker playback and the interaction and placement of musicians in the studio. Face it—no amount of effects wizardry will hide the fact that he failed to capture the essence of the artist's material in the first place. "Try to get things at the source—the instrument, the amplifier, the voice—so you don't have to rely on things like EQ," suggests independent producer Stewart Lerman (Jules Shear, the Roches). "Does your mix convey the original intent of the artist and the producer? The point is to find the *soul* of a song. If you have a lyric-driven tune and the vocals are mixed so low that the drums wind up becoming the focal point, then the listener will miss the meaning."

Finding the soul of a song means recognizing each artist's uniqueness of vision and, in turn, capitalizing on their strengths. For "Ing," the lead track on the Roches' recent album *A Dove*, Lerman tried to evoke how the three vocalists—Suzzy, Terre and Maggie Roche—would be positioned in a live setting. "When each girl pipes in going, 'Ing-ing, ing-ing,' I moved them across the speakers individually and spread them out as wide as possible, so you'd get the impression that you were listening to three distinct voices," he recounts. "Then, when they're all singing together on the bridge, I piled up the vocals to make them sound like a bunch of angels."

"Each element you work with should tell the story to its full advantage," says engineer Mark Stichman, who manually mixed the multi-genre debut by Papa's Culture with bandmembers E. Blake Davis and Harley White. On the reggae-flavored "It's Me," Stichman employs break-downs—brief snippets where drums, guitar or organ tracks were eliminated from the mix—to emphasize the storyline as well as pay homage to Jamaican dub production. "Subtraction is a good skill," he observes. "But many bands are too attached to every single note they play. Once you get a good groove going, each element of that groove becomes understood, so you can get away with having an element disappear and then return later to great effect. On 'It's Me,' I ran some of the conga and guitar tracks through some old tube amps—Mar-

BY MIKE METTLER

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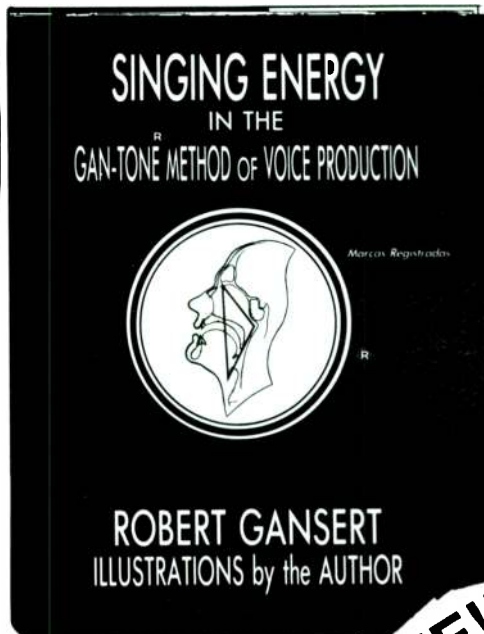
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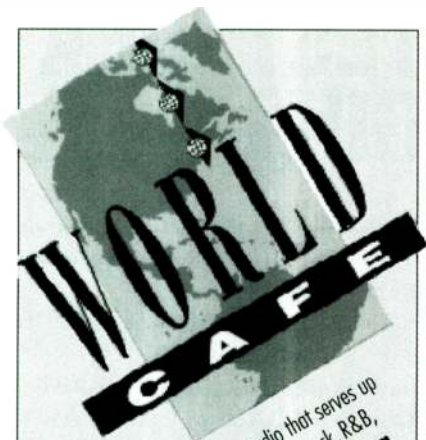
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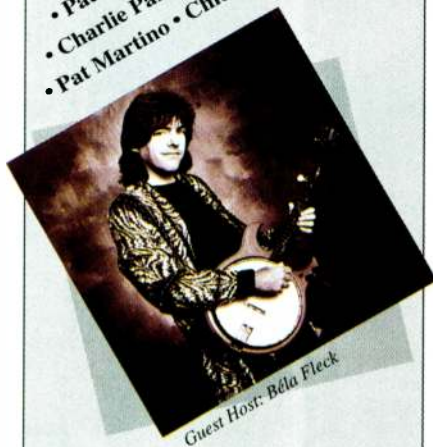




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shall, Vox and Silvertone—and then clipped the tubes to ‘brown out’ the sound.”

In hard rock, the current emphasis on grunge hasn’t diluted the importance of how vocals and guitars intertwine. “You want the vocals to blend in with the other tracks so you still get the full power of the band,” notes producer Butch Vig, who’s manned the boards for Nirvana, Sonic Youth and Smashing Pumpkins’ new *Siamese Dream*. “And power isn’t always found in the rhythm section, either,” he continues. “We introduced a string section into the mix of the Smashing Pumpkins track ‘Disarm,’ and the main question was, ‘How does the emotional content of the strings fit in with the song’s overall dark content?’ We kept them subdued at the start and then built them up dynamically using EQ and a bit of chamber [reverb] to make them even darker. To me, those strings are as powerful as distorted guitars.”

Vig has modified his once-ambient approach to mixing guitar tracks. “I rarely EQ guitars going to tape anymore,” he says. “I used to EQ right away, then I found I was getting weird things with phase and distortion, which made it harder to make the guitars sit properly in the track. Straight to tape is better.”

Equalization—or the lack of it—is a major issue. “The one thing that always gets some sort of EQ is the drums,” clarifies James Farber, who has engineered for John Scofield and James Taylor. “And a lot of times you’re equalizing to get through the [playback] speakers what you heard back in the original room recording. Or sometimes you’ll just EQ for definition. Say a band is playing through a ‘bashing’ section. You might equalize some more frequencies on the bass to make it cut through the music.”

There are also ways to save time when you’re mixing several songs in a row. In this case, it’s best to find fader positions that can accommodate the louder songs as well as the softer ones. “Try to find the middle dynamic,” Jim Anderson advises. “Say I start with a ballad, setting the zero on the final mix at -20. But if I go to a burner of a track next, and that mix has its peaks set -12 or less, I might as well start the entire mix over. That’s why I prefer going to the tune that’s most like the previous one. In a way it’s like driving a stick shift, because you’re changing the gears ever so slightly.”

Just how long does a good mix take? It depends. The Pumpkins took up to three days per track on *Siamese Dream*, Lerman says he’s done up to five songs a day and Anderson admits to weathering the occasional 22-hour marathon session. Fatigue is usually a factor, but most engineers rely on instinct to know when it’s time to wrap.

But when do you know you’ve nailed it? “A friend of mine couldn’t be in the studio the day of a first mix,” Farber recalls. “On the second day, he came in, listened to it and said, ‘I don’t hear a mix. I just hear the music.’ That’s what I strive for.”

**TONY! TONI! TONE!**

[cont’d from page 64] But for an uptempo song, you might put balloons up all over. That’s our whole thing, setting the mood.”

The Tonys’ latest album is a pastiche of soul and funk styles of the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s that they grew up on. It’s almost as if the trio have taken their influences and thrown them into the blender, creating an album’s worth of songs that are at once reassuringly familiar and brand-new.

“They’re paying respect to soul music,” says Mercury Records president Ed Eckstine, who is credited as executive producer on all three of their albums. “They’re not trying to be the boys who carry the torch for soul music, but what they’re saying is, ‘This is the stuff we dig, this is the stuff we grew up on, this is the stuff we listen to.’”

For *Sons of Soul* they generally avoided using digital reverbs. Instead, during the mixing, an EMT-140 reverb plate was used as well as a reverb chamber. Guitars were frequently recorded direct to the multitrack (without going through the board) using a Demeter Tube Direct and an API 560 preamp. On occasion, the guitars were played through a Fender Deluxe Reverb or a Roland Jazz Chorus.

Despite all the obvious influences, Tony! Toni! Tone! isn’t a slave to the past when it comes to arranging. While recording the sexy ballad “(Lay Your Head on My) Pillow,” they brought in a country musician to add a steel guitar part. It’s an unorthodox touch, as is the raggamuffin performed by the Trinidad-based toaster General Grant at the end of “What Goes Around Comes Around.”

As Tim plays a bit of Al Green’s “Love and Happiness,” Dwayne begins to sing, “Love and happiness, love and happiness. Something going wrong...”

He stops singing and starts talking again. “We wanted to do it like they used to do it. They used to do things kinda like this...”

He gestures to the three of them grouped at the organ. “Guys would sit down with a guitar, drums and a keyboard and come up with something. But today, when most people write, it’s like computer get-down. We just went back to home with our thing. That’s where the flavor came from and that’s what the whole title is about, *Sons of Soul*. Like a tribute to the old flavor.”

[cont'd from page 74] renditions of the same music: First, get a second digital deck. Using a compatible auto-locator or synchronizer, offset the two decks so the third chorus, for instance, can be flown in during the first. If you don't have access to a second digital deck, you can use a high-quality sampler to accomplish much the same thing (though the sync is trial-and-error).


