

EARTH,
WIND & FIRE

MUSICIAN

P L A Y E R & L I S T E N E R

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The Cars




THE KEYBOARD INTERVIEW SPECIAL
MARIANNE FAITHFULL, LENE LOVICH, ANDERSON
KING CRIMSON BY ROBERT FRIPP
GIL EVANS: THE JAZZ ARRANGER



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There are a number of devices that produce effects by a time delay circuit. The most common effects are Flanging, Chorus, and Echo Delay. Each of these effects mixes the original instrument signal in with the time delayed signal to produce the effect.

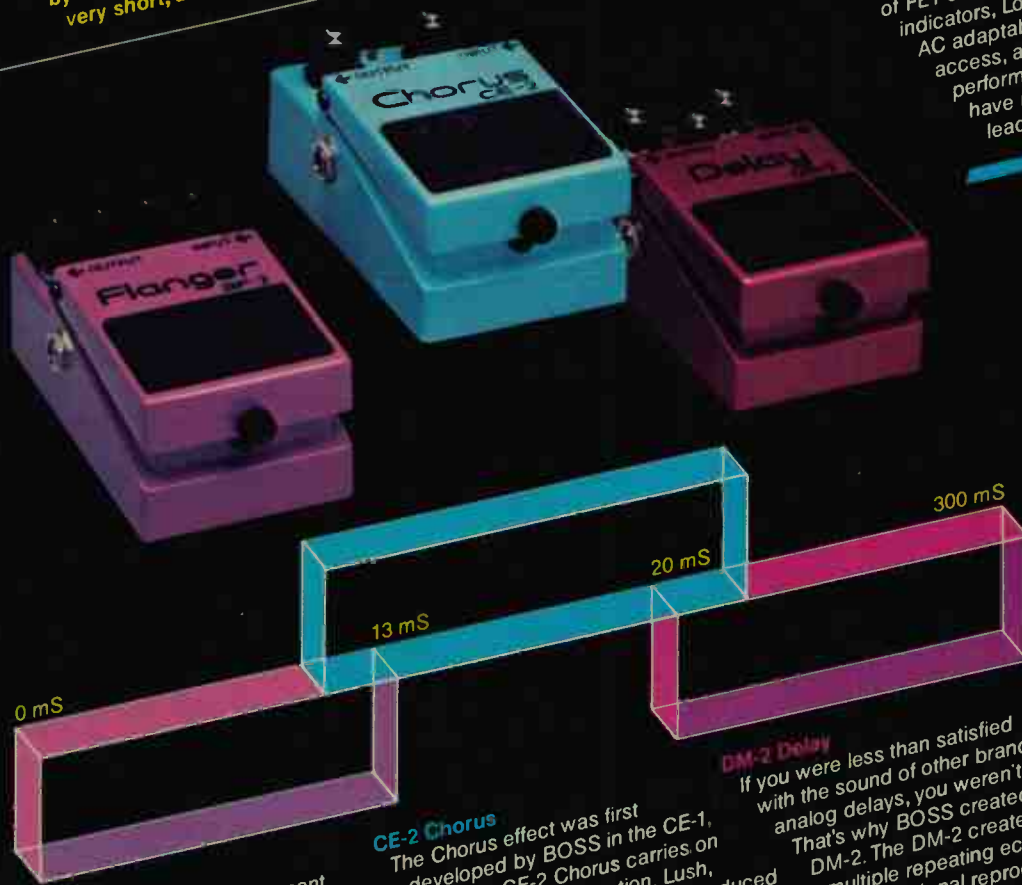
The time delay is the amount of time between the original note played and the note produced by the delay circuitry. These are very short, and are measured in

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MUSICIAN

P L A Y E R & L I S T E N E R

NO. 39, JANUARY, 1982

Maurice White and Earth, Wind and Fire despite a more-than-convincing five-year chart record, missed with "Faces" and became new boys on the block again. Pablo Guzman puts the hard questions and gets some surprising answers, including their spunky new album "Raise!"



The Cars literally invented their own genre three years ago, grafting a punky minimalism onto a traditional rock instrumental solidity. A journey into the musical minds of backseat jumbos, electric angels and cement kites.



Gil Evans may safely be called the most gifted jazz arranger of the past thirty years, having composed and textured many seminal albums. Zan Stewart talks to Gil about his new work, his memories, his musical methods, his pals and his very best.

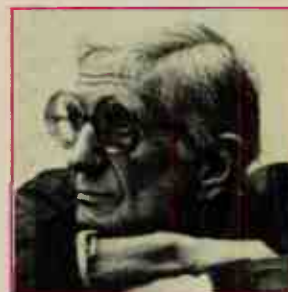


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Neil Peart
Rush

Your drums are all over the place, not just at the end of a verse or chorus but between every line, every phrase. Jaw sagging, your limbs are snapping out really fast. You're channeling energy from the audience, directing it through your kit. The music swells around you and the power's flowing through you so strong you can taste it.

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LETTERS

WYMAN SI, FASHION JEANS, NO

Thank you for devoting your magazine to keeping musicians informed. Finally, I'm glad to have invested in something which isn't hell-bent on political innuendo, fashion jeans or the embarrassment of those not of a particular ideology. Please be the stone that gathers no moss: Stick with your title's intention.

The Wyman interview was most enjoyable. While the rest of the media focused on the pretentious Jagger, you wisely sought out the most stable, most coherent Stone, for the most reliable article. Thanks also to Dan Forte for his enjoyable notes on cheapo axes.

Phil Madeira
Rumford, RI

BABY, YOU'RE OUTTA TIME

I note with dismay the growing stodginess of many respected rock critics (Marsh, Bangs et al.) over the last few years, marked by a failure to leave their ivory towers and adapt to changing times. We have reached the end of the era when "rock rooled," a fact the critics have been attempting to avoid when they're not savaging Reagan's reactionary and simple-minded politics (he's not *that* bad; it's just that the Moral Majority supported him). They subconsciously demand more "Me Decades" (now *that's* why Reagan was elected). Take Dave Marsh. In attempting to stab today's anti-rock paranoids, he comes off as twice as paranoid as his subject.

Your jazz roots are a surprising saving factor to your rock orientation; MUSICIAN's articles come off as *smart*, rather than pretentious, in spite of hack subjects like Springsteen, Petty and CCR and an obvious leaning toward a sixties-type readership (Grateful Dead cover stories?). You are now holding the most promising laurels; MUSICIAN is a magazine to watch.

Adam Sobalak
Islington, Ontario

NO BEATLES ON MY BACK

Re. Roy Trakin's article on Squeeze and the Ramones and their comparison to the Beatles and the Beach Boys: there will never be another group like the Beatles and Squeeze should be delighted to be mentioned in the same breath. As for the Beach Boys, never (except perhaps for the Stones) has a group hung on so long or so tediously.

Why don't we stop waiting for the "second coming?" There are new and interesting groups like the Clash and the Police rather than rehashers of the Beatles' music (which we still have around to listen to). John Lennon said it best: "You can't carry the Beatles around on

your backs — it would be like our parents carrying the Glen Miller Band." Let's stop looking for the "new Beatles," or Beach Boys, Elvis, Dylan or Lennon. They were unique and won't be duplicated.

Mary Morgan
Westwood, NJ

WARM IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

I would like to comment on Arthur Neihaus' letter in the November issue, in which he condemns the music of Robert Fripp as 'cold' and heartless.

This may come as a surprise to you, Mr. Neihaus, but there are a great many people whose ideas of 'warm' and 'cold' music do not coincide with your own. I, for one, refuse to accept the notion that music must be 'warm' or up-tempo' in the traditional sense to be moving and uplifting. I find Fripp's music deeply stirring and heartening; time and again it has brought out the best in me, yet you would with a word invalidate my experience.

Fripp's music, like all truly groundbreaking music, is a mirror: the way one reacts to it reflects something about oneself. In a word, it is as warm as you make it. It yields its rewards in direct proportion to the amount of effort the listener puts into it. Fripp refuses to coddle the listener, or to be entertaining for entertainment's sake. If his music seems alien to you, perhaps it is because you are unwilling to shrug off your preconceptions about what music should be.

Indeed, Mr. Neihaus, music comes from the heart, but the heart does not speak just one language.

Dennis Rea
Seattle, WA

HELL, NO

Let me first take this opportunity to commend you for publishing a great magazine. Primarily, I would like to call your attention to an error made in the "New Reggae" article of the November issue. You put Peter Tosh's name under a really nice color photograph of Dennis Brown! Out of fairness to both gentlemen, I think that an acknowledgement on your part is in order. Other than that, keep up the good work, guys (and gals).
Steve Hill
Athens OH
C'mon Steve. Even if we were wrong, we would never admit it in print! — Ed.

WYMAN'S WIT

Just finished your interview with Bill Wyman, one of the best I've read in a while. Glad to see such a straightforward interview. He not only has wit, but is very charming as well, a quality not found in many people, famous or otherwise. Only one complaint: why a full page picture of Mick instead of Bill?

Good picture, though. Keep rockin'.

Ruth Johnson

Huntington Beach, CA

ORNITHOLOGY

Fripp is not a turkey! Fripp is a most splendid, beautiful loon who, upon resurfacing in the most unexpected of places, has let forth a wildly intriguing set of musical sounds. New. Compelling. Eerie. Fripp is a loon, way out there in a musical lake.

Clifford Metting
Mason MI

INVITATION TO LOBBY

The article "Two Orchestral Stupidities" by Frank Zappa in your recent issue narrated very well the financial difficulties which a composer faces in the effort to achieve performances of his music. One of his remarks indirectly raised an issue which many musicians, writers, and congressmen have been discussing for years.

The orchestra committee of the Residentie Orchestra demanded royalties from the composer for making the records. I agree with Frank Zappa that this demand from the composer disregards the reality of recording economics and also suggests dangerous precedent. In the United States, congress has been considering for years a law which would provide musicians on a sound recording with royalties when a radio station or other media performs the sound recording.

The proposed law differs from Frank Zappa's situation in that the royalties payable to the musicians under the proposed law would not come from the composer but from a separate scale imposed upon the broadcast media and other performers of sound recordings. On its face, the law would in no way diminish the royalties due to the composer.

I invite any interested readers to address this question and to contact their congressmen accordingly.

L. James Juliano, Jr.
Cleveland, OH

HE OUGHT TO KNOW

There was a bit of excess shrinkage in the "Jazz Short Takes" section last month. On Oliver Lake's new album, Prophet, there's no "Donald Harris;" Donald Smith plays piano, Jerome Harris plays electric bass. Please tell Lester Pares.

Jerome Harris
Brooklyn, NY

Errata:

The photo collage accompanying Brian Cullman's column on African music last issue was incorrectly credited to Ahmed Yacoubi; the artist responsible for the work is Peggy Yunque. Apologies.

MICRO SIZE MICRO PRICE MICRO SIX

*A
Great
Holiday
Gift
Idea*

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World Radio History

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Industry News

Enterprising muggers are working the New Jersey ticket office dispensing New York area **Rolling Stones** tix. A member of this magazine's extended family had a knife put to his throat after collecting tickets. The choosy villains turned down wallet, watch and ring and took the tickets. There's no business like low business.

Collaborations abound this month and we'll just whet your appetite briefly: **Eric Clapton** played live with **Jeff Beck**... **Aretha** dueted with **George Benson**... **Eddie Rabbit** joined **Crystal Gayle**... **David Bowie** helped **Queen** for a cut on their *Greatest Hits*... the **L.A. Dodgers** hummed "She's A Bad Mama Jama" by **Carl Carlton** all through the series (George Steinbrenner is now buying up all the copies)... **Hall & Oates**, **Edgar Winter**, **Todd Rundgren** and **Rick Derringer** jammed during a Palladium benefit for the Real McCoy's stolen equipment.

Vic Garbarini, the "Fifth Beatle" (eat your heart out, Murray the K), has not been the same since he talked to **Ringo** this month. After telling us it was the most revealing, comprehensive interview Mr. Starkey had ever done on the Beatles, Vic has begun decorating his office with octopi, yellow submarines and roses. As soon as we break down the door and get the transcript, you'll read it here.

Commericalism corner: new marketing schemes with tie-ins to rock bands are everywhere. Some particularly enticing ones are Nestles' coupons giving away free EPs of **REO**, **Journey**, **Cheap Trick** and **Molly Hatchet** (we always said that stuff was bad for your teeth; Skoal and Busch beer use **Charlie Daniels**; McDonalds in Baltimore has school

notebooks with the **Commodores** and **REO** (junk food for all races) and Ronrico rum is sponsoring the new **Marshall Tucker** tour. Leave us not forget **Maurice White** and EW&F's Panasonic ad, for which Maurice actually did the story board. Next month, *Musician* may sponsor the **Chipmunks** 37-states-in-35-days extravaganza.

It should be pointed out that **Miles Davis'** current guitarist Mike Stern, currently lambasted in the jazz press for his loud rock guitar, is a devoted bebopper (and student of Pat Metheny's) whose amp has been cranked up to 10 by Davis himself, with the hoarse instruction to "play rock 'n' roll and don't touch that dial."

Max Roach has sent out a press release excoriating Leonard Feather for his unsympathetic review of Miles' Los Angeles date, Roach accuses Feather of chronic incomprehension of Afro-American music, artist-envy and a host of other imperfections. What Feather didn't know and Max doesn't mention is that Davis played his Hollywood Bowl date with a bad case of pneumonia.

Davis has either denied interviews to the jazz press or demanded extortionate amounts of money for them, but on the urging of **Wille Nelson** he granted an interview to Cheryl McCall of *People* magazine; who used only a small part of the conversation. You never can tell where the rest may turn up, but a nod is as good as a wink.

Tape Wars

Emotions are running high in the new round of the record industry vs. blank tape war. Sony Tape is sponsoring not only **Rod Stewart's** "Grande Tour" of '81-'82 (a not

unsurprising development in light of Jovan's underwriting of the Stone's antics) but also a live international TV-FM simulcast on Dec. 18, obviously perfect for taping.

Jazz

At least one well-known young artist was arrested in Italy for passing counterfeit *lira*. It seems that a group of promoters had taken to paying black American jazz players off in bad paper — how's a homeboy to know? The chic modernist in question was quickly released and the lead promoter — his name is Slezio; pronounce it — was quickly jailed, but the action resulted in the cancellation of several already-booked and badly-needed tours for a number of New York's finest.

Anyone remember the San Francisco church that made the late **John Coltrane** the object of its collective veneration? In the American way, they branched out into commerce, opening a number of businesses, among them a bakery that sells loaves of bread with the image of Coltrane emblazoned on the wrapper. It seems that Turiya Alice Coltrane, the widow of the apotheosized musician, has finally tired of it all: she's filed suit against the organization, not just for injunction and surcease but for \$7.5 million American. What price glory?

Chart Action

Chart action for most of the month was no action, at least at the top. The big four remained in perfect formation: Stones, Journey, Seger and Foreigner. Definitely rock. The Police pushed up from sixteen to four, bumping Seger. For the Stones, *Tattoo You* was their first platinum album ever. (They didn't sell that many records back then — nobody did.) For Bob Seger, *Nine Tonight* was a great haul for a night's work. For Journey and Foreigner, *Escape* and *4* were really just a good laugh on all those simpering rock critics who debunk hard pop but can't keep everyone from buying it. For the Police, *Ghost In The Machine* was their first serious threat to go to #1, as Sting boasted six weeks ago before anyone believed him.

Below the placid four-plus-one there were laid backs, losers and luckers. Dan Fogelberg, naturally, was laid back and didn't move from #6 all month. Daryl Hall and John Oates' *Private Eyes* and Billy Joel's *Attic* also bided their time, waiting for some dead rockers to fall past. Loser Stevie Nicks gently floated down several places (did he call Stevie Nicks a loser?) as did *Precious* Pat Benatar and Al Jarreau. Genesis was a big lucker as *abacab* entered at 41 a month ago and is now lucky seven.

re·ac·tor



neil young cra·zy horse

Produced by David Briggs, Tim Mulligan & Neil Young with Jerry Napier.



On Reprise Records & Tapes

World Radio History

Olivia Newton-John took only a week to get *Physical* to 13 from her entry at 34. (Outraged denizens of Utah and the Bible Belt are banning the album, decrying its lyrics as "pubescent.") Barry Manilow joins the ravaging hordes of adult contemporary conquerors at #14 (as Kenny Rogers is fought off and Willie Nelson peaks at 27). As for the "big splash" award, Earth, Wind & Fire's *Raise!* entered at ten. Look out.

Healthy records trying to get into the playoffs are releases by Kool & the Gang and Luther Vandross and the Go-Go's. Big shots humiliated in the chartwars include Rickie Lee's *Pirates* and *Pretenders II*, not to

mention the Kinks' *Give The People*. The Rossington Collins Band, Little River Band and Devo get good odds to win some respect. King Crimson's *Discipline* is #69 (with a little white star). Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon* jumped ten points to #136 after only 388 weeks! A new Diana Ross *Greatest Hits* LP and similar retreats from Queen and Blondie are expected to cause trouble.

Why is it that we always get more pleasure telling you what went down on the AM charts? When last we saw "Endless Love", it was one tiny week away from tying the all-time singles mark for weeks at #1. Sorry Di and Li, you'll have to remain tied for second.

Another numero uno couldn't hang: After losing most of the nation somewhere between the moon and a large East Coast city, Christopher Cross dropped to #9. "For Your Eyes Only" by Sheena Easton withered twelve places in a week and is being administered last rites. Well, enough fun.

Oates and Hall and their remake of "Kiss On My List", Private Eyes", are the new Derby winners; the Stones' remake of "Brown Sugar", "Start Me Up", can't seem to get beyond placing or showing. Olivia Newton-John's "Physical" leaptfrogged in the final turn to third, just in front of Foreigner's new "Waiting For A Girl Like You", relief for their sagging "Urgent". Bob Seger held firm in the middle of the top tune while Dan Fogelberg couldn't. The Little River Band ("Night Owls"), Air Supply ("Here I Am") and Rick Springfield ("I've Done Everything") handle the token homogenized-rock quota for the month (don't ask us to list these tunes next month, too). A wonderful Larry Carlton solo redeems "Hill St. Blues".

Back at the stables, the Police's "Every Little Thing She Does" is ready for the second heat, as is a new soupy Commodores hit appropriately entitled "Oh No" and Diana Ross' remake of Frankie Lyman's "Why Do Fools Fall In Love?" ("Why Did Diana Do This Song?" is more like it.) Barry Manilow has another nostalgia cheeseburger, "The Old Songs". Can we go back to the part about what went down?

The real action took place on the Soul LP charts. Rick James finally lost his grip on first place to Al Jarreau who tried to break away but after two scant weeks got knocked out by *The Many Facets Of Roger*, which came up twenty points in three weeks! ("I Heard It Through The Grapevine", the album's first single, shot to the top of the Soul singles race with similar celerity.) Who the heck is this guy? Well, Roger Troutman is a synthesizer funk-freak in the best tradition of P-Funk/Bootsy/Zapp madness. After shaking everybody out, Roger was promptly bumped by nice-guy Luther Vandross, a vocal arranger-producer with a list of former employees (Bowie, Chaka, Michael, Bette, "The Wiz," getting the idea?) that would finish this column. His album's title cut, "Never Too Much" also dominated the Soul singles charts. Now that's what we race-callers like to see, new blood and heavy action. Aretha, Four Tops and Teddy P. are also tough sellers and whenever Kool, Prince and the Isleys have new releases, everyone takes cover. Quincy Jones' productions of Patti Austin and James Ingram sound particularly nice, but we're not supposed to be taking sides here, are we?

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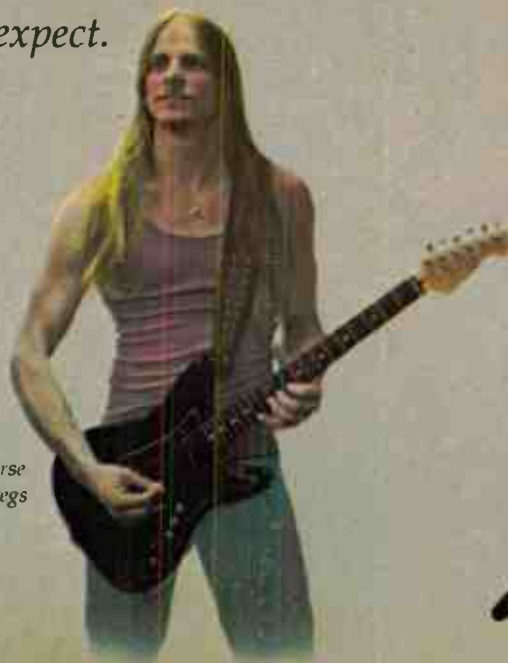
Photographed in a dressing room at the "Whisky"

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THE POSSIBILITIES OF LENE LOVICH

After the trendy splash of her first years as a pop phenomenon, the peasant queen from outer space is trimming back and settling in for the long haul, building her own studio and readying some provocative new music.

By Toby Goldstein

Take two woman musicians, and consider their parallels and alternatives. On the one hand, there's Blondie's Deborah Harry, unquestionably a superstar, undeniably glamorous, and enjoying life as a pacesetter. Harry, raised unostentatiously in New Jersey, toiled as a waitress in Max's Kansas City, outlasted a flirtation with heroin, passed through a folk-rock group and several pre-punk outfits before launching Blondie at the Bowery landmark-to-be, CBGB, in 1975. Deborah is reinforced in both a personal and collaborative way by her guitarist-boyfriend, Chris Stein, who has been her companion for many years. Deborah has endorsed designer jeans, been photographed for international fashion magazines and gone to the best parties. She's accepted, and she's happy.

On the other hand, there is Lene Lovich, who arrived in New York for her latest promotional tour, carrying, she says, "two suitcases full of rags." She twists the bits of scarfing and lace around her head and body to create an effect which suits her perfectly but might be described by a fashion critic as peasant-from-outer-space. The presence of her bald-headed guitarist-boyfriend of long standing, Les Chappell, reinforces that image. Lovich was born in Detroit but emigrated to the U.K. as an adolescent, dropped into and out of art school and pursued an itinerant life for five years or more. She earned her way by selling at street markets, then performing with fringe theatre groups on board ships' orchestras, as a disco songwriter and professional screamer in horror movies. The unified efforts of Lovich and Chappell were eventually rewarded in 1978 with a signing to Stiff Records and three moderately successful recordings: *Stateless*, *Flex* and *New Toy*.

Lene Lovich's enlargement of the band's concept in performance parallels the increased maturity of her recordings. After being "discovered" by influential London disc jockey Charlie Gillett in 1979, Lovich released *Stateless*, a free-spirited album that classified Lene as a wild-eyed freak. One could imagine a Slavic army's onrush to the martial airs of songs like "One In A 1,000,000" and "Home." The Cossack touch, coupled with Lovich's unearthly promenade of vocal sound effects over-



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Lene Lovich has grown beyond novelty vocal trills and cuckoo noises, now using her impressive range for more subtle moods and rhythms.

shadowed Lene's ability to sing with delicacy, "Too Tender (to Touch)" and with a sense of humor, "I Say When."

Flex, Lene's second album hinted that she and Les Chappell were moving toward a concentration on rhythm on their songs, particularly on "Funky Talk" and the single "Bird Song," both of which blended copious keyboards with a jazz beat. But *Flex*, still adhering to a conventional story-song format and utilizing an over-dramatic men's chorus on "Bird Song," only locks her more eagerly into the babushka-baby stereotype.

The six-song EP, *New Toy*, indicates that Lene Lovich has found a way to push her and Chappell's rhythmic dedication to the forefront. When military overtones are meant to exist, as on "Cats Away," they are given free reign, rather than forced to compete with Lene's emotive voice. Yet when she wishes to, Lene is able to bring forth her tender side without ridicule, on the bal-

lad "Never Never Land." *New Toy* is considered by Lene to be a record of transition, pointing the way for her and Chappell to immerse themselves as they desire — in songs which utilize Lene's admittedly primitive saxophone, in slices of sound where Lene can make all the funny noises she wishes, or for that matter, in conventional tear-jerkers.

Lovich retains a constant awareness of the battles she's fought to develop her image in a way she sees fit. "A lot of people come up to me and say, 'I work in the post office, and if I came in dressed like you I'd get the sack.' But it's become important enough to me that I have spent a lot of time and effort trying to create some sort of occupation in which I can be myself. It's not easy.

"I've been very quiet in England lately, because I find it very difficult to stand side-by-side with this new romantic dress-up thing. I don't want to be a party poop, because I like to see people

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enjoying themselves, but it seems very sad to me that people feel they have to spend a lot of money on clothes. I did a show with Adam and the Ants and I like Adam — I think he's got a lot of zap and I like that in a person — but when he went on in a newspaper article about how his new outfit cost \$2000, I thought of all the people who look up to him who'll think they can never be any good because they haven't the money."

Throughout the conversation, Lene acknowledged her delight in gaining "small freedoms which don't cost anything at all," such as the greater acceptance of her vocally distinctive, highly rhythmic music, especially in the U.S., where "New Toy" has become a substantial dance floor hit. She is proud of increasingly utilizing her voice's vast range, stretching it to build rhythms and

heighten mood, rather than simply call attention to itself with the trills and cuckoo noises that appeared on "Lucky Number." In fact, her writing development with Chappell resulted in two instrumental tracks on the *New Toy* EP.

"I did sing 'Savages' with words last night," Lene admitted, referring to her guest performance at Stiff America's launch party for its new loft quarters in lower Manhattan. "However, the band played 'Cats Away' as well as most of the other songs on which I play saxophone. There's nothing more powerful than a voice and words for creating a bit of attention, but I'm concentrating on the instrumental side of the voice rather than the verbal side just now." Particularly when Lovich duetted with her friend, the anarchistic German singer Nina Hagen, who uses her voice almost

exclusively as a dramatic instrument, the strength the two women projected was considerable.

But balanced against the musical joys which Lovich and Chappell are constantly discovering are Lene's very practical considerations of the "larger freedoms," creative as well as personal, which often go to the highest bidder. The current state of England has driven much of its musical community to costumery or catastrophe, but to Lene Lovich the artist's future is most closely tied to understanding the meaning of necessity and survival.

She recalls, "When all the bands started five years ago, it was on a much smaller scale. There were a lot of small clubs. You could do a tour around the pub circuit in London and that would be enough to get you off the ground. And once people knew about you, you'd go outside London and keep growing. But it comes to the point where you can't keep doing things for nothing. It's all right to hump the gear yourself and not have a roadie but it gets to be more than hard work. It becomes detrimental to the creative side.