The embedded sync also makes it possible to fill up eight tracks on one tape, pop in a new one and fill up eight more, *ad infinitum*, and then synchronize all of the tapes for mixdown using as many (rented) machines as you need. With an ADAT or RD8, you'll need to convert between Alesis/Fostex's proprietary sync format and SMPTE timecode using the Alesis BRC (\$1995), TimeLine's AI-2 (\$995), or the DataMaster (\$749) or DataSync (\$345) from JL Cooper. With the DA-88, you'll need Tascam's SY-88 sync card (\$799). Here's the procedure: Using a sequencer, cook up a basic sequence for the song; just a click track will do. Slave the sequencer to the tape deck's proprietary sync output. Now stripe a liberal number of tapes with a mix of the sequenced

tracks, and get to it—you can listen to the basic sequence as you record each part, regardless of which tape you're using. The music on each tape begins in exactly the same place, so everything will sync up in the end.

In the absence of one of the converter devices mentioned above, be sure to stripe every tape with SMPTE timecode before doing *anything* else. In most music-related situations, the proper SMPTE frame rate is 30 frames per second, non-drop-frame (30ND), so if in doubt, go with that. Timecode can make the transition between home and pro facilities go a lot more smoothly, allowing you to synchronize the studio's various tape decks, computers, drum machines and so forth to your original track. If your music has a strict tempo, it's smart to lay down a click track as well. This provides a definite marker for the location of each beat of music, useful in solving a number of problems. Trust me: Sooner or later, it'll get you out of a jam.

Here's a way to make the most of working at home without a digital multitrack—all you need is a DAT, a sequencer and a MIDI-to-SMPTE converter. Sequence your basic arrangement, and generate a SMPTE tone driven by the sequencer. Send the tone to one side of the DAT. (If the

DAT machine has a center track for timecode, use that instead.) Listening to the sequence, record your performance—say, a rhythm guitar part—on the other side of the DAT. Don't rewind the DAT when you finish a take! Start the sequence over again and perform, say, the lead guitar. Repeat as needed for lead vocals, background vocals or whatever, laying the tracks down consecutively. Finish up by striping the DAT with each sequenced part in turn. Then, in a pro studio, you can use the SMPTE (on DAT) to drive a digital multitrack deck as you transfer each part, digital-to-digital, to its own track. Now you're ready to mix!

Fortunately, one of the most effective production strategies is also the simplest: Take the time to prepare. Sequence everything you can. Rehearse. Finalize the arrangements and choice of sounds *before* you start paying by the hour. Decide what needs to be done first and what can be saved for the inevitable last-minute rush. Discuss the project's requirements with the engineer. Then cut loose, and use every option available to spend your money, time and energy where it will do the most good. You'll hear the difference, guaranteed. 

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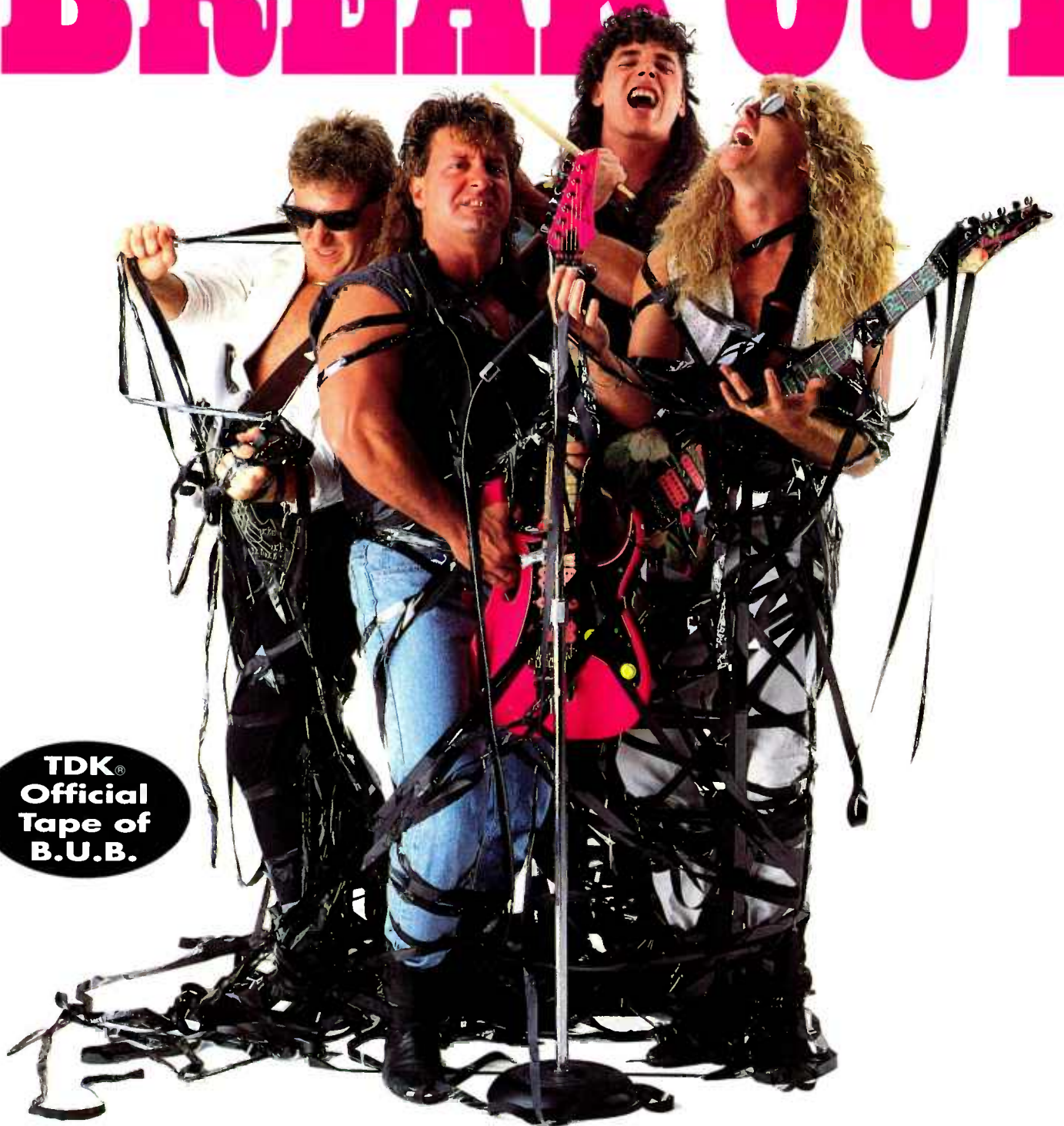
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IF YOU LOOK AT ads for new microphones, you can't help but notice references to "transformerless" design. Transformerless mikes lack transformers—no kidding!—but why should anyone care?

In a microphone, the transformer converts the output impedance to the right value for a mixer's input. It also balances the signal, which filters out radio-frequency interference. Most important, particularly for those who perform in large venues, the transformer conditions the mike signal to travel safely down a gazillion-foot cable to the house mixer.

Transformers have their drawbacks, though, in situations where long cables aren't an issue, such as small clubs and recording studios. Simply put, transformers are at their best when they're big. Microphones are small.

Make a transformer small enough to fit into a microphone, and you're bound to compromise the transformer's ability to pass very low and very high frequencies. In this digital age, a microphone's frequency response is more critical than ever. Hence, the current trend toward transformerless designs.

Actually, it began in 1981 when Brüel & Kjær introduced the 4003, an outstanding transformerless omni-directional mike. The 4003 is still on the market, priced at \$1660. A cardioid model, the 4012, lists \$1800. Unfortunately, both require a proprietary power supply, adding \$1690 to the price tag.

Though it isn't always so costly, a power supply is an inevitable feature of the transformerless landscape. This limits the field to solid-state condenser mikes (dynamic mikes are unpowered by definition, and tube condensers require their own kind of power supply). Being condensers, transformerless mikes tend to be less rugged, but their high operating voltage gives them four to five times the output level of your average condenser, plus the ability to withstand higher sound-pressure levels without distorting.

If you can't hack the pricey power supply, B&K also makes the phantom-powered 4011 (\$1800), a transformerless cardioid mike. Yeah, they're all really expensive; but B&Ks are, without exception, the clearest-sounding mikes I've ever heard. Period.

The other end of the transformerless price spectrum is ruled by AKG's Blue Line, which starts at \$438—not cheap, but still a great buy. Like the B&Ks, these are small-diaphragm condensers, great for recording acoustic fretted instruments, piano and cymbals. In addition, they're modular. The

capsules and bodies are interchangeable, so you can exchange an omni capsule, for instance, for one with a cardioid, hypercardioid, figure-eight or shotgun pattern. Buying a few extra capsules, which start as low as \$179, costs a lot less than buying a few extra mikes.

The Audio-Technica AT4051 (\$610), Audix SCX-1 (\$899) and Neumann KM 140 (\$950) also sport modular capsules. The A-T boasts a bright upper midrange; the Audix is relatively neutral; and the Neumann is slightly dark, with outstanding transient response. Like those of the Blue Line, Neumann's capsules are active (pre-amplified). You can disconnect them from the mike body and locate them remotely, at the end of an extension cable. Perfect for TV or video!