"You can share a room with cockroaches for ten or fifteen years, but after that it gets boring. I think it's mostly people who've come up from a fairly well-off background who say it doesn't matter. Now I'm not saying money can make you happy, just that there's a sense of survival in most people, especially people who've never had very much. I had to leave school when I was very young and I've always had to work, but you have to want to do something better for yourself. You have to want to try. I don't want to die. Not yet," she states quietly and unpretentiously, but with conviction.

Lovich and Chappell's priority, in the face of the music industry's leanness and greed, is to build their own recording studio inside the garage of their new home outside London. (Giving up residence in the city was another trade they had to make to develop their independence.) Although the idea of performing in a trendy establishment like Studio 54 gave Lene cause for concern, and she worriedly asked if the club still maintained an exclusionary door policy, she was willing to play the date for the boost in financing their studio project.

"It's become clearer to us that we want to have more say in the production of things and we really need time to experiment, so we have to become independent. We did the gigs because we needed a bit of help with our expenses. I *have* to say that because many bands don't want to admit it's expensive to tour and you have to make money if you want to survive. Les and I have worked out that our personal development need is to build our own studio, but I think other things have to change. I can see bands getting more and more into video and cable. That has

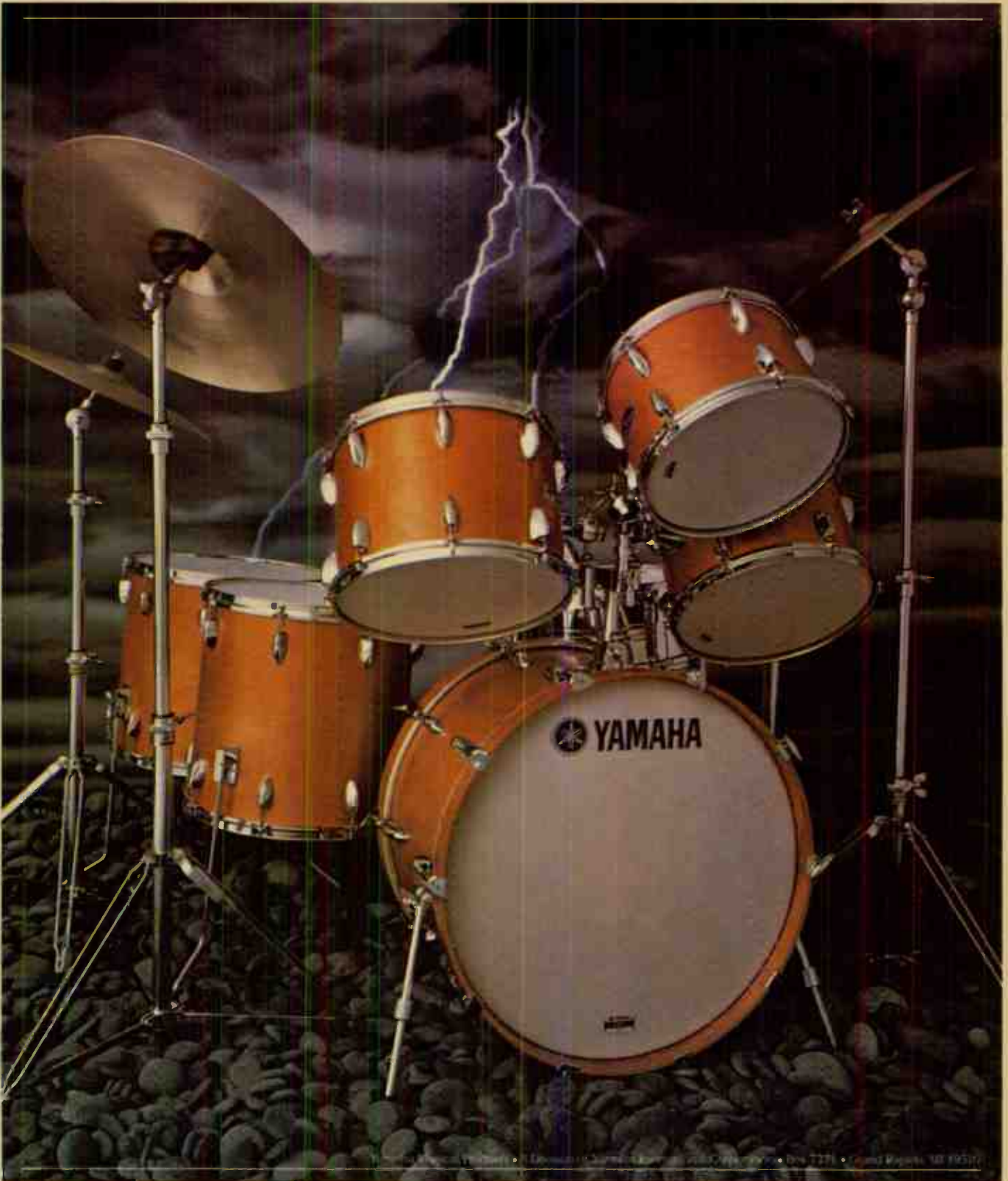
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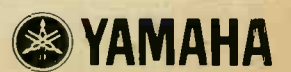
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YES, THERE ARE SOME GOOD CHRISTMAS RECORDS

For yuletide consumption, the old maxim is truer than ever: it's the singer, not the song.

By Brian Cullman

As far as I'm concerned, there's no such thing as a "good" version of "Frosty The Snowman," "Jingle Bells," "Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer," "Mamacita, Dond'esta Santa Claus?" or any number of other seasonal atrocities. These are songs that can best be appreciated by very dim children and professional ice skaters. The only way to deal with them is to circumnavigate them completely, to re-fashion them, the way Phil Spector and the Ventures do, into unbridled, knock-down-the-Christmas-tree trash, a free-for-all in which the songs (almost always) lose and the artist wins. Phil Spector meeting Christmas head-on is a little like a title match between Ali and Leon Spinks — someone's bound to get messed up, but the fun is in the fray.

These are not songs to be taken seriously (hell, for the most part these aren't even songs to be *listened* to), so the last thing you need are smarmy, sincere versions of them; most artists with any integrity can so dominate Christmas songs that they take on the singer's personal landscape: Willie Nelson somehow makes "Winter Wonderland" (one of the all-time dismal songs) into a haunting prairie lullabye; Otis Redding raises "White Christmas" to tragic proportions (in his version, fraught with the desperation of "I've Been Loving You Too Long," you know from the start that Christmas won't be white, that there will be no presents underneath the tree — which itself will be battered and dying — and that Christmas Eve will find Otis alone and abandoned, staring tearfully out the window); Bruce Springsteen makes Santa's mission an epic quest, and the hero of "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" is a loner (Born To Sled!) dedicated to the pursuit of justice, an obsessive who will not rest until he has meted out proper punishment to the "naughty" and just rewards to the "nice."

Christmas carols are a different matter altogether. They seem not to have been written but handed down like family secrets through the years. They have genuine lives of their own, come with all the associative baggage and mystery of childhood attached to them, and can't be dominated. John Fahey and Emmylou Harris are excellent interpreters primarily because they give in to the songs; they let the songs move them with all the simplicity and power intact.



DEBORAH FEINGOLD/RIC MURRAY

Even though you know some of these records are dogs, they can be hard to resist.

Emmylou Harris — *Light Of The Stable* (Warner Bros.)

This album is a revelation of sorts and has finally given me access to Emmylou Harris, a singer I've always respected but never particularly wanted to listen to. She has a pure, unaffected voice, intelligent phrasing, and a tendency to stand with both feet firmly planted behind the song (unlike most interpreters, who stand like road blocks between the listener and the song: "You want the song, Buster, you gotta get past *me* first!") In other contexts, this reticence makes Harris a bit anonymous, but here it gives her the chance to actually inhabit the songs, to give them a sense of wonder and discovery. Everything about this album bespeaks care, intelligence, and, above all, faith — if no other kind, at least faith in the worth and power of these songs: "Away In The Manger," "O Little Town Of Bethlehem," an *acapella* "First Noel," "Silent Night," "Golden Cradle," and Rodney Crowell's "Angel Eyes." Willie Nelson, Neil Young, Dolly Parton and Linda Rondstadt all add harmonies, but this is clearly Emmylou Harris' show; I can't imagine a more beautiful Christmas record.

John Fahey — *The New Possibility* (Takoma)

Well, maybe I can. These solo guitar interpretations of carols and hymns make up my other favorite Christmas album, highlighting all that is best about Fahey: his incredible spacing and phras-

ing; his quiet mysticism (the album's title comes from a line by Paul Tillich); his love of Mississippi John Hurt and Fred McDowell; his ability to strip an idea or a melody to its very bones and build from the inside out, breath by breath. A second album of carols (*Christmas with John Fahey*) was released a few years ago, but it lacks the strength and urgency and sheer surprise of *The New Possibility*.

Willie Nelson — *Pretty Paper* (Columbia)

Even the grand old codger can't redeem "Jingle Bells" or "Frosty The Snowman," but he makes "Winter Wonderland" downright listenable, and works wonders with "Silent Night," accompanied by Jody Payne's fine acoustic guitar. In an odd twist, he somehow makes tin-pan-alleyish tunes like "White Christmas" and his own "Pretty Paper" read like bona fide carols while making "O Little Town of Bethlehem" seem like something the reindeer dragged in.

Phil Spector's Christmas Album (Pavilion Records)

All of Spector's contradictions emerge in full force, showing him as both a genius and a sap. His mousey eulogy on Christmas, spoken over a string section and a heavenly choir (of, one assumes, all of his artists, humming dutifully behind him) is no worse than Dennis Wilson's on the *Beach Boys' Christmas Album*, but then no one's ever accused Dennis Wilson of genius. Some

of the recordings here are simply quirky (the Ronnettes singing "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" or the Crystals singing "Parade Of The Wooden Soldiers"), but Darlene Love's "Christmas (Baby, Please Come Home)" rivals the best of Spector's work, and the Crystals' re-working of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" is inspired. Bruce Springsteen's been using this arrangement for his version, a standout at his Christmas concerts, which is now available in a spirited live version on *In Harmony 2* (Columbia), an album of songs for children by Dr. John, James Taylor, Bruce Pendergrass, Billy Joel and others.

The Ventures' Christmas Album (Liberty)

The silliest *listenable* Christmas album ever made (no one's ever going to unwrap *The Star Wars Christmas Album* or *Christmas in Poland*, so they don't count). Everything is re-worked to sound like "Walk Don't Run" (which can't help but improve things), and they have the audacity to stick the intro to "Like A Rolling Stone" onto their version of "Silver Bells." Total genius!

Merry Cajun Christmas (Swallow)

In the spirit of Clifton Chenier, these are zydeco versions of Christmas standards: a fiddle and accordion jump-up rendition of "Jingle Bells" and "Silent Night" sung in indecipherable cajun French, and Hasa Ortego's recitation of "Christmas Eve On The Big Bayou," in which Santa (who appears to be a clumsy, bewhiskered Fats Domino) arrives on a sleigh pulled by lazy croco-

diles and distributes gumbo and boudin (hot Louisiana sausage) to all at hand.

Soul Christmas (Atco)

A sly party album: the emphasis is on *soul*, with little more than a nod to Christmas Otis Redding, in his best "Cigarette and Coffee" style lurches through the most desperate version of "White Christmas" ever recorded; Clarence Carter winks his way through the bawdy "Back Door Santa" ("I ain't like old St. Nick/He don't come but once a year."); Joe Tex's sentimental "I'll Make Everyday Christmas (For My Woman)" is almost as affecting as his classic "Hold What You Got," and shows Tex rivalling Bobby Womack in phrasing and nuance.

Rhythm & Blues Christmas (UA)


A near-perfect collection of seasonal R&B and novelty songs compiled by Snuff Garrett. Included are the Drifters' classic "White Christmas," Charlie Brown's "Merry Christmas, Baby," Chuck Berry's "Run Rudolph Run," along with appropriate songs by B.B. King, Amos Milburn, the Orioles, and Lowell Fulson, among others. All that's missing is Walter Davis' "Santa Claus Blues" and "James Brown's "Santa Claus Go Straight To The Ghetto."

Jingle Bell Jazz (Columbia)

What are Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Lionel Hampton, Dave Brubeck, Carmen McRae, and a host of other respected and reputable musicians doing playing dreck like "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree," "Jingle Bells" and "The Christmas Song?" They seem to be asking themselves the same question, shift-

ing from one foot to another as they step up to take their respective solos, ashamed to look each other in the eye. Only Miles Davis (aided by Bob Dorough's wonderful vocal on "Blue Xmas") and Chico Hamilton (with Charles Lloyd on sax) emerge unscathed. Cut in the early 60s, these sides evoke the Playboy cool-yule sense of the time: lecherous jazzers in fake Santa beards ogling busty little starlets as they bend down to stuff the stocking with bottles of Chivas and naughty pictures. For real jazz evocations of Christmas songs, try Charlie Parker's "White Christmas," Louis Armstrong's phenomenal rendition of "The Night Before Christmas," Jimi Hendrix's "Little Drummer Boy," the MJQ's improvisation on traditional English carols, or Lord Buckley's "Scrooge," a jive version of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Elvis Presley — Elvis Sings The Wonderful World Of Christmas (RCA)

You can probably live without Elvis' operatic renditions of "O Come All Ye Faithful" and "Silver Bells," but a six-minute version of "Merry Christmas, Baby" is awesome: Elvis kicks, moans, pushes the band, and carries on with ferocious horniness, all but decimating the original version of the song in the process. Silver Bells, my ass! The way he pushes himself, this could almost be Elvis' "Listen To The Lion." The song is available on a 12" picture disc from England (RCA) backed with a sappy version of "It Won't Seem Like Christmas (Without You)." 