For superb studio-quality sound onstage, you can't go wrong with the cardioid Neumann KMS 140—not to be confused with the KM 140 above—and hypercardioid KMS 150 (both \$1495). These outstanding small-diaphragm mikes are optimized for hand-held use.

The Neumanns notwithstanding, condensers with large diaphragms are a more typical choice for vocals, as well as sax, cello and flute. The cardioid Neumann TLM 193 (\$1295), a new large-diaphragm condenser, uses the same capsule as the world-standard Neumann TLM 170 (\$2450 list, and also transformerless). And speaking of world standards, AKG recently announced their Vintage TL (\$1499). The Vintage TL

C414B/TLII uses the same capsule as the legendary AKG C12 tube mike (now out of production), which it is designed to emulate, and provides a variety of polar patterns.

In the I-can't-pigeonhole-this-one department, we find the Sanken CU-44X (\$2295, plus \$475 for the power supply). This cardioid mike sports two capsules mounted in one body. Like a woofer and tweeter, the one-inch (large) diaphragm reproduces low frequencies while the half-inch (small) diaphragm picks up the highs. I haven't heard this one, but Sanken has a great reputation. Finally, the cardioid Audio-Technica AT4033 (\$650), with its mid-sized diaphragm, offers a relatively inexpensive option for recording great-sounding vocals.

Despite the improvements wrought by eliminating the transformer, its presence or absence is only one factor in a mike's performance. Quality of design, workmanship and materials are more essential. And, of course, some models are valued for the unique coloration they impart, regardless of design. In case you're wondering, I'll be keeping my transformer-balanced Neumann U87A!

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## AKAI CD3000 SAMPLER &amp; CD-ROM



ON A LIST of favorite ways to spend an afternoon, most musicians would rank sampling somewhere between sweeping out the basement and having a tooth filled. As a result, supplying pre-recorded samples has become something of a cottage industry, with hundreds of gigabytes of pristine audio available on CD and CD-ROM. While taking samples from audio CDs requires the usual trimming, looping and mapping, samples from CD-ROM are ready to use right out of the box. No fuss, no muss—just load 'em and play 'em.

If that makes your mouth water, you'll appreciate the beauty of Akai's new CD3000 (\$3995), which weds sampler and CD-ROM drive in a single box. The unit comes with five CD-ROM discs from leading developers, and also reads discs formatted for the Akai S1000 and S1100. Of

course, the CD-ROM drive also plays audio CDs. Piping in an audio source—in the digital domain, no less—is far too easy. (Use only as directed by your attorney.)

So far, so good; but what really sets the CD3000 apart is the implementation of "set-up files." These remedy the biggest drawback of CD-ROM: It's a read-only medium. Set-up files, which can be saved either via the internal floppy drive or to an external hard disk, store any edits you impose on sounds retrieved from CD-ROM.

The samples continue to reside on CD-ROM (sparing loads of expensive hard-disk real estate), but play back according to your edits. Set-ups also make it possible to group any combination of sounds on a disc and retrieve them using a single MIDI patch-change command.

There's a catch, though: A set-up file recalls data only from a single CD-ROM disc. What you really need is a set-up that loads banks made up of sounds from multiple sources, and prompts you to switch discs when necessary. If Akai can add this capability, they'll transform the CD3000 from a trend-setting design into one killer machine.

TED PINE

• Akai, 1316 East Lancaster, P.O. Box 2344, Fort Worth, TX 76113; (817) 336-5114.

## DBX 296 SPECTRAL ENHANCER

NO, IT'S NOT an Aural Exciter. It doesn't adjust phase like a BBE Sonic Maximizer. And it's not quite an equalizer, either. Actually, the dbx 296 Spectral Enhancer (\$349) is three processors in one: One circuit reduces hiss; another enhances high-frequency content; and the third adds punch while cleaning up the low end.

The Spectral Enhancer belongs to dbx's Project 1 series, a line that purportedly offers high quality and numerous features at "project studio" prices. No argument here. At this price, the Spectral Enhancer offers plenty of bang for the buck. There are two channels, so you can process a stereo mix or two individual tracks. Just patch it into your mixer's master inserts or in series between two other devices and you're ready to roll.

This box is smart, too. For one thing, the high-frequency enhancement is dynamic, boosting highs in response to the music. For another, the amount of enhancement is dependent on the amount of the noise reduction, so the two processes are coordinated. That is, when (and only when) the dynamic filter is working to reduce hiss, the unit limits the degree to which the highs are enhanced. In practice, that makes it possible to find one setting for the duration of a mix that simultaneously reduces hiss and adds sparkle and crispness to the drums. Set it and forget it!

The "LF (low-frequency) detail" control does wonders for material lacking in both punch and clarity. For punch, it boosts 50Hz. At the same time, it pulls back on boominess and sponges up sonic mud by cutting the upper-bass/lower-mid range. These are common problem areas in recordings produced on cassette multi-track decks and narrow-gauge, open-reel analog formats, and more or less what a good recording engi-



neer does instinctively to clean them up. And it sounds killer on individual tracks such as bass guitar and kick drum, regardless of the recording format, analog or digital.

When a processor gives you such wide-ranging control, the only problem is making sure you don't overdo it—unwarranted or overzealous use can sound shrill and/or bottom-heavy. But coupled with a little care and an ear for subtlety, the dbx 296 can make your mixes kick.

MICHAEL COOPER

• dbx, 1525 Alvarado St., San Leandro, CA 94577; (510) 351-3500.


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Orchestral recording produced by **ALAN PARSONS**



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## OUT OF THE BLUE



JAMES  
LAID  
(MERCURY)

**J**ames, a British band with several smart but unspectacular records to their credit, have unexpectedly come up with what must be one of the best albums of the year. In fact, it sounds like music we'll still be listening to in 10 or 20 years. *Laid* is gentle without being wimpy, smart without being snotty and moody without being morbid. I've been playing it almost nonstop for the last three months and people keep asking me, "What is that and where can I get one?"

James' sudden leap into the front ranks may owe something to lessons learned on a stripped-down, semi-acoustic tour they did early this year, and it owes a lot to Brian Eno's "Let's-get-rid-of-all-the-distractions-and-figure-out-what-you-really-have-to-say" production. Aurally, *Laid* lives in the dreamy terrain Eno navigated on *The Unforgettable Fire*. But for all the beauty of that sparse environment, *Laid* connects so strongly because its beautiful melodies are sung honestly, without a trace

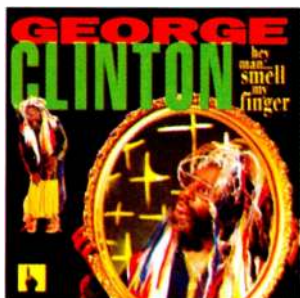
of distance. You listen to this album and feel like someone is talking right to you, telling you stories you've never heard before.

The album's title may have been picked as a joke ("Did you get *Laid* yet?"), but it captures the general mood of post-coital dreaminess. Although the lyrics aren't the main point, they address the sort of issues, general and personal, that drift to the front of our minds as we're falling off to sleep. "Out to Get You" and the Leonard Cohen-like "Just Human" survey

damaged relationships with the sorrow that hangs on long after anger has faded. "One of the Three" finds an agnostic telling Christ, *No hard feelings*. "Low Low Low" puts into perspective man's position as he heads toward extinction ("I'm a member of an ape-like race at the asshole end of the twentieth century") and implies that, while regrettable, the importance of the end of humanity should not be blown out of proportion.

But, honestly, the *subjects* of these songs are the last thing you'll dwell on as you let this album sink into your subconscious. Who knows what Van Morrison was singing about on *Veedon Fleece*? Who cares? In whittling their music down to a Shaker-like simplicity, James have built something that will last for a long, long time.

—Bill Flanagan



**GEORGE CLINTON**

*Hey Man, Smell My Finger*  
(PAISLEY PARK)

**B**EING THE MAD MESSIAH OF FUNK and all, George Clinton could easily coast on his rep. Instead he's come up with the best album of his solo career since '82's *Computer Games*. And if *Hey Man, Smell My Finger* never quite reaches the manic melodic heights of that classic (whose "Atomic Dog" has become a touchstone, twice quoted here), on this record even the filler sticks. D.O.A. clichés like "Dis Beat Disrupts" and "Get Satisfied" are revived and energized by brilliantly layered and carefully attended-to grooves, then sent into the night to strike terror into uncool hearts one more time. The soul ballad "If True Love" sounds mawkish on the surface but playful just below; "The Big Pump" mines disco (canned strings thump-thump), but it's a ruthlessly single-entendre parody of same.

Other songs touch bases political and psychedelic, sometimes at once. "High in My Hello" and "The Flag Was Still There" are mainly meant to stone you and will, if you're at all susceptible. "Maximumism" comes on like a message song—only G.C. could make

"where's the lumps in my gravy" sound deep—while "Martial Law" is a riot-as-metaphor celebration of personal freedom of expression: "It's gonna take martial law/Curfew ain't gonna get it/We're used to funk' after hours." In moments of quiet reflection you may worry about these images, but the song sucks you in sounding positively positive.

The big political statement, "Paint the White House Black," is also the record's guest-loaded rap fest and it looks at first to be just a catchy slogan to hang obvious jokes about having a Clinton in the White House. But as each rapper does a turn, the song's focus widens, becomes ambiguous—Yo Yo and Chuck D interject notes of unsimple seriousness—until the title refrain comes to mean the blacking out of a useless and dated symbol. The song comes near the beginning of the set and it's a keynote in style if not subject matter: Little here is what it might first seem, the deeper you listen the clearer you see and, most importantly, behind a really wretched album title can lurk a mess of compelling polytextured grooves and a variety of urgent voices. All insinuating, of course, under the aegis of funk's premier auteurist George (damn! He still hasn't lost it) Clinton.

—Richard C. Walls



**KATE BUSH**

*The Red Shoes*  
(COLUMBIA)

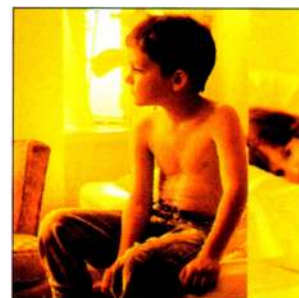
**I**F YOU'VE PEGGED KATE BUSH AS A dreamy cosmic spirit, don't miss the climax of *The Red Shoes*, where the stunning "You're the One" renews the tradition of brazenly pitiful love songs. Though this torchy ballad features some of her most powerful singing, not to mention vintage Jeff Beck, who contributes the sort of passionate lead work rarely found on his own records anymore, all pales next to Bush's gut-wrenching sign-off, a strangled shriek of pain that might prompt calls to 911.

The rest of this fevered meditation on the meaning of it all isn't as wonderfully raw or direct, but desperate impulses abound. Explor-

ing the terrain of the heart in her hyperdramatic way, Bush argues that romance is all we have, even if life stinks ("And So Is Love"), so there's no reason to hold back ("Eat the Music"); that being true to your emotions provides the one sure defense against the darkness ("Lily"), so don't be scared ("Constellation of the Heart"); and follow those desires ("Big Stripey Lie"), even if they lead to perdition ("The Red Shoes").

Between the theatrical arrangements and aggressively intimate vocals, Bush has clearly labored to do justice to the soul's storms. Mostly, she succeeds. "The Song of Solomon" finds Bush imitating a crazed angel, shrilly singing, "Don't want your bullshit/Just want your sexuality" in a memorable collision of the carnal and holy. Just when preciousness threatens to overflow, she tests a more conventional alternative that validates her wacky extremism: "Why Should I Love You?," a funky little rocker, features heavy Prince involvement. It's fun and catchy, but it's not Kate Bush.

Thus, let us hail this woman who stops at nothing in pursuit of inner truths, even to the point of imitating the sound of a stretching rubberband in "Rubberband Girl." And, above all, unleashes that dreadful howl at the end of "You're the One." Awesome! —Jon Young



**AFGHAN WHIGS**

*Gentlemen*  
(ELEKTRA)

**TAD**  
*Inhaler*  
(GIANT)

**T**HOSE OF US STUCK IN DRIER MUSICAL climes have had to witness the Northwest scene through records, and most of the great ones have been on the seminal Sub Pop label. Sub Pop is a big reason the Seattle scene has stayed vital, but its bands, like lusty salmon, do occasionally get the urge to swim from home. Now, following big fish like Nirvana, Mudhoney and Soundgarden, two more Sub Pop alumni have ventured into deeper waters, both with happy consequences.

The Afghan Whigs turned in some great work for Sub Pop, but they've also had to spend the last four years saying, "No, we're actually from Cincinnati." The Whigs always were a couple of fuzzboxes shy of their ex-labelmates' giddy excess, and for the band's major-label debut they relocated to the decidedly soulful confines of Ardent Studios in Memphis. The result, *Gentlemen*, is full of what makes the band interesting—odd, ambling guitars and Greg Dulli's skewed songwriting—but a warmer, more dynamic sound serves the record well. On "Debonair," "Be Sweet" and the title track, Dulli's in great vocal form, preferring to sideswipe his lines rather than take them head-on. Wild slide guitars seem to drop into tunes just because they're in the neighborhood, and touches of cello, Mellotron and Big Star's Jody Stephens on background vocals enliven as well. And the drunken, heartbreak waltz of "I Keep Coming Back" sets a new emotional standard for the band. If the Afghan Whigs were shotgunning brews for Sub Pop, on *Gentlemen* they're swilling bourbon.

Tad Doyle has moved his band to the appropriately named Giant label, and their debut, *Inhaler*, is another slab of the kind of beefy, hard-charging rock 'n' roll that Tad's been making for years. On Sub Pop, Tad worked with the cream of underground producers (Vig, Albini, Endino), and this time around he let Dinosaur Jr's J Mascis do the knob-twiddling. Mascis has compressed Tad's large sound so that it's harder and nastier, while leaving room for Doyle's underrated vocal ability and songwriting skills to shine. Rockers like "Leafy Incline" and "Lycanthrope" pay simultaneous tribute to Montrose, Ozzy and the Ramones, and the warbling guitar note that kicks off the chorus of "Grease Box" is just the kind of hook that could stick in your head for months. Tad closes out the album with "Gouge," a tenderly sung near-pop tune that would be perfect for a junior high dance, at least until the crazed heap of guitars at the fade.

Tad and the Afghan Whigs may have left the

Sub Pop party, but with *Inhaler's* furious, keg-tapping rock, and *Gentlemen's* soundtrack for a sunrise hangover, both bands are still pitching a pretty wild bash. —Chuck Crisafulli



**SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON/  
WILLIE LOVE**  
*Clownin' with the World*

**JERRY "BOOGIE" MCCAIN/  
TINY KENNEDY/  
CLAYTON LOVE**  
*Strange Kind of Feelin'*

**BIG JOE WILLIAMS/WILLIE  
LOVE/LUTHER HUFF**  
*Delta Blues—1951*

**THE SOUTHERN SONS**  
*Deep South Gospel*  
(TRUMPET/ALLIGATOR)

**F**OR THE WIFE OF A JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI furniture store owner, Lillian McMurry racked up a pretty impressive record as the head of tiny Trumpet Records. Between 1950 and the label's demise in 1956, she cut Elmore James' epochal slide classic "Dust My Broom"; made a memorable series of sessions with harmonica ace Sonny Boy Williamson; memorialized the Delta stylings of Big Joe Williams and the embryonic Chicago style of Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup; and utilized such then-youthful sidemen as B.B. King and Little Milton Campbell.

Now Alligator Records is taking a deep look at McMurry's and Trumpet's formidable legacy

with a comprehensive series of their releases (several of which were first issued in 1991 by researcher/annotator Marc Ryan's Acoustic Archives). *Clownin' with the World* is of most immediate interest, since it focuses on unreleased sides by harp man Williamson (Sonny Boy II, that is, a.k.a. Aleck "Rice" Miller). The tracks here aren't the best Sonny Boy made for Trumpet (see Arhoolie's *King Biscuit Time* for those), but they include a feast of lubricious vocals and Williamson's unmistakable, wah-wahing instrumental work. The big treat here is the barrelhouse raunch of the unjustly obscure pianist/singer Willie Love, one of Sonny Boy's favorite accompanists. His death from alcoholism in 1953 robbed the blues world of a distinctive talent, one best heard on his 1951 regional hit "Nelson Street Blues," a musical tour of Greenville, Mississippi's juke joints. Love reappears on the down-home-oriented *Delta Blues—1951*, which includes eight exquisite numbers by nine-string guitarist Big Joe Williams (who, according to Ryan's notes, McMurry had not heard of when she recorded him) and four songs by the less gifted but entertaining guitarist/mandolinist Luther Huff.

The R&B side of Trumpet's roster is compiled on *Strange Kind of Feelin'*, which features bumptious, horn-driven house rockers by Jesse "Tiny" Kennedy, a veteran of the Jay McShann and Tiny Bradshaw bands, and pianist/singer Clayton Love. Seven tracks by the solid Little Walter acolyte Jerry McCain round out the album. In the amen corner, *Deep South Gospel* comprises 14 mind-bending a cappella numbers by the Southern Sons, a powerful sextet organized by bass singer Cliff Givens, a former member of the Ink Spots who went on to join Jackie Wilson in Billy Ward's Dominoes. The Sons' work here offers luminous examples of jubilee-styled harmonizing.