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ERNESTINE ANDERSON'S TRUE GRIT

A heavy hitter from the fifties,
lost to jazz singing for a decade,
comes back to make her move.

By Paul de Barros

With so many of the classic fifties songbirds coming back to give present-day pop "jazz singers" some genuine instruction in the art — women like Betty Carter, Sheila Jordan and Abbey Lincoln — the way was cleared for return to form by one of the very best, Ernestine Anderson. At one time, Ernestine was rated number three by American jazz critics (behind Ella and Sarah), her face graced *Time's* cover, and her *Hot Cargo*, was as valuable as its title. Twenty-five years later, having survived the ravages of the "no-jazz-please" era, she is back, sounding as if she had only taken a summer off.

Actually, comparing Ernestine to Ella, or Sarah, or her past peers is misleading. Ella's a girlish soprano and Sarah's purple cloud has little to do with Ms. Anderson, tipped to earth by her hearty, ironic sensibilities to live with the rest of us common-folk. Ernestine has a soulfulness, a grit that recalls Aretha or Etta. Her range is down low, rich and sexy, as round as the bell of a *cor anglais*. Her phrasing is at the service of what she has to say; she is a grown-up teller of tales and makes no false moves, tells no lies. It's her home-fried inflection that lets you know there's some Texas testifyin' going on beneath that genteel supperclub gown.

That Texas testifyin' came from roots in a Houston Baptist Church, but young Ernestine found the lure of the ballroom irresistible; after she debuted at the Eldorado, she was summarily tossed out of the choir. Alarmed by this development and by the thirteen-year-old's falling grades, Ernestine's father decided to end her career by moving to a city with a humdrum nightlife scene, and took a job in the shipyards of Seattle.

Fortunately for us, the ploy backfired. Johnny Otis met the young chanteuse and took her right out on the road with his band. Then came Lionel Hampton (1952-53), a successful Stan Kenton audition nixed by a baby on the way, Gigi Gryce and some nowhere lounge gigs in Manhattan. Ironically, Ernestine's big break took her to Sweden to play with the Rolf Ericson Band and resulted in her hit, *Hot Cargo*.

Toasted by the *New York Times* as an equal to Ella in 1958, feted by *Time*, a perennial top vote-getter in jazz polls, Ernestine seemed at the top of her field.



DAN LAMONT

Ernestine sinks her teeth into a song with a survivor's soulfulness, a grown-up teller of tales who makes no false moves and tells no lies.

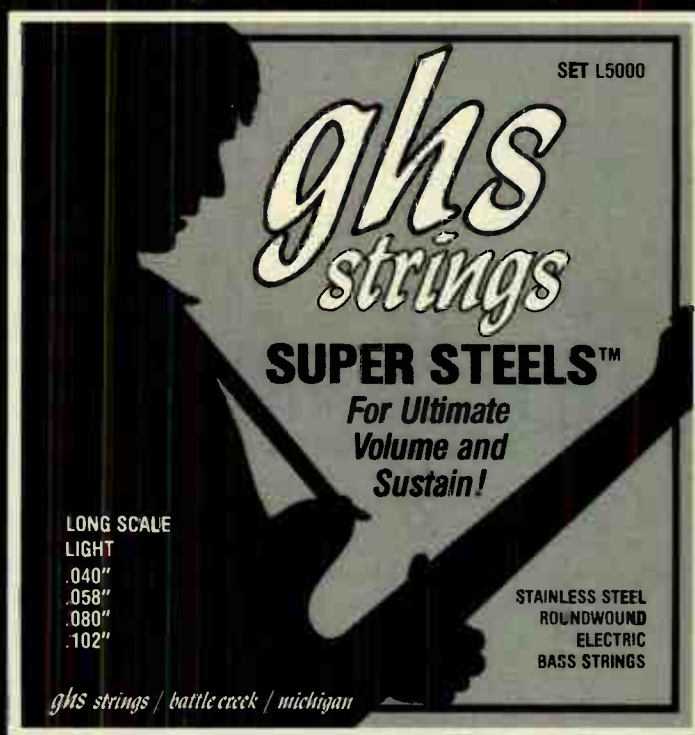
But success did not avert three problems. Her record company, Mercury, refused to promote any albums but her very first one. Ernestine herself found the high-pressure life of stardom to be pulling her apart: "I'd been busy concentrating on my career ever since I was thirteen. I'd never gotten in touch with myself as a person. There was a war. I couldn't put the two together, the homebody and the showsinger." The third problem was beyond anyone's control: the rock boom. "In 1964, agents just didn't want to know you if you sang jazz."

"I was living in Los Angeles in 1966 when I decided I just wanted to give it up. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I didn't want to sing anymore. As I recall, it was a bad time of life all around, I mean, it's still bad, but for some reason it got to me, kids takin' dope and dyin', all that I had reached the point where I just wanted out."

Ernestine spent the next ten years in Seattle, "getting to know my children." She managed to resolve some of her personal conflicts through Buddhist chanting: "Buddhism has allowed me to try to find out who I am, what my relation-

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ship is to the rest of the world. There's more to me than show business. I'm a lot of things. I'm a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend. I'm even a grandmother."

But she had done too much to be forgotten. In 1976, Seattle jazz writer Maggie Hawthorn coaxed her to the Concord Jazz Festival in northern California (Ernestine seems to draw out the protective side of critics: it had been San Francisco jazz writer Ralph Gleason who originally put her in touch with Mercury years before.) Soon, she was doing gigs at Donte's and the Parisian Room in L.A. and twice-annual shows at Seattle's Parnell's. Concord Jazz released a series of albums with Ray Brown at the helm. When she returned to such European spots as Ronnie Scott's in London (where she had opened with Yusef

Lateef 20 years earlier) or Berlin, fans assailed her to autograph albums she barely recognized.

The sessions with Ray Brown took her into a genre she was born to sing, R&B, something she had refused to do in the sixties. Ernestine took that uptown sophistication and mixed it right in with some downhome funk on the title cut of her fifth and latest Concord Jazz LP, *Never Make Your Move Too Soon*. The song is a revenge-is-sweet blues aimed at a scrapped lover, full of exuberance and contempt. Why it hasn't been released as a single is one of 1981's biggest mysteries. Ernestine likes not only the feel of the song but the fact that it's a great vehicle for her comeback: "I love it. Some friends from Dallas called the other night and said the record was

getting played down there a lot. It's great to have something that's getting you from point A to point B."

The rest of *Move* is a model record of straight-line jazz singing, a flat-out joy. There are hints of Dinah Washington and, to a lesser extent, Carmen McRae, but she displays all the emotional and musical command of someone fundamentally on her own. The trio of Monty Alexander, Ray Brown and Frank Gant offers exemplary support (though Alexander's solos are not very imaginative). Ray Brown had a large hand in shaping the sessions and should be commended for including some blues roots and both the Harold Arlen treat "As Long As I Live" and "What A Difference A Day Makes," which Ernestine handles with a sassy naturalness.

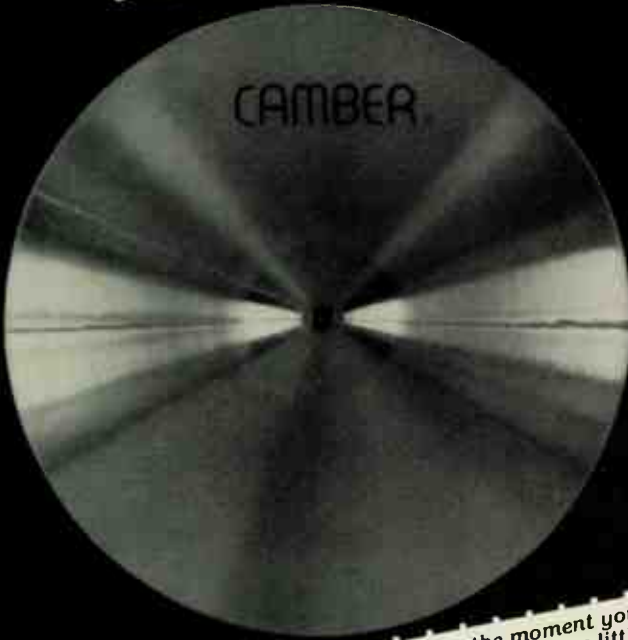
If there is any flaw, it is Ernestine's onstage shyness, her failure to project a strong stage *persona*. This may stem from her humble preference for what is ordinary and everyday. She conveys neither the spicy flourish of Carmen McRae nor the nutty honesty of Abbey Lincoln. But resolving some of her identity questions may have released a more dynamic Ernestine Anderson. At her last gig at Parnell's in Seattle this summer, the show felt much looser and more charismatic. She drew the audience in with preacher-blues intros, cut up a little, mugged and gave her cheerleader grin. She got every woman in the place chanting along with "Never Make Your Move Too Soon" and revitalized Ray Charles' "I Want A Little Girl". Even handling stagey ballads like "Poor Butterfly" and "Why Did I Choose You?" she sounded like a lady who knows exactly where she's going.

Does hombody Ernestine feel threatened by the travel requirements of showbiz Ernestine, or by the pressures of heavy performing schedules? "It hasn't gotten to that point... yet," she laughed hoarsely, "but it's gaining momentum. I haven't done this in a long time. What I think we're going to do is try and get bookings with breaks in between. I don't want a breakneck pace. I've been working three months straight now and I'm physically tired. It hits me in the throat first. In the mornings, I can barely talk.

"But at least I realize now that I don't have to live somewhere else to remain in the business. I can get on a plane and go anywhere. Of course I couldn't live here now if I hadn't gone away before. I mean, I went all the way to Sweden to get things going at one time." Her hometown has repaid the compliment. Last August the mayor of Seattle proclaimed "Ernestine Anderson Day" which, she says ingenuously, meant more to her than all the glamorous gigs she's been doing abroad.

If Ernestine's ready to come out again, I hope we're ready to hear her. **M**

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MARIANNE

Originally typecast as the virgin princess of British rock royalty, Marianne Faithfull returned last year with a bitter, painfully honest confessional, "Broken English." Now she shares some tales of beauty and power, some hard-won musical insights and some "Dangerous Acquaintances."



EBET ROBERTS

FAITHFULL

By Kristine McKenna

A stunningly beautiful teenager, Marianne Faithfull was the quintessential Carnaby Street nymphet. A ghostly pale blond English rose, her mouth a sullen mod pout, eyes wide, limpid and blank she looked like some pre-Raphaelite virgin mistakenly plucked in the wrong century — the perfect

embodiment of sixties swinging London cool. When she was sixteen she was "discovered" by Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham at a party for the Stones, and the following year, 1966, she made her professional debut with "As Tears Go By," a saccharine pop ditty written for her by Keith Richard and her then-boyfriend Mick Jagger. "Tears" went to number one and was followed by three more charting singles and a five-

year relationship with Jagger. Together they wrote the classic druggie's lament, "Sister Morphine," prior to her split from him in 1969. She also made two suicide attempts during that period of her life, one of which resulted in a six-day coma and a miscarriage.

Marianne Faithfull was not a happy girl. Her status as legendary girlfriend to the stars coupled with a crippling and well-publicized addiction to heroin tended to eclipse her activities as an artist in her own right, and she spent the next ten years in a drug-induced twilight. Her child from a previous marriage that ended when her celebrity began was taken from her when the court declared her an unfit mother. She made occasional stabs at acting, appearing in plays by Chekov and Shakespeare, and in 1976 released *Faithless*, her first album since the sixties. Recorded over a period of two years, the LP was indifferently received on all fronts.

Then in 1979 Marianne Faithfull surprised everyone and released a great record. She'd conquered her drug problem with an eight-month hospital stay and *Broken English* was, in essence, a final purging of the poisonous residue left by the ten-year nightmare she'd just ended. Bitter and enraged at discovering that the glittering diamonds, money, beauty, drugs and glamor were in reality lumps of coal, Marianne had evolved into the antithesis of the sweet-faced folkie of the sixties. Her love songs had come to be riddled with jealousy and revenge and her voice was now a harsh cigarette-and-whiskey rasp. *Broken English* was a harrowing episode of rock *verité*; it garnered a Grammy nomination in America and went gold in Europe.

Marianne got our attention with *Broken English*, so she's been able to relax and enjoy herself a bit with its follow-up of this year, *Dangerous Acquaintances*, which she laughingly describes as "a happy record." *Dangerous Acquaintances* is a bit less gothic than its predecessor, but the stormy mood she conjured on *Broken English* is still very much in evidence here. She plans to do a major world tour — "my first and last" — which will commence in March of next year.

Marianne presently lives in London with her husband of two years, Ben Brierly, one-time member of the punk band the Vibrators and currently with the Blood Poets. I met with her one morning at Island Records' New York offices.

Exquisitely dressed in a cream hounds-tooth suit and silk blouse, Marianne Faithfull is still a strikingly beautiful woman. Kicking off her shoes and sitting Indian-style like a child, she nonetheless exuded a regal air. She wore no makeup the day we met, chain-smoked, sipped a glass of water, fidgeted and tempered her obvious nervousness with a droll sense of humor. A voracious reader, she had a pile of books with her; Jane Austen was on the top. There is an unmistakable fragility about Marianne Faithfull, but she struck me ultimately as a formidably resilient woman. Just how tough she is can be seen in the fact that she has the strength to reveal her vulnerabilities.

MUSICIAN: What precipitated your reemergence last year with *Broken English*? I read that you were inspired by

punk. Is that true?

FAITHFULL: Partly, yes. That gave me a certain amount of confidence. One of the things that always floored me was that thing of trying to compete with super rock 'n' roll groups, and punk smashed that. I thought, if they can get up and do it then I can too — and I could.

MUSICIAN: How do you see your music evolving? How is the new album different from the last one?

FAITHFULL: (laughing) *Dangerous Acquaintances* is my attempt at a happy record. I knew that it was terribly important that I not be typecast with this single record. I could see it coming — 'the rock 'n' roll tragedy queen,' which is just as bad an image as "the victim." So I really tried to make it a bit more upbeat, although it's impossible for me to completely suppress the other half of my

nature. I can't help writing edgy little songs. "Intrigue" was the closest I could come to a love song. I have written songs without any sort of edge to them. The last banal song I wrote was "Easy in the City."

MUSICIAN: Do you feel that an absence of edge equals banality?

FAITHFULL: I don't know. All I can say is that I live my own life very intensely.

MUSICIAN: It's a popular myth that one must be in some sort of turmoil or conflict to do creative work. Do you feel there's any truth to that theory?

FAITHFULL: I certainly work best with my back against the wall.

MUSICIAN: How do you feel about yourself as a vocalist?

FAITHFULL: I respect excellence and would really like to be a great singer. Nina Simone is my idea of a great singer. There are many different kinds of singing though. There's pure, beautiful sound you find in great opera and jazz singers, then there's another class where communication is the focal point. Personally I'm more attracted by words.

MUSICIAN: Who has influenced you?

FAITHFULL: Buddy Holly, Elvis, the Everly Brothers, Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, James Brown, Bessie Smith, Billy Holiday, Ma Rainey.

MUSICIAN: What's the quality common to all those artists?

FAITHFULL: Soul.

MUSICIAN: All of those artists tend to be of the fifties and sixties. How about current music. Does it excite you?

FAITHFULL: I like the Sex Pistols very much, Kid Creole & the Coconuts, and my husband's band, the Blood Poets.

MUSICIAN: Is there a particular audience you hope to reach?

FAITHFULL: Everybody. I don't see the point of making elitist records. If you're going to do it you may as well get into it with both feet. Perhaps later on in my life I can withdraw a little more and make really arty records, which of course I'd like to do.

MUSICIAN: Don't you consider *Broken English* a fairly arty record?

FAITHFULL: Yes, I do. I have a tendency towards artiness and have to force myself to work in a more commercial way; it's something I have to do. There are many ways I could make money. The Sunday newspapers offered me £160,000 for my life story, but I'd rather make my money by making these records and keep some kind of dignity.

MUSICIAN: How did Steve Winwood become involved in your current music?

FAITHFULL: I've known Steve since I was sixteen. On *Broken English* the songs were not that together and he sort of came and saved the day. He didn't have that big a hand in the new album, apart from the song we wrote together.

MUSICIAN: When you have a co-writing credit what do you usually contribute? Lyrics? Melody? Arrangement?

FAITHFULL: A little of everything.

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Sometimes solely the lyric. On "For Beauty's Sake" for instance, I wrote all the lyrics. Sometimes someone in the band will bring in a stanza and say, "Here, finish it!" and I'll do that. Some of the songs, "Eye Communication" for instance, are written by the band in the studio.

MUSICIAN: Does your band find it easy to collaborate?

FAITHFULL: No, we fight like cats! In the end I suppose that's productive but it's really hell at the time.

MUSICIAN: Your last record was frequently described as being "vengeful" and "bitter." Do you think those adjectives are appropriate?

FAITHFULL: Sure — and that was that! I got it out and therefore it went away. That record was very cathartic for me and a lot of fun as well.

MUSICIAN: Do you feel it's been a disadvantage in life having been born a great beauty?

FAITHFULL: I never think of myself as beautiful. I suppose I was very beautiful when I was much younger but I didn't realize it at the time. A few weeks ago I saw a film in which I played Ophelia. I never watch anything I do but in that instance I couldn't get out of it. I was in a room with some friends and to run would have been cowardly, so I had to sit there and watch it. And I suddenly realized, "God, how beautiful you were!"

MUSICIAN: Did you derive pleasure from your beauty?

FAITHFULL: I derived power from it.

MUSICIAN: Is beauty the most potent coin of the realm?

My image is terribly accurate, despite the fact it was created years ago for me; the whole thing — the little virgin, the drug addict, the filthy dirty Rolling Stone girlfriend...

FAITHFULL: Only when you're young and stupid and then you use it as a weapon. But look — I'm not beautiful now, although perhaps I've achieved some kind of beauty of spirit.

MUSICIAN: Is fame an aphrodisiac? There seems to be a strong sexual charge connected with it.

FAITHFULL: Power is an aphrodisiac and there is a degree of power that comes with fame.

MUSICIAN: A British paper recently accused you of having fabricated an exploitive persona. Do you feel there's any truth to that?

FAITHFULL: I don't think I fabricated it at all. It was there so I stepped into it and used it. Why let it go to waste? Instead of me being exploited, I took the reins and exploited it. And that was a first in my life.

MUSICIAN: Is it necessary to have an exaggerated image in order to sell pop

continued on pg. 104

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DEFUNKT

"When he was fifteen, Joe Bowie led the baddest funk band in St. Louis," proclaimed Lester Bowie in an interview last year. Well now brother Joe is trying to lead the baddest funk band in New York. His latest group called Defunkt has been the talk of New York and the toast of Europe ever since the punkers, the minimalists, the mock-song makers and the dancers rediscovered the power of funk.

Defunkt is a groove band, the sort of band that used to play the Chittlin' Circuit, pumping out R&B, popular jazz standards and even an original or two. You can still find these bands in cities like New Orleans, playing places like Dorothy's Medallion Lounge where the value of the music is measured by the number of people on the dance floor. This is not to say the music is of little or no importance, because every subtle shift in tempo or movement by the lead singer or player should complete the circuit between the band and audience.

That's why Joe Bowie doesn't hesitate to stop Defunkt in mid-bar and have the song started over. He wants the tempo to be right, because he works best when people dance to Defunkt. That's also why Defunkt's

JOE BOWIE OF DEFUNKT



repertoire is limited. If people just want to dance, they may not care if the same song is played over — that is, if it makes them want to dance again.

At New York's Savoy, Joe Bowie and Defunkt showed what a groove band can do. The band that night — Joe, trombone; Lester Bowie, trumpet; Byron Bowie, tenor; Vernon Reid, guitar; Kelvyn Bell, guitar; Kim Clark, bass; Richie Harrison, drums; John Mulkerin, trumpet; Cliff Branch, keyboards — borrowed from all eras of black popular music. Joe Bowie was the most visible figure on stage. Mugging and dancing like a hyped-up distillation of James Brown, Joe Bowie is the Jr. Wells of funk. He barked out cynical, humorous lyrics — "Make them dance, make them dance/To the beat of the dance of death" or "Made love to a photo copy/And left the room in perfect order" — all about love, death and heroin.

On "Defunkt," "I Tried to Live Alone" and "Happiness is Just an Illusion," the band joined Joe in jocular a capella vocals reminiscent of Stuff Smith and Louis Jordan. At other times the bass and drums would hook up in the most contemporary of funk lines — borrowed from Chic, Sister Sledge and even James Brown. They played a



TOM VERLAINE

shuffle, "Blues," and two jazz tunes, "Blue Bossa" and a bop melody, Charlie Parker's "Pondering".

Within the eclectic and rigid rhythmic structure there was ample interplay between soloists; Vernon Reid (dressed like he just stepped from the yacht he doesn't own) and Kelvyn Bell usually traded quick guitar solos, with the former playing fiery rock-funk and the latter whining blues-jazz. However, the real surprise was to see Lester Bowie ("getting exercise") rocking and playing from his heels. His spark and impish humor added the spontaneity that Defunkt sometimes lacks, and he prodded Joe into blowing more than burrs. Hopefully, Defunkt's plain-old-fun groove will translate to their upcoming single. —Don Palmer

TOM VERLAINE

Tom Verlaine deals in a chancy unsettledness, spinning images like ice floes while jumping from one to another against the current as others walk downstream along the shore. With Television and in his solo career, Verlaine has always aimed to startle his audience by throwing new musical juxtapositions at them and the resulting compositions have had little of the calming sense of melodic resolve. They shift keys suddenly, up and down, dominant, diminished and around back to form oddly-figured songs. Then his guitar bends the songs out of shape. Chords are rattled past the key change; high, shivery notes refuse to connect with the melody; fast runs tumble forth when slow ones seem called for. The idea is to keep the listener off balance, to make him abandon his expectations of what rock sounds like and follow connections he never conceived of before.

In his first gig in New York since Television's break-up in 1978, Verlaine pressed and stretched — upper body swaying at the knees — the boundaries of compositions that have too long excited only on vinyl. From the opening number, the crowd at the Ritz made it clear it had come for spectacular guitar work and Verlaine served it to them, though his emphasis was not on the merely flashy riff but the gnash-

ing freneticism of churning solos against melodic backdrop. There were times when these excursions drifted out of the range of the melody and bombed badly. But on the whole, Verlaine ran a zig-zagging centrifugal course that was wind-at-your-back exhilarating for those who could handle the swerves.

He opened with charged renditions of "Kingdom Come" and "Red Leaves" from his first solo album that sounded new depths while bolstering familiar points in the songs. The performance climbed with Verlaine's break on "Always" from his new *Dreamtime* record, his guitar slicing hard and fast against and through the syncopated melody. There were long-sustained upper-register bends, linked strings of deadened notes and rapidly strummed block chords that chugged to a halt even as the melody bounced along. The contrast between the guitar's dissonance and the melodic line was a huge gulf that lured your imagination and was then filled. The ten-minute solo Verlaine took on the old Television number, "Marquis Moon," made up in guts what it lacked in cohesion in pushing the melody to all possible extremes.

For the Television fan, there was the absence of the counterpoint/anchor of Richard Lloyd's guitar — a sound as muscularly melodic as Verlaine's is wildly obtuse. But the same loony tension, slipped phrasing of that seminal mid-70s band was there. A pleasure to have Verlaine back. — Barry Jacobs

ALEX CHILTON

In appreciating the troubled genius of Alex Chilton, patience isn't a virtue: it's a necessity. As erratic a five-star talent as rock has ever produced — right up there with the Iggy's, Syd Barrett's, Roky Ericksons and Jimbo Morrison's of this world — Chilton has had his finger poised on the button labeled "Self-Destruct" ever since his power pop circuits shorted out seven years ago on his last LP with the sorely missed Big Star, the stark disturbed *Wasteland-of-an-album Big Star 3rd*.

His recorded output since then has been meagre and infuriatingly incon-

sistent, including an intermittently enjoyable '77 EP, *Singer Not the Song*, a rave-up '78 single backing his own "Bangkok" with the Seeds' "Can't Seem to Make You Mine," and a recent import solo LP called *Like Flies on Sherbet*, a dark pop portrait of the artist's soul on thin ice. The Cramps came back from Memphis with real-life horror stories of Chilton's drunken, unpredictable behavior while producing their debut album, *Songs the Lord Taught Us*. And even dedicated Chilton-o-philes put up a brave face when discussing those few times in recent years when he has ventured onto a stage, often with an under-rehearsed band playing a bizarre mixture of covers, Big Star non-hits, and sometimes even a sodden reprise of "The Letter," a hit at sixteen for him with the white Dixie soul Box Tops.

But with his 3 A.M. set September 19 at New York's Peppermint Lounge, Chilton hit rock bottom, ground zero,



LAURA LEVINE

ALEX CHILTON

possibly the nadir of his performing career with a resounding crash, giving a performance rivaling Joe Cocker's booze-and-vomit extravaganzas for inebriated sloppiness and open contempt for the Alex Chilton the audience paid good money to see. Backed by guitar, bass and drums — all sounding as lost as their leader — Chilton took the stage with a Heineken bottle (the first of several) in one hand and held the mic stand for dear life with the other. He collapsed into the drum kit more than once and sang with a pathetic tuneless wail, like some Bowery drunk's imitation of a rock star. The first number, a bullish bit of rough-house rockabilly with a central "Shakin' All Over" riff, suggested that he might pull this one out of his hat yet. But when for his third song he savaged the Johnny Mathis ballad "Chances Are," he reached the point of no return.

The set was mercifully brief, hardly forty minutes including two under-served encores. He waffled through a few blues, beat "Bangkok" to a pulp, and clumsily shuffled through the only pop biscuit of the evening, a potentially winning neo-50s charmer called "Girl After Girl." But there was never

even a hint of the things that made Chilton famous, a *cause celebre* in spite of himself — his emotionally pointed pen, the classic subtly oblique tunefulness of his songs, the pained Memphis-meets-McGuinn twang in his singing.