Alligator continues its Trumpet series this month with *Goin' in Your Direction*, another excellent compilation of Williamson material (including two numbers with Crudup), and a pair of anthologies devoted [*cont'd on page 94*]

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## NEW RELEASES

## ROCK

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

MUSIC FROM THE MOTION  
PICTURE*Judgement Night*

(EPIC SOUNDTRAX)

IT USED TO BE that having rockers and rappers get down together was radical and exciting; now, rock + rap = cliché. So what makes this cross-pollination special? Partly the talent—Living Colour with Run-D.M.C., Pearl Jam with Cypress Hill or Biohazard with Onyx—but mostly the insights generated by these genre-jumping interactions. Who'd have thought House of Pain could find the funk in Helmet's static structures? That Cypress Hill would bring out Sonic Youth's dub side? Or that Teenage Fanclub's wan guitar pop would provide the melodic jolt needed to pull the best from De La Soul? Tear down a few walls and it's amazing what tumbles out...

GARTH BROOKS

*In Pieces*

(LIBERTY)

AS IF EAGER to prove he's no threat to the Nashville hierarchy, Brooks mostly abandons the pop-oriented experimentation of his last couple albums for by-the-book contemporary country material. Not that it makes him any less listenable; song for song, this is his strongest album since *No Fences*. But let's face it: Even with dobro licks, "The Red Strokes" is still just another power ballad, and as such not as interesting as the boogie-fueled "Ain't Going Down (Til the Sun Comes Up)" or the Lyle Lovett-like "Kickin' and Screamin'."

MEAT LOAF

*Bat out of Hell II: Back into Hell*

(MCA)

ALL FILLER, NO BEEF.

MARIAH CAREY

*Music Box*

(COLUMBIA)

DEEP HER LYRICS aren't, and anyone approaching this with words in hand is bound to come away disappointed. Listen to how she handles a melody, though, and suddenly *Music Box* sounds pretty good. This isn't the flashiest singing she's done, but it's better for its restraint, adding extra propulsion

KIRSTY MACCOLL, *TITANIC DAYS* (I.R.S.)

AFTER MORE THAN a decade of being the *Singer Most Likely To*, MacColl finally has—made a great album, that is. Every song's a winner, from the bittersweet romance of "Last Day of Summer" to the kicky, power-pop stomp of "Bog Boy on a Saturday Night" to the mischievous understatement of "Bad." Even better, each of these gems is perfectly set, with clean, carefully colored arrangements and none of the over-harmonized excess that marred her previous output. Prepare yourself for a Titanic love affair.

to the C+C groove on "Now That I Know" and shoring up the breezy melody of "Dreamlover." In fact, apart from her too-faithful remake of the Harry Nilsson hit "Without You," there isn't a misstep here.

MORPHINE

*Cure for Pain*

(RYKODISC)

BETWEEN MARK SANDMAN'S Jim Thompson-esque lyrics and the band's bass/bari sax/drums lineup, Morphine does the noir thing better than any group around. Whether that makes it the cure for pain is another issue, but it remains a reasonable inoculation against boredom.

REDD KROSS

*Phaseshifter*

(MERCURY)

HAD THEY DECIDED to play it straight, *Phaseshifter* would have come across like the best Cheap Trick album since *Dream Police*. This being Redd

Kross, though, playing it straight never was an option. So beneath every pop-perfect melody lies a sly twist or subtle allusion (slipping a play on "The Air That I Breathe" into "Monolith" is typical), turning passable power pop into a stunning trash-culture bash. Which is more than Cheap Trick has done lately.

UNREST

*Perfect Teeth*

(4AD)

THE TROUBLE WITH most pop reductionists is they let the theoretical interfere with the actual—they're all art and no rock. Unrest seems equally at home with both, pulling hooks from the thrash-lite intensity of "Cath Carroll" as easily as they put an edge on the languid cadences of "Angel I'll Walk You Home." But then, any band that can make feedback sound as pretty as it does on "Food & Drink Synthesizer" must have more going for it than good album graphics.



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**BAD RELIGION***Recipe for Hate*

(EPITAPH)

IMAGINE SOCIAL DISTORTION without the Johnny Cash fixation, and you'll have a sense of Bad Religion's sound. Add politicized songwriting that's as interested in good hooks as in making a point, and you'll know why this is a must-hear album. Whether it's the Clash-like grandeur of the chorus to "Kerosene" or the sing-along outrage expressed in "Don't Pray on Me," Bad Religion has the smarts and the chops to make you a believer.

**JAZZ**

BY JIM MACNIE

**BILLY BANG***A Tribute to Stuff Smith*

(SOUL NOTE)

BILLY BANG'S SWEET 'n' sour tones, Sun Ra's queer phrasing, John Ore's seasick drive and Andrew Cyrille's prowling swing—can you bring together four more individualistic players? So novelty looms, as it often does when lefties address music of the right, and it's the kinky turns which catch the ear on this salute to the under-appreciated violinist Smith. Examples? Ra's romantic blues on "Deep Purple" (which he played with Stuff back in the '50s), and the way the leader "bangs" it out on "April in Paris." The latter song reminds that soloing was always Bang's forte.

**STEVE COLEMAN AND FIVE ELEMENTS***The Tao of Mad Phat—Fringe Zones*

(RCA)

MORE LIKE 20 elements: The M-BASE poly-rhythms (and polythemes) still get me, still make for great social music, still treat funk like a trampoline to bounce bigger ideas off. This live date gives the nod to snaky jams that careen a tad too long—but just a tad, while Coleman's precision fixation and whomping groove make up for the itinerant soloing. He never made the converts initially hoped for, but his music hasn't diminished its turbulent intensity.

**CHARLES MINGUS***Thirteen Pictures*

(RHINO)

JAZZ PURISTS FORGET that not everybody knows how icons earned their status. So these classy Rhino tribs (Trane, Les McCann, etc., all from the Atlantic vaults) are more crucial to novices than the cultural elite. But sharp programming winds up giving the pros an elucidating listen as well. To wit: Mingus not only bullied his hirelings, but his emotions, too, demanding that cheer take on euphoric proportions and that sorrow investigate the realm of misery (perhaps why the scheduled

shrieks in his pieces are at once joyous and scary). From the piercingly introspective piano solo "Myself When I Am Real" to the immensely rich orchestral logic of "Meditations on Integration," this is a rich, illustrative portrait.

**BENNY GREEN***That's Right!*

(BLUE NOTE)

TOO GROOVY-GROOVY for some. But when the interplay is this precise, and the swing is this natural, it's best to stow the jibes and listen closer. Those who do will find that the pianist has grown with each record. His trio here—Chris McBride and Carl Allen—is also his working ensemble, and the steady gigging shows. Though Green still revels in the blues, the Bobby Timmons–Red Garland–Walter Davis references have been jettisoned, turning this into a tour de force by a guy who many thought didn't have it in him.

**ARTHUR TAYLOR'S WAILERS***Wailin' at the Vanguard*

(VERVE)

BOP NOSTALGIA THIS ain't. The drummer shakes, his kit rattles and the band rolls into line on a club date that proves why such places are packed when the vet-boss sets up shop. Taylor doesn't allow his group a second of coasting time, and he has a slew of rhythmic accents to jump-start any lagging passages. Looks like examining the innards of tension and release is still a coercive m.o. Two horns, one piano, no waiting.

**ROSCOE MITCHELL AND THE NOTE FACTORY***This Dance Is for Steve McCall*

(BLACK SAINT)

TEXTURE AND DESIGN used to be major elements of his aesthetic. Now, rumination—both delicate and disruptive—seems to guide Mitchell's work, intentional or not. That tack is at its most cogent here, on his best record in years. Half *Snurdy McGurdy* joyousness, half AACM "little instrument" fest, academia falls to the wayside and felicitous interplay steps forward. It's Mitchell's brand of felicity, natch, but if you can remember how moving *People in Sorrow* was (and is), you've an idea how this sextet waxes sentimental.

**BENNY CARTER***Legends*

(MUSICMASTERS)

FINESSE IS ONE thing, refinement another. But if you place yourself in front of the speakers while listening to these duets between the alto genius Carter and sublime piano master Hank Jones, you're standing on the corner of Expression and Erudition. There are five twosomes on this date, and along with other settings (quartet, quintet), they remind that Carter's a monumental improviser who can make you swoon with a single phrase.

When the venerable pair fuse their bittersweet blues on "Sunset Glow," it's the most intimate jazz moment of the season.

**BARON DOWN***Tongue in Groove*

(JMT)

DRUMS, 'BONE AND tenor. Call it parade music from the Bush era—half the band's been laid off. Yet novel notions arise when environments shift, and Joey Baron—an idea man if there ever was—has decided to whoop it up anyway. His backbeat-heavy rhumbas, cha-chas and strip-tease beats all come off gleefully impudent and dazzlingly attentive, providing a cogent stance for free improv inclinations. Titles help tell the story: "Oops," "Wow" and "Go." Each was recorded in ultra vivid "gutbucket digital." These three ought to get some gigs opening for the Dirty Dozen.

**ZANE MASSEY***Brass Knuckles*

(DELMARK)

MASSEY DECODED WITH Shannon Jackson, so he knows about oomph. Here his ardent tenor is applied to tunes that shift between lofty blare and intrepid Newkian rundowns. Neither's treated lightly, making both seem like part of the cagey and expansive world view of a guy who lived through the '70s and '80s without donning a suit.