Alex Chilton certainly deserves his place in rock's Hall of Fame for the brilliant early 70s Big Star trilogy #1 *Record*, *Radio City*, and *Big Star 3rd*. Nor is it inconceivable that he'll eventually come back from the abyss, talent intact. He will, however, soon wear out his welcome if he insists on flipping his finger at the faithful the way he did at the Peppermint Lounge. Even genius is no excuse. — *David Fricke*

PHAROAH SANDERS

For many the name Pharoah Sanders conjures the image of the brash young tenorman who provided much of the adrenalin rush on classic Coltrane energy dates like *Meditations*. In those days, his tenor sound was sharp enough to cut glass with and his multi-phonics brimmed with so many harmonic overtones that they could have been transcribed with chord symbols. His energy was so incessant that people began to wonder if all he could do was scream.

By the mid-seventies, Sanders had begun to break away from that monolithic image. A new Pharoah seemed to arise from the ashes of the sixties. His sound became warmer, rounder and subdued by comparison, and his stratospheric solos were replaced by quite traditional post-bop ballads. Yet there were still those who cried for the amphetamine injections they had come to expect from Pharoah.

With the more energetic eighties well underway, Sanders has now struck a happy medium. As his recent performance at the Village Vanguard illustrates, he's ready to offer the best of both worlds. The variety is refreshing and I, for one, welcome the return of the high energy playing. There's something so intrinsically Afro-American, so bluesy about the visceral, vocal approach to the tenor the New Thing revolution of the sixties brought us. Much like George Adams, who offered a commanding performance a few weeks earlier as part of the impressive Public Theatre New



PHAROAH SANDERS



EBET ROBERTS

MINK DEVILLE

Jazz series, Pharoah uses his screams, screeches and patented effects much the way a blues vocalist or guitarist would use anafogous dramatic devices when the spirit moves them. These days, nobody outside of the blues can blast with more gut-wrenching effectiveness than Adams and Sanders.

Opening the Vanguard set with a head featuring multi-phonics fire, Pharoah established just how naturally he can move from simple power lines to early Coltrane-like flurries complete with Trane chord substitutions. Close on his heels at all times, bassist Clint Huston and drummer Idris Muhammad drove the quartet with invigorating bravado, while the fulcrum of the rhythm section, pianist John Hicks, mixed basic Tynerisms with his own wit and drive to produce some of the most gripping piano solos I've heard in some time (no wonder he's one of the most in-demand players in New York).

Adams' concert offered a similar mix of the hot and the super-hot, but had the added dimension of highly developed compositions by Adams and Hugh Lawson (Pharoah's tunes basically served as launching pads), and tasty playing by Jimmy Knepper and Dannie Richmond.

With today's avant-garde mainly concerned with the expansion of structural horizons, it's good to hear some freedom swing from the avant-garde or an older generation. Their music is spiritual and penetrating. These men know how to make their horns spit white light. May they burn on — *Cliff Tinder*

MINK DEVILLE

Willy DeVille sidles out onstage in a French suit that firmly refuses to fit, a lavender shirt the color of a post-nuclear sunset, and a strange skinny tie once found behind the radiator of a Holiday Inn. He's so thin that even full-face he looks like he's in profile, and with his enormous pompadour, his pencil-thin moustache, and a golden earring that you could just about shoot baskets through, he looks like a gold dawn on his luck or the aspiring lead for a film of the *Ike Turner Story*.

But when he starts to sing, it all falls into place — his awkwardness, his mannerisms, his bouffant hair, and his French cuffs. It all seems intentional and right. He could come onstage in his mother's nightgown, and once he started singing it wouldn't matter. He's got a voice you can drive around the block, a voice so full and rich that, like Ben E. King and Van Morrison, he has more than he can ever use. Doc Pomus figures he's the best around, and Doc (who's written seminal songs for the Drifters, Ray Charles and Elvis Presley, and who co-wrote much of DeVille's last record) ought to know.

After two good records that were consistently praised and admired (and not bought) and a third that was only half-heartedly released by his label when import copies of it began selling, Willy has a new label (Atlantic), a fine new album (*Coup De Grace*), and is in the midst of an extended tour. Now if he can only get some airplay, something might happen. It's hard to know because radio has never known what to do with Mink DeVille — the name sounds like the music should be new wave (in fact, the band grew out of the CBGB/Max's circuit), and the band was first ignored because they were considered new wave, then ignored when they turned out not to be.

The music is actually a passionate re-invention of 60s R&B and soul music (in much the way that The English Beat have re-invented and re-informed ska); not just re-inventing the music, but re-inventing the heart of the music, re-awakening the feeling that The Drifters must have had when they first went up on the roof and looked down at the lights of the city and realized that there was another world. Willy's music is about that other world. — *Brian Cullman*

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THE DIARY OF

King Crimson

Part III
By Robert Fripp

April 18th, 1981; World HQ, Wimborne. Today is my sister's birthday — hello Wonderful sister!

Last night Bill Bruford and Paddy came around after their dinner at the Hidden House Restaurant, and we had a frank discussion covering all the areas which have been worrying me. Bill used a classic Crimson line once used on a duff U.S. audience: "We respond to encouragement." He wants to know the good as well as the bad. Both of us are happy to play music we don't particularly like if we feel it's good. Bill reckons on the next two or three years giving him enough ideas to work on for the following five or six.

There's a wonderful story of Tony at the Horton Inn. The inn is five miles from Wimborne on the road to Cranborne, and a half mile from Horton Village. That is, it's kinda in the country, and small events can take on a relatively large significance. Adrian was at breakfast, reading a book, and Tony joined him. Said Tony of his morning's adventures: "Walked to Horton. A dog barked at me." Adrian continued reading. Three pages later Tony finished the story: "Walked back again." It was only a few pages later that the full impact dawned on Adrian, and the story has been adopted as capturing the essence of band life at the Horton Inn.

The systematics of music life continue to interest me. Stafford Beer's *The Brain of the Firm* is helping me to understand the theoretical position of strategies which I adopt instinctively, and later rationalise. A good example is where the "boss" collaborates. For me the boss is simply adopting a role to enable a process to take place, and without any implications that the person is special or better in some way. Beer gives the example of a boss collaborating with three subordinates: where each has an average possibility of being right 82.5% of the time, working together the total chance of error is 0.0033. As long as this management group collaborates it will hardly ever make a mistake. The psychological point is impartiality: personal freedom from like and dislike, ambition, and so on. I've found that if everyone gets an equal share of earnings, collaboration increases.

HQ; 20:00. Very good rehearsals after a

soggy beginning. AB is decidedly blue but perked into life later. He's already missing his family badly. BB integrated the Simmons electric kit into his regular kit, and tried two tunings on the pre-sets for metallophone parts. Today we changed gear.

Easter Sunday, April 19th, 1981; World HQ. Sitting here I'm hearing an interesting contrast between the Minster bells in D major on my immediate left, and the Salvation Army brass band in all manner of flat keys on my right. Each confession is celebrating Easter musically and with vigour. My ecumenical position at HQ can be a harrowing experience, particularly on a Tuesday evening when bell-ringing practice coincides with brass band practice.

Easter Monday, April 20, 1981; HQ; 9:15. El Paddola called last night and is over the top with excitement after hearing a rough cassette from rehearsals. Our first convert.

HQ; 14:05. Padulamus Est has just visited to discuss strategies. Basically, he is super-enthused about the music. Strategic Merchandising will handle the merchandising for shows, with our own quality control and pricing. The overall approach is to humanise what is usually a de-humanising activity: it's very important not to try and squeeze the last buck out of this team. Nineteen eighty-three will be the year for this band.

The Americans don't like the name Discipline. For my part I'm happy for it to be King Crimson, because that's what the band is. It would help in the short term but I'm not thinking short term. Paddy is now inclined towards it but not in a hurry to decide.

And Bill is having difficulty relating to being a sideman: this is something he hasn't done before. But he's learning from the Americans, who are used to working within determined parameters. His new style is emerging and he trusts enough to go with it.

April 21st, 1981; Chez Parents; 18:15. Today's rehearsals were the first of the third stage, very slow, twitchy, and failed to lock in. BB has spent his Easter time off digging. TL visited Peter Gabriel in Bath, and AB spent the time on lyrics but, although today was the promised day for the vocal debut, they weren't ready.



JANE WINSOR

Tony told a great Gabriel story. They begin working together on the next Gabriel album when this venture closes. As usual, Peter has no words and no tunes, but he did have seven percussion tracks recorded for Tony to dub bass. Peter went out of the studio for a moment and returned just as Tony began to overdub, but Tony didn't know about the faulty button which caused all the safety switches to malfunction. So clearing three safe tracks for bass cleared everything else with it. Now Peter has nothing at all towards the fourth Peter Gabriel album. Tony was laughing so hard it softened the blow. Peter has an isolation tank he'll have to spend more time in, floating about and coming up with ideas.

HQ; 23:15. The success of the day's rehearsals determines my personal state until the next rehearsal. This kind of involvement is a permanent strain and bad for me.

April 22nd, 1981; HQ; 20:00. Today was the real beginning of stage three. We drew up a running order and played a complete set: 65 minutes. Quite a presentable effort. BB has earned my respect for abandoning so many of his ideas on arrangement, tunes and even drumming. TL wants the rhythm section to come up with their own repertoire and vocabulary so the pieces aren't all based on guitar lines. My concern is for

new material to be part of our new style which is emerging, and this is the first time in any group where I've explicitly taken this directing role from the beginning. Adrian didn't sing today. We're taking Friday off from full rehearsals so the rhythm section can concentrate on their own ideas. Adrian can button up the vocals.

But the slow beginnings of the days: ouch. Tony and Adrian compared notes on the different styles of their Tai Chi classes. TL learned his from a little Chinese man in a tiny room of a hotel on Broadway at 92nd.

News from Gabriel: Peter's album isn't being released until January (possibly as a result of Tony's recording activities?) so we have a good chance of time from Tony for touring the U.S. and Japan with an album this autumn

Thursday, April 23, 1981; Chez Parents; 18:15. Today I hurt. A telephone call from New York. My personal life has gone wrong. A lot of my life is spent on the hop, moving from one place to another. The main route is between Wimborne and New York. It was while staying in New York that I began to grow up, and the different parts of me fall into place. And I made a small number of really solid friends. English girls and I have never really had much interest in each other, but across the Atlantic is a different bag of bananas. New York has more women than men, so the odds are favourable for males of a predatory inclination. Of the men that are available few are early thirties, single and vigorous. Turning 33, my approach to the chase changed: it lost its desperate edge.

Throughout my late teens and for all my twenties the Fripp brain was in my dick. Early sex in Wimborne was nervously conducted against a background fear of pregnancy, paternal disapproval and possible small town disgrace. Moving to London in 1967 at 21 liberated me externally. I had a room to myself and girls could stay overnight — in a bed: no more grappling about on the front seat of a car, at least, not through necessity. But I remained a shy and introspective young man, short on social graces and approaches; an earnest and shabbily dressed countryman. One girlfriend, who visited me in the apartment Greg Lake and I shared, told me I looked better with my clothes off. She may not have been referring to the qualities of my body. I'll continue this story later.

Friday, April 24th, 1981; HQ. The girl who preferred me with my clothes off was a 17-year-old model from Newcastle, where I had met her while playing in Change Is, a new and trendy club. She had come to London to run rings around a musician she had met at the club the week before. He was actually running rings around her: he was married. When she discovered this she slashed her wrist in the bathroom sink and then staunched the flow of blood on Greg's towel, leaving large stains and clots. This angered Greg, who had only allowed the girl to stay in our bachelor flat for a few days as a special favour. At that time, May 1969, Greg Lake and I had an apartment together in Leinster Square, just between Queensway and Westbourne Grove. The flat was one large room with a cardboard partition which made two "rooms." This allowed each to be fully involved in the personal life of the other, and *all* its details, whether wanted or not. Greg had come to London in November 1968 to join Michael Giles, Ian MacDonald and myself in Giles, Giles and Fripp, replacing Peter Giles. Since Greg had nowhere to stay he shared my bed in Brondesbury Road. It wasn't a great arrangement, so we got an apartment. King Crimson began rehearsing on January 5th, 1969, in the basement of the Fulham Palace Cafe, Fulham Palace Road, and for the first week of March went to work at Change Is in Newcastle, the new and trendy club. Our booking was as Giles, Giles and Fripp, the only work GGF were ever given, following a moderately successful BBC2 TV show, *Colour Me Pop*. We caught the train from London to Newcastle on the day before the gig, Saturday, and checked into our digs at South Shields, right on the North Sea coastline and with a cold that reached all parts. Greg said we should go into the club and line up the birds for the coming week. He looked on me, somewhat rightly, as an inept puller. Once in action I was assured, but to get to that point was a problem. Greg for his part had all the lines down and could

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charm nearly everyone he wanted, and he took it on himself to give me some help in strategy and manoeuvres. So, off the team went to Change Is.

This was the last day of the club's first week, with the Paul Williams Set playing, and the crop of the town's young women in mini-skirts as waitresses. We lined up trade for the week. I was wearing my smart Carnaby Street jacket, trousers and frilly white shirt, and felt bold. The character of pulling, I learned, involved being pushy and insincere. The following week, liberated from background in a new town and society, the first time I had ever been further north than London, two waitresses responded. Both visited me in London. The 17-year-old model who made her suicide attempt did so on the night King Crimson played the Van Dyke Club in Plymouth. The band returned by milk train via Bristol and I arrived back at our flat at 7:30 in the morning. Lee Kerslake's girlfriend, a friend of the model, answered the door. Obviously, something was wrong. Just having traveled London to Plymouth, played, returned without sleep, this was just what I needed. The model's wrist was stitched by now, Greg's towel a shade of heavy magenta and a freshly opened razor blade on the sink with only a touch of coagulated blood. I washed it off and shaved on it for a week. We sent her home to her mother.