**INDIES****VARIOUS ARTISTS***Plus from Us*

(REALWORLD)

PETER GABRIEL'S WAY of thanking the players who contributed to his last album *Us* was to give them their own record (each contributor gets a separate track); since the countries represented include Russia, Kenya, India and Turkey, the effect is panoramic. While the Meters peacefully coexist with Shankar and Hossam Ramzy, the members of Gabriel's regular band also get their licks in, with Tony Levin's wicked Stick display "Lone Bear" scoring heavily. But the best moments are the quietest—Ayub Ogada's intimate "Obiero," Peter Hammill's brooding ballad "Oasis" and Elektra Strings' delicate rendition of Alex Gifford's "Morecambe Bay." Overall, *Plus from Us* is a bit less consistent than its predecessor *Passion Sources*. But like that album, it's a marvel of juxtaposition and a guaranteed consciousness-raiser. (Caroline Records, 114 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10001)—*Mac Randall*

**DUKE LEVINE***Nobody's Home*

(DARING)

PERFECT FARE WHEN you're in the mood for some riotous guitar, caked with enough yodeling slapback echo to suggest it's come directly from the mountaintop to you. Levine plays a little blues,

a little country, a little roots rockabilly, and a lot of swamp. He can be as flashy as prime Danny Gatton, but more often favors soulfulness—check out the tender solo on “King Kamehameha Blues.” Somebody’s definitely home on this one. (Rounder Records, 1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140)

—Mac Randall

**JACK BRUCE**  
*Somethinels*

(CMP)

JACK BRUCE’S POST-CREAM era has been a wild ride, a genre-hopping trip through various experimental avenues and, in the last few years, circling back to Cream-ier stuff. *Somethinels*, featuring Eric Clapton on the varied special guest list, cements the connection on the heels of the band’s recent induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. There’s a growlsome, pre-VH-1 Clapton on “Willpower,” digging deeper into the strings than he has been of late on his own. But isn’t that also Trilok Gurtu and Dave Liebman lurking on other tracks? Yes, Bruce is up to his old eclectic tricks, mixing pseudo-classical sketches and shades of fusion with dance and post-Cream grunge. This album’s dizzy contours can be exhilarating as well as disorienting: Bruce is always thinking about somethin’ else.—Josef Woodard

**BACHIR ATTAR**  
*The Next Dream*

(CMP)

EVER SINCE BRIAN JONES produced a field recording of the Master Musicians of Jajouka in the late ’60s, this rarefied, centuries-old Moroccan tradition has had its mystical appeal dispersed to a music outlet near you. Tampering with ethnic musics and ancestral spirits can be risky—if not sacrilegious—business. This intriguing package, produced by the itinerant Bill Laswell, dares to bring together Jajoukan musician Bachir Attar, on various indigenous wind and stringed instruments, African percussionist Aiyb Dieng and all-American sax-man and James Brown alumnus Maceo Parker. The result is a mashing-together of, to quote a song title, “Mixed Cultures,” but one that retains an integrity and mystery of its own. The musical emphasis is in Attar’s court, with the guests flown in and on their best, empathetic behavior.—Josef Woodard

**MARY ANN PRICE**  
*Etched in Swing*

(WATERMELON)

FANS OF DAN HICKS and his Hot Licks and *Preservation*-era Kinks will instantly warm to the notion of a debut album by singer Mary Ann Price; the only oddity is that it took so long for someone to think of it. Guess it demanded the superior taste of a music journalist—producer Dan Forte—to get it together, and to include two songs by Hicks,

who’s the closest thing to Cole Porter coolness the modern pop era has produced. (And isn’t it about time somebody got *him* back in a recording studio?) Dan and Texas Playboy Leon Rausch also duet admirably on two tracks with Ms. Price, who otherwise sails across a bunch of swing-style standards and ought-to-bes with the witty, seductive, impeccably easeful phrasing that calls to mind influences from Anita O’Day to Barbara Stanwyck—it’s that vivid. Don’t let the little label and the Austin byline fool you; this disc is a prime contender for jazz vocal record of the year.

—Mark Rowland

**MICK FARREN’S TIJUANA BIBLE**  
*Gringo Madness*

(BIG BEAT)

YOU’VE HEARD OF film noir? *Gringo Madness* is music noir: all high-key lighting, low angles and distorted emotional perspectives, usually through an empty whiskey bottle. Accompanied mostly by moody guitar only, Farren conveys dissolution quite...convincingly. The recitatives betray his literary bent, while Bible-mates Henry Beck and John Collins keep the soundtrack bubbling. These under-the-volcanoscapes aren’t for dancing, but they are affecting and even funny—if you like your humor noir. (46-50 Steele Road, London NW10 7AS, England)—Scott Isler

**CAROLA GRAY**  
*Noisy Mama*

(LIPSTICK)

CAROLA GRAY HAS a canny ear for melodic construction and the tonal sonorities of a multi-percussion kit, with the good sense to let the music come to her, rather than forcing the action. On “Bedsidestory” she introduces a series of motifs and rhythmic contrasts on the rims and sides of the cymbals, progressing to an elegantly phrased Latin theme, before developing her melodic strains like a keyboardist. As with most drum stylists who love the cymbals, some of her thematic and melodic ideas don’t quite jell in terms of that emphatic quality all great drummers have. But Gray’s music is on target; her writing is bright and open, the vamps have real harmonic movement and she hasn’t fallen too deep into anyone’s bag. Credit saxophonist Craig Handy and bassists Lonnie Plaxico and Ron McClure for giving her arrangements a real lift.—Chip Stern

**BAJOUROU**  
*Big String Theory*

(GREEN LINNET/XENOPHILE)

YOUTHFUL IN APPEAL but with roots as strong as a baobab’s, this is the soundtrack to big weddings and parties, dusty taxi rides and market haggling in Bamako, Mali. *Bajourou*, or big-string, is midtempo music for lovers. This album, licensed from the adventurous U.K. label GlobeStyle, presents the

pure, acoustic side of *bajourou* recorded direct to DAT, courtesy of two of the Malian scene’s star guitarists and one of its leading male singers. If the six-string quiver and strum of Bouba Sacko and Jalimadi Tounkara sound like the *korá* or *ngoni* lute, that’s because the players derive their rippling runs and stone-groove rhythms from those instruments. Vocalist Lafia Diabate can cry out in anguish or croon with satisfaction, empowering this delicate yet earthy Sahelian mood music.

—Tom Cheyney

**TENKO AND IKUE MORI**  
*Death Praxis*

(INONSEQUITUR/WHAT NEXT?)

ABSTRACT EMOTIONAL CONJECTURE, sometimes inspired, sometimes not, is what the notorious singer and percussionist are best at, and on this well-considered and arty duet date they manage to find a motive for their quixotic improv: making the incoherent seem reasonable. There are nods to folk traditions—many of the curt pieces resound with the earnestness of Amerindian and Far Eastern rituals—yet the electrodrums and extended vocal techniques establish a modern, sonically rich demeanor. (Box 344, Albuquerque, NM 87103)

—Jim Macnie

**BUTCH HANCOCK**  
*Own the Way Over Here*

(SUGAR HILL)

THE AUSTIN DOYEN can’t sing a lick, but his extensive canon is an evocative trove for those interested in post-Dylan verse-a-thons, and imagery that’s instantly visible in the mind’s eye. And anyway, in every akilter note of Butch’s pinched vocal, there’s an eon of experience and commitment. Like last year’s *Own & Own*, this comp is culled from his No Two Alike cassette series, and its constant quality—as well as post-“Memphis Blues Again” pinnacles such as “Only Born”—might just elicit some interest in the whole unwieldy 14-cassette edition.—Jim Macnie

**STEPHEN BRUTON**  
*What It Is*

(DOS)

NOTHIN’ FANCY ABOUT *What It Is*, the low-slung, gut-bucket roots workout from Texas guitarist/writer Stephen Bruton. Sizzling guitars rub against a rolling B-3 wall, while harmonica bleats and an elastic backbeat bounce through these low-rent surroundings. Whether it’s the poignant misery of “Too Many Memories,” featuring Bonnie Raitt, or the no-frills worldview of the title track, Bruton’s torn, gruff voice gets the job done with nothing left over to distract from the broken hearts, hopeful moments and battered dreams he scatters—like so many aching solos—in his wake. Smoking in some places, smoldering in others, Bruton ignites the moment.—Holly Gleason

**TIGER TRAP***Tiger Trap*

(K)

THEY MAY NETWORK with other righteously frustrated teens, but these Sacramento pop primitivists seem more like gurls than grills: They value romanticism over antagonism. Their rudimentary strumming swims in its own commotion, yet constantly reminds itself of form; no matter what kind of ephemera urps forth, it's swallowed up by the tunes. That balance of exuberance and hooks helps give even the most facile post-punk a good name.