Her friend, the other waitress, visited

from Newcastle shortly afterwards. A very quiet, innocent and pretty blonde. She gave me gonorrhoea. The first one gave me trichomoniasis vaginitis, but I didn't know this at the time. Not long afterwards Greg was going to pay a visit to the Willy Shop as a matter of course, and why didn't I go along, too? After all, this was part of my education, Wimborne mud fresh from my recently purchased (with Greg) Anello and Davide boots. So, we went to Gower Street Special Clinic together and the doctor told me I had gonorrhoea. Unclean! VD! Unclean! Nice people didn't get VD. I had shamed my family. Greg was far more practical and comforting. Then I had to get in touch with the girls, and an embarrassed confession from the innocent blonde returned by mail. I never heard from her again. The first one I saw backstage at the Lyceum two years later, still with the married man, but I haven't seen her since.

At this time King Crimson was beginning to be successful, and the new blood we represented began to appeal to the bloodthirsty. Mike Giles, the drummer, was married but then gravitating towards his second wife. Ian MacDonald fell in love for the first time. This left Greg and myself as the band's main singles. Part of the appeal of being a professional musician, particularly in rock, was the freedom of behaviour allowed to young players, particularly

young rockers. One expected them to carelessly and frequently rut; ergo one could carelessly and frequently rut. Taking on a persona made pulling much easier: Robert Fripp of King Crimson could proposition with a confidence that Bob Fripp, young thinker of Wimborne, couldn't. And there was interest coming the other way. David Enthoven, one of our managers and the E of EG, said: "Greg'll get all the dollies, and Fripp'll get the heavies." Certainly, I did come to know one or two women of substance.

Meanwhile, two young women who worked the periphery of the nightclub area had been looking through the *Melody Maker*. One had said to the other: "You should get yourself a pretty rock star" and took her through the music press to find one. A photo of King Crimson showed Greg to have the qualifications: "That's the one for you," said the instigator. Her friend, for whom Greg had just been selected, was a friend of our second manager, John Gaydon, the G of EG. He made the introduction and was sent champagne as thanks. We were recording *In The Court Of The Crimson King* at Wessex Studios by now, July 1969, and I was homeless. Greg had moved a Danish blonde into our bachelor flat and I moved out, my share of the rent being taken over by another young bass player, Chris Squire. Chris had the apartment mostly to himself because

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Greg was spending a lot of time visiting the lady who had selected him. Anyway, at the end of a long day's recording I would set out to find a bed wherever I could. One night Greg asked where I'd be staying and naturally I didn't know. And so it turned out that the first lady, the instigator, had herself taken an interest in a rock musician: me. Said Greg: "You can take pot luck and go on 'round, or come and eat with us and we'll get her over. Have a look and see what you think." I opted for the meal and get-out clause, and went 'round to Chelsea where Greg's wealthy friend had her expensive apartment. Did I like avocados? I'd never had one. Yes please. Excellent meal, and towards the end of it my selector came 'round. She was Danish and worked late evenings as a hostess in a well-known London nightclub. Her job was to help rich men spend a fortune on fortuous drinks, and she helped by emptying her glass on the carpet under the table. She held the men in contempt. Whether or not she turned the occasional trick I never asked: Greg thought she probably did. She took me home with her to a small and comfortable flat in Notting Hill Gate, where she cooked and took care of me. I knew what was required.

About this time, mid-1969, I saw a little of London's swinging set, but it was really beyond me. I couldn't afford it; I wasn't part of it; it had a subtle filth and

depravity which attracted and repelled me. I did not swing. It disappointed me that this was a situation I couldn't master: I just couldn't handle it. Sophistication and social graces I lacked. But I began to see how much hookers, strippers and musicians have in common: they sell something very close to themselves to the public. This observation I've confirmed many times. The feeling is of people in the same job who sometimes get together after hours.

HQ; later the same day. At yesterday's rehearsals we ran through a set for a mini-audience of Paddy and the soundmen from London to check our needs. We played badly and the running order was all wrong, but AB's wild and weird sounds are well in evidence all over the place now he's using his Fender more.

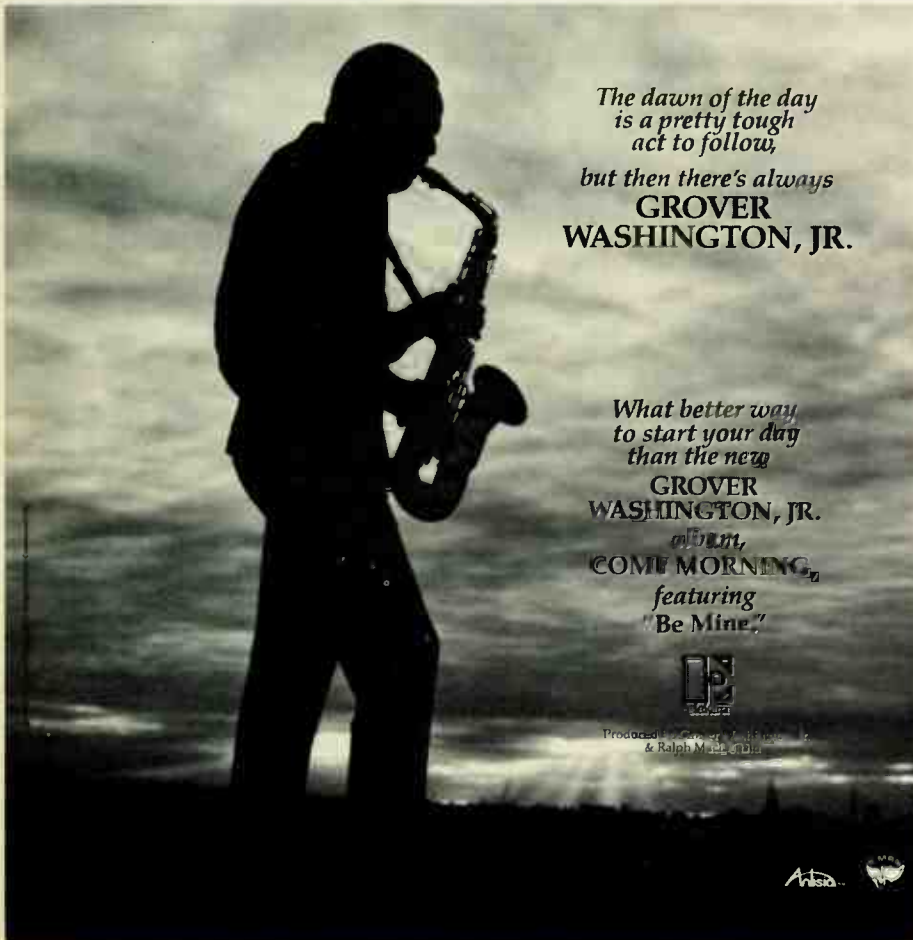
Bill's family came to visit and the team assembled at the Horton Inn for dinner. Wonderful stories from the Americans about their work with different legends of the music industry. It was during Frank Zappa's 20-minute guitar solo when the band wandered off that Bowie took Adrian for the "Heroes" tour. Adrian went over to say hello to David and Iggy Pop during the break and Bowie promptly offered AB a job at the end of the Zappa tour. Tony had stories of how the New York studio musicians test out producers. Crinkling polythene in front of a microphone sounds like a duff mic lead if you're in the control room, and on

two albums TL was doing, *all* the musicians in the band took to doing this, during the countdowns just before the takes. And if the producer gets a bit heavy the musician with strong nerves will leave for a coffee, once again just before a take. The really bold one will go out of the studio and bring back bottles of wine. "Hey, you guys, wanna have a bottle of wine?" apparently will loosen up any structured atmosphere. Tony has just come from the Yoko Ono album with Phil Spector in New York: one hundred run-throughs for one or two takes. Phil sits in a darkened control room, and the musicians set up in the farthest corner of the studio. They weren't allowed to leave for coffee or the bathroom and were told not to look at him. When Phil discovered they were checking out the safe/record lights to see if one of the hundred run-throughs were for real, he wanted to disconnect the signal lights on the 24-track, but technically it wasn't possible.

Monday, April 27th, 1981; Chez Parents; 18:15. Somewhat weary after today's rehearsals. Backtracking to Saturday: we heard Adrian's vocal ideas. Good words, good tunes, particularly "Heat In The Jungle" and "Matte." In the evening we went to Shillingstone Village Hall to see the Martian Schoolgirls and a group from the Tarrant Valley. Both were effective, and Tommy Winstone's PA system from Bournemouth is good, his mixing excellent. This area is getting close to having a musical review. We may not have local groups with new styles likely to change fashion on a world level, but we can go to a village hall and enjoy ourselves to live music enthusiastically played. Shillingstone was full and bopping. Returning to Wimborne we got caught in a blizzard which cut off the electricity at the Horton Inn on Sunday morning at 7:00. So a shivering team came into HQ in the afternoon to warm up, as AB and myself worked on our parts. Continuing to socialise, we went off to Bournemouth to see "The Long Good Friday," which appalled Tony and triggered stories of making "One Trick Pony," which kept him filming for ten weeks.


Late night Pad and I had a heads-together over the prospects of an autumn U.S. tour. September is the seventh anniversary of King Crimson "ceasing to exist," the end of the Drive to 1981 and the beginning of the Incline to 1984, and the release of our album. It would seem to be the moment for Discipline to change its colours. But, we don't have a label. So, Paddy and I had best go shopping in late June when I'll be in New York to cut the record. The distributors in America are Polygram, WEA, RCA and CBS. Given that, what can anyone do? They're all hopeless. Staying with Polygram in Europe is probably okay. One of my aims is to limit record company



continued on pg. 102



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MAURICE WHITE

EARTH, WIND AND FIRE

By Pablo Guzman with Jock Balrd

At the beginning of 1981, Maurice White and Earth, Wind and Fire discovered the hard way that memories are short in the record business. After waves of double platinum albums, they had produced only a gold, hardly a ripple in the pool these days. *Faces*, 1980's double-LP extravaganza, was indeed a letdown, but certainly not a disaster; nonetheless, it suddenly seemed as if the once-mighty EW&F, the can't-lose funk-AM princes, had become *personae non grata* down at Black Rock, CBS's Sixth Avenue headquarters. The message was muted but clear: "If your music won't sell itself, we certainly won't sell it for you. Better luck next album."

Such treatment toward a "major act" seemed brusque at best, considering the length and success of service. It was their fourth Columbia LP, 1975's *That's The Way Of The World*, including the landmark title cut and "Shining Star," that established them as Grammy candidates and chart-busters. Year by year, the double platinum parade continued: *Gratitude* included both a live LP that kicked even harder than their earlier funk, and a studio side that boasted "Can't Hide Love" and "Sing A Song;" *Spirit* featured "Getaway" and "Saturday Night;" *All 'n' All* crackled with "Serpentine Fire," "Jupiter" and "Fantasy;" *The Best Of EW&F, Volume One* offered "September" and a nifty cover of the Beatles' "Got To Get You Into My Life;" *I Am* yielded "After The Love Has Gone" and the made-for-disco-use "Boogie Wonderland." Five years, five albums, all double platinum. Let the Rolling Stones work on that one.

CHARLYN ZLOTNIK



How could so much have unraveled so quickly, how could Maurice White still have to prove himself in 1981, not only to his company but to a whole new audience that demanded more than memories? Scores of bands, black and white, had copied Earth, Wind and Fire's chunky rhythms, their cadences of lush ascending 11th chords, their huge-but-lockstep horn sound and particularly their vocals, the yin/yang of Phil Bailey's angelic falsetto and Maurice White's urgent tenor bark. Their standard of excellence, every musical hair totally in place, every stage effect perfectly executed, was to be taken for granted.

Like the gleaming images on the posters inside their albums, EW&F were fixed as stars in the musical firmament, distant, beckoning, complete in every way. Possibly that had become their problem. They were just too damn good to be true after awhile. Here was *Faces*, a sort of fulfillingness' third finale, two records worth of universal bliss that constantly conjured up snatches of *I Am*. Apart from the hell-fire spark of "Let Me Talk," with White's call to action blaring over a jab-and-crush rhythm section, the album could have passed for a direct imitation of the band's best.

Thus was the winter of Maurice White's discontent. Had Earth, Wind and Fire become the Pittsburgh Steelers of funk 'n' roll, former world champs who were now slow of step and long of tooth? It was at this point that White agreed to meet with me at the American Recording Company's huge complex just outside L.A. (all L.A. seems to be outside itself.) White's frustration with the apparent setback in the group's fortunes and his search for reasons both in his music and in the industry was the major subject of our conversation, but White was already planning the details of an immediate followup to *Faces*, an album that would deflect some of the most visible criticisms of the last few years.