—Jim Macnie

**REISSUES**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

*A Cajun Music Anthology**The Historic Victor-Bluebird Sessions**Volume 2: Raise Your Window*

1928-1941

*Volume 3: Gran Prairie 1935-1940*

(COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION)

WERE THEY PLANNING on posterity? While fishing for new rural markets, Victor scouts snagged some ace musicians from southwest Louisiana and east Texas and set their popular French dancehall tunes onto wax discs. *Raise Your Window* has the more eclectic roster, with accordion/fiddle duets, Texas swing-influenced string bands and even a solo harmonica. *Gran Prairie* narrows its focus to string bands, including the still-active (!) Hackberry Ramblers. The entire anthology documents Cajun music's remarkable ability to intermix diverse styles (swing, blues and commercial country) and still maintain its identity. These reissues should also give contemporary bands like the Mamou Playboys and Beausoleil some new material to consider.—Michael Tisserand

JOHN PRINE

*Great Days: The John Prine**Anthology*

(RHINO)

LONGTIME JOHN PRINE fans will rejoice in the release of this double CD pack, which also offers a chance for the uninitiated to see what the fuss is about. The genius in Prine's songwriting goes beyond the crafts of rhyme and meter, which he's mastered; it's in making such ordinary occurrences as your foot falling asleep or a hole in the street seem loaded with meaning and emotion. Prine's journey to the Last Resort is filled with encounters with disgusted old women, horny young soldiers, mongrel cats, junkie war vets and just everyday people overwhelmed with the circumstances of their lives. But all is not gloom and doom; Prine's wry sense of humor surfaces at unexpected times to clue us that if you can't laugh at your troubles, you're really in trouble.

Disc one refreshes our memory of such Prine icons as Sam Stone, the old people, Barbara Lewis and Donald and Lydia. (With songs this sad, they oughta name a drink after *him*.) Disc two covers more recent material, songs that are less familiar but equally strong. Producers and styles vary throughout, but Prine's deft finger-picking and one-of-a-kind world view always shine through. The set's extensive liner notes, photos and Prineisms are a treat too, but more than anything, *Great Days* is great music. I think it's worth mentioning that my dog loves John Prine, too.—Ray Waddell

ABBA

*Gold/Greatest Hits*

(POLYDOR)

CONSUMED IN SMALL portions, such as the relentlessly silly "Dancing Queen," Abba suggests nothing more than a '70s kitsch artifact, albeit a great-sounding one. When viewed on a larger scale, like this 19-track collection, a more complex portrait of the Swedish foursome emerges. In addition to sticky confections ("I Have a Dream"), masterminds Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus turned out splendid Spectroesque pop ("Waterloo") and sad mini-symphonies with melodies that could break a heart of stone ("One of Us"). Sure, they were creatures of their time—check the cheesy Bee Gees echoes of "Voulez-Vous"—but, along with Olivia Newton-John (see the still-awesome "A Little More Love"), Abba proved slickness and seething passion could coexist. Call 'em froth if you must. It's your loss.—Jon Young

**VIDEO**

FAITH NO MORE

*Video Croissant*

(BLASH/WARNER)

VIDEO CROISSANT OPENS with singer Mike Patton crouched and screaming like a death metaler, so terrifyingly that my friend's cat ran out of the living room for cover—no doubt fulfilling one of Mike's career dreams. Like a warped travel guide, much of this long-form features Faith No More members doing strange and dangerous things as they travel the world: guitarist Jim Martin bungee jumping ("It was like being on horrible drugs"); the band coping with a rowdy audience in Spain throwing things at them; Patton teasing a swan, swinging his hand near its nasty beak.

—Jill Blardinelli

**CLASSICAL**

JOHN CAGE/DAVID TUDOR

*Indeterminacy*

(SMITHSONIAN/FOLKWAYS)

NOTHING DIFFICULT ABOUT the concept: Cage recites 90 one-minute apothegms while pianist Tudor interjects Cage music live and on tape.

Nothing difficult about the result either; Cage's friendly voice and whimsical stories, plus musical punctuation, make a charming combination. The real koan here is why Smithsonian/Folkways didn't assign individual track numbers to the 90 episodes.—Scott Isler

CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD/

SAINT PAUL CHAMBER

ORCHESTRA

*Martinů: La revue de cuisine*

(LONDON)

RICCARDO CHAILLY/ROYAL

CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA

*Shostakovich: Jazz Music*

(LONDON)

IS IT SO SURPRISING that in the 1920s a Czech composer assimilated jazz better than George Gershwin? Martinů's suite from the ballet *La revue de cuisine* even samples James P. Johnson's "Charleston." This performance is at least as snappy as (and more reverberant than) the Dartington Ensemble's on Hyperion. The other chamber orchestra works on the 77-minute CD make an excellent case for Martinů's reputation: less high-spirited than *La revue* but equally propulsive and melodically striking.

As for Shostakovich...well, you'd have to be a stolid Soviet citizen in the 1930s to consider his two "jazz suites" anywhere near jazz. They are charming salon pieces, but Shostakovich came closer to a jazz sensibility with his irreverent first piano concerto, also included here. Chailly and orchestra (with pianist Ronald Brautigan and trumpeter Peter Masseurs) are empathetic in a mixed bag. The concerto is essential Shostakovich; the rest, including a showcase arrangement of "Tea for Two," is for connoisseurs of small pleasures.

—Scott Isler

**BOOKS**

FROM THE VELVETS TO

THE VOIDOIDS

*Clinton Heylin*

(PENGUIN)

SUBTITLED *A PREPUNK History for a Postpunk World*, Heylin's book does a good job of showing how a bunch of mid-'70s rock 'n' roll misfits claimed for their own some bars in New York and Cleveland and managed to change the face of pop culture. With a cast that includes Patti Smith, Pere Ubu, Television, Blondie, the Ramones, et al., plus rare photos (the pre- and post-record contract Dead Boys shots are hilarious) and an extensive discography including imports and boots. *From the Velvets...* is unreservedly recommended to those who were there, as well as to those curious about the potential of three chords and an attitude.

—Thomas Anderson

[cont'd from page 87] to R&B and gospel. If their quality is this consistent, here's hoping such reissues keep coming until the vaults are bare.

—Chris Morris

## NINA SIMONE

*A Single Woman*  
(ELEKTRA)

**T**HANKS TO A TELEVISION AD FOR Chanel perfume, the prominent place-

ment of her songs in the objectionable film *Point of No Return* and the publication of her autobiography, Nina Simone is experiencing something of a resurgence. This, her first album for a major label since the mid-'80s, should add further heat to that interest, as the things that have always been so splendid about her are very much in evidence. Simone is 60 now, but from the start hers was a very old soul, so one doesn't detect a marked shift in her abilities or her approach. A politically outspoken woman whose rage over the poisonous racial climate in America led her to leave the U.S. in the early

'70s (she lives in the south of France), Simone has always infused her music with an odd balance of burning anger and exquisitely cool grace. Weary, wise, a bit cynical, very sexy, she is above all else indomitable. Freighted with a sense of loss so intense it's almost unbearable, and a strength in the face of loss that's quite moving, Simone's voice is at once masculine and feminine, remote and intimate, familiar and utterly strange. It's great to be hearing it again.

Produced by Andre Fischer (who also produced *Unforgettable* and *Take a Look* for his wife, Natalie Cole), *A Single Woman* is a classy piece of work that incorporates a 48-piece string section and casually rich arrangements evocative of Nelson Riddle. It comes as no surprise to learn that three of the songs here (the title track, "Lonesome Cities" and "Love's Been Good to Me") were inspired by Simone's admiration for Frank Sinatra—they have a melancholy elegance that's very Frank. (What is surprising to learn is that these fine songs were written by the poet everybody loves to kick around, Rod McKuen.) Also included is a Simone original, "Marry Me," and re-recordings of two songs she cut in the '60s, "If I Should Ever Lose You" and "Just Say I Love Him." It's on "Just Say I Love Him" that Simone casts her spell most completely. The phrasing, inflection and timbre of her voice absolutely impeccable, she winds her way through its haunting melody like a purring cat.

—Kristine McKenna

## DAVE ALVIN

*Museum of Heart*  
(HIGH TONE)

**W**HEN DAVE ALVIN LEFT THE BLASTERS several years ago to strike out on his own, fans were left with understandably mixed feelings. On the one hand, Dave was the band's creative force, a tremendously talented songwriter and increasingly expressive guitarist, whom no one could fault for wishing to sing his songs and lead his own band. But as his first two solo albums also revealed, brother Phil Alvin's soulful vocals and charismatic presence, and the Blasters' explosive swing, were not qualities easily replicated. The net result was that one great band had cleaved into two good ones.

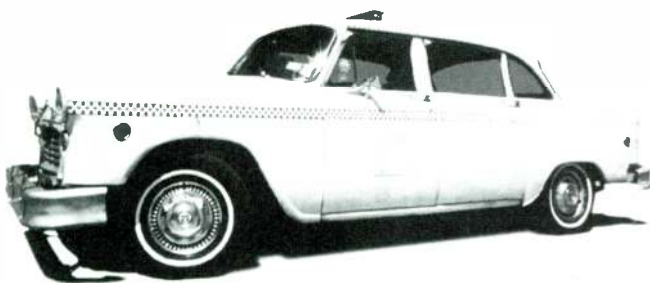
Until now, anyway, for *Museum of Heart* is a terrific record that begs—and bears—comparison with the best of the Blasters. Credit the return to form of Alvin's songwriting (with various collaborators), conjuring the emotional language of lovers and losers with a keen eye and a sympathetic heart. Credit a crack, exuberant band (with a range of complementary gui-

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**MUSICIAN**

tars by Greg Leisz) and arrangements that swerve from roadhouse stomps to lonely-room ballads. But mostly, I think, credit Dave Alvin's voice, because for the first time in his career he's singing with the assurance his songs deserve. Like Johnny Cash, Alvin's singing suggests strength not so much through what it does express, but by what it chooses not to—it's a voice that cushions pain.

And Alvin doesn't shy from painful things; he's too much a populist to settle for simple anger or self-pity. On "A Woman's Got a Right," he counsels a friend who's been jilted by gently pouring cold water on his romantic illusions. "As She Slowly Turns to Leave" narrates the end of an affair with the matter-of-fact fatalism of Raymond Carver. On "Stranger in Town," a song more than a little suggestive of post-riot Los Angeles, Alvin shows how tension and fear can uproot a community and leave it spinning toward disaster.

It's a thin line between deep and didactic, of course, but on *Museum of Heart* Alvin treads it better than just about anyone. These are ram-bunctious, literate, emotionally ambitious songs. You can hang 'em in a gallery, or open up your heart and let 'em live. —Mark Rowland

#### COUNTING CROWS

[cont'd from page 48] up, while Duritz free-verses lyrics. "I write off the top of my head a lot," he says. "In fact, I have a lot of trouble singing new material if we don't have tapes running because if I have to remember it I can't come up with anything."

A few songs, like "Ghost Train," were recorded live by the band, with plenty of bleeding between instruments. Emotional rather than technical perfection became the standard. "If there was a problem with this band, I thought maybe we all knew a little too much about what we were doing," Duritz figures. "Especially with this sort of music, there's got to be an emotional reaction. So there was a concerted effort to break everybody down on this record. It was done to me too, 'cause it was saying, 'Put away the skills for a minute and what you know how to do, put away the effects, stop those piano trill lines, and if you have to stumble, stumble.' But make yourself feel it as it happens." That's hard to tell good musicians to do," he admits. "But I want to hear that stumble."

The result was a record created in the spirit of an open wound, a state of affairs that more than once threatened the band's cohesion.

"They weren't a band for 15 years when they got signed," T-Bone Burnett points out.

"So a lot of the record was them trying to figure out what they wanted to sound like. I think in the process of breaking songs down, they were reinventing themselves. So there was a great deal of conflict. I think Adam had the strongest vision, but nobody took it lightly—it was a passionate process.

"But it never seemed like it wasn't worth it," he adds. "'Cause if the people who are making the record aren't passionate about it, why should anyone else be?'"

As first among equals, Duritz also found himself treading a particularly slippery line between buddy and boss. "We divvy up the publishing, because you write your own parts in rock 'n' roll. But there's a bottom line to decision-making—and it's mine. And I'm sure they always remember the time you tell them 'no,'" he adds with a grimace. "It's hard for me and it's hard for them, because you're gonna say I'm a tyrant and that's gonna piss me off. So we fought and went through shit. Several of the guys in the band have almost quit several times—including me. But we're out the back end of that."

He smiles, a little shyly this time. "Maybe."

Duritz's uncertainties seem apt; by summer's end, "unofficial" Counting Crow David Immerglück had decided to leave the band for good to devote more energy to his own group, the Monks of Doom (he was replaced by guitarist Dan Vickery). And for all the kudos Duritz has received from L.A.'s singer/songwriter elite, the commercial fate of *August and Everything After* remains an open question; literacy, soulfulness and good taste, after all, don't necessarily guarantee a hit.


"It's a tough record," T-Bone admits. "These songs aren't 'fun in the warm California sun.' But I think people can dig it, if they get into the sound and the mood. The album has a really deep mood."

Well, no one said life was a breeze, not even the rock 'n' roll life. But you get the feeling that Duritz has the right proportions of heart and moxie to make it through. A few nights after the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame dinner, he relates, Maria McKee invited him over to the studio where she was recording her album—an album that featured not one, but two Van Morrison songs. About three in the morning they were sitting together in the lounge outside the studio, passing the time.

Heard you did that Hall of Fame thing, McKee remarked casually. Heard Robbie asked you to sing a Van Morrison song. Yeah,

Duritz responded, a little warily. You know, he really should have asked me, McKee went on. I'm a big fan of Van Morrison. He knows that. A pause. But then I think about it, I think, man, you're a great singer, I can't think of anyone I'd rather have do it than you. It's strange, though...I probably would have done "Into the Mystic." Like this:

"And then she sat there and did it!" Duritz laughs, still bowled over at the memory. "I mean, it was a jawdropper. She blew doors, it was incredible. And she finished it off and she said, 'But you know, I bet you were great.'"

Duritz smiles brightly. "And you know, we were pretty good." 

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Soundcraft—8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, CA 91329 (818) 893-8411.....	9
TDK Electronics Corp.—12 Harbor Park Dr., Port Washington, NY 11050 (516) 625-0100.....	21
Telex—c/o Adtrack, 931 Blairs Ferry Rd., Cedar Rapids, IA 52402 (312) 395-9777.....	59
Thomastik—1026 Fort Salonga Rd., Northport, NY 11768 (516) 757-0110.....	3
Yamaha—6600 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, CA 90620 (714) 522-9011.....	12, 100

COUPON

# MUSICIAN CLASSIFIED HOTLINE

TOLL FREE

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In NY State (212) 536-5174  
Outside NY St. (800) 223-7524

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**REGULAR CLASSIFIED** (ads without borders):  
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**BOLD FACE CAPS:** First line, additional \$20.

**MUSICIAN BOX NUMBER:** Add \$4 per insertion for handling.

**PAYMENT MUST BE ENCLOSED** with your ad. Send to Musician Classified, Jeff Serrette, 1515 Broadway, NY, NY 10036.

**DEADLINE:** Two months prior to date of publication.

**ALL AD CANCELLATIONS MUST BE IN WRITING AND MAILED TO THE MUSICIAN CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT.**

**FAX YOUR AD TODAY (212) 536-5055**

**CATEGORIES:** Please mark category desired.

- Accessories
- Books/Publications
- Computers
- Employment
- For Sale
- Instruction
- Instruments
- Miscellaneous
- Musicians
- Records & Tapes
- Services
- Software
- Songwriters
- Talent
- Video

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in the information below if you want to charge the cost of your classified advertising.

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Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Bank # \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_


Publisher has the right to refuse all mail order retailer ads that might conflict with Musician dealers.

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From Standard Records & CD's with the Thompson Vocal Eliminator™ Call for Free Catalog & Demo Record.  
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Lithonia, GA 30058  
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Singer's Supply - We Have Anything & Everything For Singers!



**Music BARRINGS!**  
Guitar • Banjo • Sax • Piano  
Music Note • Trombone • Clarinet  
Available in gold or silver electroplate.  
\$9.95 / pair      \$7.95 / each  
Send \$1 for a b&w catalog or send order with ck. or money order to: South End Jewelry 146 Congress Portsmouth, NH 03801. 603-436-0109 - 5537 (fax)



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**GIBSON, CHARVEL, MARTIN, PRS, TASCAM,** Stelling, Zeidler, Guild, Flatiron, Alvarez-Yairi, DOD, Collings, Santa Cruz, Boss, National, Digttech, Breedlove, much more in our free illustrated discount catalogs. Send for yours today. **ELDERLY INSTRUMENTS**, 1100 N. Washington, P.O.B 14210-DB5, Lansing MI 48901 (517) 372-7890.

**VINTAGE INSTRUMENT CATALOG:** send SASE for tri-weekly list of about 1,000 vintage, used and new instruments. Accurate descriptions, sensible prices. New Martins, Gibsons, and Guilds. We buy, sell, trade, appraise, and ship worldwide. Gruhn Guitars, 400 Broadway, Nashville TN 37203 (615) 256-2033.

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2258-A Union St. Suite H, San Francisco, CA 94123



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**SUBSCRIBE NOW** to our monthly used and vintage instrument list with hundreds of quality instruments at down-to-earth prices. \$5.00/year (\$10.00 overseas). Current issue free on request. **ELDERLY INSTRUMENTS**, 1100 N. Washington, P.O.B 14210-DB5, Lansing MI 48901 (517) 372-7890.

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**MUSICIANS NATIONAL REFERRAL**—Professional musicians seeking bands—bands seeking professional musicians. Bands register free. Call now for information. 1 (800) 366-4447.

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Quantity	C10	C20	C30	C45	C60	C90
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