This month that album, *Raise!*, has hit the streets and the result of Maurice White's soul-searching is quite apparent. Eschewing both ballad-heavy syrup and too-sleek production, *Raise!* hits the beaches with everything playing and perspira-

I know American music. I could write you a country western song, or a rock 'n' roll thing. I know where all this music came from. It came from Black people, It's an expression of Black people. Whenever pop music's at a low, Black music is always steady.

tion and messy hair definitely in evidence. The effect is bracing, to say the least. Scronch punk guitars shatter mixes, synthesizer notes meander out of tonality, Brecker Brothers horn lines attack the listener from blistering percussive textures. The closest thing to a ballad swings along eagerly, fading to a White vocal scat that evokes a dixieland muted-trumpet solo, then dashes into a latin-funk segue and sweeps into a new wavish bouce that concludes with rasty, guttural chants over a hard rock backbeat. Whew. Throughout it all, Maurice White is there, his voice prodding and testing the songs, making sure they come off the vinyl and buttonhole the listener with purpose and punch.

The transformation is genuinely startling, the more so because so much of the familiar elements of the band's sound are intact. Was this album the aberration, or was *Faces*? Was the change a calculated one, just as "Let's Groove" the new single, is clearly aimed directly toward AM airplay, or is it a more fundamental return to "the street?" Are the doubts and the anger that White felt at the beginning of 1981 directly responsible for the renewed urgency and experimentation of *Raise!* or was he going to go that way anyway? Was the proverbial kick-in-the-pants deserved and necessary, or another racist parable? And, perhaps most importantly, will America take the new album into its heart and declare all forgiven? All these questions remain for Maurice White and Earth, Wind and Fire, but their escape from the museum of the seventies has been definitely established.

MUSICIAN: Although you're the leader of one of the most successful bands in the 70s most people don't know your name. Does this underplaying of your personal stardom in favor of the band as a whole go all the way back to your first musical experiences?

WHITE: I think my life, and the lives of many other people my age, you know, mid-thirties, all evolved around a certain principle of group value. That goes all the way back to growing up in Memphis, Tennessee (Maurice stresses the first syllable: *Ten-uh-see*).

MUSICIAN: I thought I detected some Southern roots...

WHITE: Yeah, Memphis. I was introduced to music through the gospel church, so I had a good exposure to feeling in music because my home life was somewhat...you know, poverty and that whole thing. So all us Black folks turned to the church. I was the first of nine kids...

MUSICIAN: Nine!? [EW&F has nine members.]

WHITE: Yeah, so being the oldest, I was raised by my grandmother because my mother was helping to send my daddy to school to become a doctor, in Chicago, so I went with my grandmother to Memphis. Which was really good for me, my grandmother being real sensitive to the needs of a young kid, she *nurtured* me. She did a lot of teaching — and a lot of things I learned from her because she'd listen to things I had to say...

MUSICIAN: What was her name?

WHITE: You're the first person who ever asked me that. Her name was Elvira. So I was in an environment of musical expression, my grandmother was a singer, she sung in church, so I was right under her wing. She kinda pushed me out there. Really set my roots in good things. It also implanted in me the awareness of the Creator, not in a religious sense, but in a felt sense. You leaned on the Creator when you had problems. I learned He was my best friend, learned all of that as a kid...from grandma.

MUSICIAN: Your music and the lyrics are strongly spiritual, and many people tend to view that with skepticism...

WHITE: Yeah, of course, because we're taught to do that.

MUSICIAN: But what you're saying is that spiritual thing has *always* been there, not just in the more recent albums where it's more explicit...

WHITE: No, the things that I find myself sharing now with my public, these things were planted in me when I was six or seven years old.

MUSICIAN: What was the next phase of your musical involvement?

WHITE: Well, the next thing I was involved with was the streets. And drum and bugle corps marching through the streets of Memphis. So, I mean hey, you know, being in the ghetto and these cats wearing these shiny suits and carrying shiny instruments — it was very appealing to a kid. So I said to myself, "I want me one of those suits." To impress my friends, to be a part of something.

MUSICIAN: There's sort of a connection between those suits and the elaborate costumes the band now wears...

WHITE: (Uncomfortably) Yeah...so anyway I auditioned for this drum and bugle corps. I didn't know how to play an instrument but my street talent showed me how to play drums. I practiced the whole summer, and made the school band when I got back in the fall. That was really the beginning of applying everything from home and church because I was playing with a lot of other people and my exposure was greater.

MUSICIAN: How old were you at this point?

WHITE: Around twelve years old. So by the time I was fifteen, I was playing with some of everybody.

MUSICIAN: Were you a hell-raiser, average hell-raiser, kind of shy and quiet, just observing somebody else hell-raising...?

WHITE: I was kind of shy and quiet. I wasn't one that talked a lot. But I was one of the street cats. I was right in it. I was one of the cats who didn't say nothing but you didn't mess with me. (Laughs) I would sit back and watch.

MUSICIAN: So how did you get from a Memphis marching band to Ramsey Lewis?

WHITE: I moved to Chicago and started working as a studio musician, worked for many years, and that's where I developed a lot of my studio knowledge. I played on everybody's records...

MUSICIAN: Who were some of the people you gigged with?

WHITE: Oh, I used to play on records of Etta James, I played on Curtis Mayfield's records, I used to play on, oh man, Billy Stewart — all them hits of Billy Stewart, it's me playing drums...a lot of other people. Everybody that came through that whole Chess central during the time I was there learning. I was just a kid, learning my craft.

MUSICIAN: And then you joined the "in crowd" with Ramsey Lewis...

WHITE: I learned a *lot* in Ramsey's band. I was fresh out of the studio, real young, and there was a lot of experience I didn't have as far as playing for live audiences, *big* audiences. I had done a lot of clubs, joints, but I mean concert presentations, that whole thing. I also learned a lot from him as an example of a man — he's a gentleman. The Ramsey Lewis days were great days for me. I had a chance to grow, to evolve and find out what I wanted to do with music.

MUSICIAN: Ramsey was one of the first cats to start messing around with crossover. He offended a lot of jazz purists...

WHITE: That's right. Turned music around. Innovator, man. Innovator. That's the key word here. It's the same thing I try to do relative to my music. If I can't be first, make some kind of innovation, then I don't need to do it.

MUSICIAN: Around the time you began thinking about starting your own group, what was some of the music you were listening to: Miles' *Bitches Brew*, Stevie's *Music Of My Mind*...?

WHITE: Everything. All the music I was hearing was influencing me, Sly, Miles...but it gave me an opportunity to find out what was mine. I knew my contribution was through rhythm and that I had to be rhythmic in my presentation. Everybody I heard was real cool in melody but there was something missing. My whole thing is rhythm. Even my vocals. I mean, I *know* people are going to get off on my vocals, I know they can't forget what the feel is. I'm not out there chancin' nothing. Drums were my first thing and the drums built everything else.

MUSICIAN: It seems there was a lot of flux in the early period of Earth, Wind & Fire, a lot of different voices going in different directions... It seems as if there was a change when you became a more stable unit.

WHITE: Yeah, that was a period of many changes. The big turnaround was after I changed the group over and we went from Warner Brothers to CBS. There were a lot of structural changes, all of them positive, I think.

MUSICIAN: There were disputes with the original personnel?

WHITE: Yeah, and that's why we split, or should I say, I split, in the sense of reforming the group because musically we weren't all about the same thing. There was no direction there, so I had to move on.

MUSICIAN: So the new incarnation was more unified...?

WHITE: Right. We started to have more objectives toward the group's sound because we had people who were all working together trying to achieve something. But that change is never over. In the 80s, we'll probably have other structural changes. I'm sure you know in the next year we'll probably have certain cats leave, or whatever. [Guitarist Al McKay has left EW&F, replaced by Roland Bautista.] I don't mind that. In fact, I encourage it because it allows someone else an opportunity to come in and add something beautiful to the group.

MUSICIAN: During that early period, you really worked hard touring in a lot of different circuits. When did you finally start to feel secure — when you said, "You know, I don't think we're going to have to fold up our tents tomorrow..."?

WHITE: Around *That's The Way Of The World*. That was our first basic hit, man. That album changed our whole walk of life.

MUSICIAN: How so?

WHITE: Well, you know, the acceptance. We all of a sudden had universal acceptance. We were exposed to more of the universal market. And that's when we knew that our message



EW&F took the drill team tradition of Black music and fed it to the funk: saxman Andrew Woolfolk, Phil Bailey, Verdine and Maurice.

was not just for Black people. Then the next albums, *Gratitude* and *Spirit*, continued to do it, but *All 'n' All* just solidified the whole thing. Just solidified the whole world vibration.

MUSICIAN: Well, let me say that courage is not my big thing, and I say this out of the greatest love for the group, but when you use words like "universal" and "whole world," I get nervous, because I see so much of that phase of your music getting ballad-heavy...

WHITE: Right, ballad but rhythmic too, sometimes a lot more laid back. A lot of that has to do with the growth of the group. We had constantly played nothing but funk and so-called R&B all those years, and we had to involve other things in order to draw everybody's ears. We had to take about two years and a couple of albums to try to universalize our whole trip.

MUSICIAN: Yes, but to me, what you're really describing is that something's gone out of the band: the *Fire*.

WHITE: Yeah... I think what happens... I don't really think the fire has been lost, I think what happens is... in... some of it might be my fault, in a production sense. A lot of time I might be guilty of trying to *perfect* what I'm doing instead of trying to *enhance* it. You try to do better each time around...

MUSICIAN: You just have to see it from my point of view as a DJ. The big airplay number off *All 'n' All* was "I'll Write a Song For You;" people would call up and that's what they wanted to hear. You told me to be honest, well, you got me nauseous here. 'Cause as a DJ we play it *over and over*. Pick up the request line. There was another ballad you had, one of your recent ballads...

WHITE: "After The Love Has Gone"?

MUSICIAN: "After The Love Has Gone"! God! To be honest, man, I got *sick* of that. You know, "After The Love Has Gone, after the love has gone..." One night I said, "That's it, I am NOT PLAYING THIS RECORD NO MORE." Then this woman called up, sobbing, "My old man just left me. I don't know where he is. Could you play 'After The Love Has Gone'? It was Our Song." It was teary, man, I had to wipe the telephone off. But I *had* to play it. And the cat heard it! He heard it and they got back together.

WHITE: Yeah? No kidding?

MUSICIAN: Well, I don't know if they broke up again...

WHITE: But at least they got back together...

MUSICIAN: Hey, I'm not saying that stuff doesn't provide a service but the street connection seemed to be much stronger when I first heard the band.

WHITE: I think one reason is because of this crossover situation that happened with us. Our music has changed in the last three years or so because we were trying to appeal to people around the world. The street situation that we endure as American Blacks, people in Brazil or most other places in the world don't relate to. We've had to broaden our music. See, a lot of mistakes we make in terms of thinking of our Blackness is that, "Hey, man, we are as Black as the U.S." But it goes far deeper than that. There's people all around the world starving to death. You can't be that selfish; there's a power in people and that power should be shared by all people. That's what we're about. The one thing I don't want to do is the same thing the white man's done.

MUSICIAN: What's that?

WHITE: Separatism. That don't work. That means you separate ideas, you separate everything, you keep technology to yourself. And none of us can move on.

MUSICIAN: You mentioned Brazil. Weren't you just there?

WHITE: Yeah, we just got back. It wasn't the first time we'd gone but it was the first time we'd played there.

MUSICIAN: Your production values are so highly developed, it must have had an amazing impact on people who are used to a more, well, primitive stage format...

WHITE: Actually, we were the first Black group ever to do Brazil on the scale that we went. They had never seen a show like that — a bunch of Black people up there. They were going out of their minds! For the first time, there were brothers who brought a show to their country that was, like, presented in the highest form — first time they had ever seen a sound system, lights, big production... And they're show-oriented anyway.

MUSICIAN: How about Africa?

WHITE: We're going to Africa. That's next for us. We're just trying to find what countries are cool for us, so they can bring us in. There are many difficulties when you try to take a show

as big as ours to another country, governmental things, what have you.

MUSICIAN: Well, I see what you're trying to say and I definitely think you've got a good point about separation versus universal, but I just see such a difference between some of that "adult contemporary" stuff and, say, "Let Me Talk" off the new album. Now *that* tune was more like what I consider your best stuff...

WHITE: Aha. I think in production of that, I was basically trying to capture the street, capture what I felt, capture... well, my roots. I was coming from the streets. That is something I'll never lose, it's always there, it's just a matter of when you want to call on it.

MUSICIAN: Musically, too. You have all those things vibrating against each other, the brass, the guitars, the voices going off in the background, Verdine's bass, it's all so polyrhythmic.

WHITE: Well, we're going to be doing more on that level. That's really where we are coming from.

MUSICIAN: So we can expect more...

WHITE: More like "Let Me Talk," man. That's the sound of the 80s. Sound of the 80s.

MUSICIAN: I love it, that first line... "Fifteen million voices..." Those lyrics have a certain edge to them, a fighting spirit...

WHITE: Sound of the 80s. But "Let Me Talk" was not a hit record. Not because of the people; it didn't make it because of the record company. They just didn't know what to do with the record, they didn't understand it. That record represents the promise, the attitudes of the people, that's what it's rapping about. But they sittin' up in those plush offices on Fifth Avenue someplace and they just don't know what the people are talking about, so consequently they just missed out on the whole thing.

MUSICIAN: You really had trouble selling the whole *Faces* album.

WHITE: Well, we weren't trying to really break any sales records. We wanted to go back and reach another part of ourselves. A lot of times we've had to do the type of music that's called for in the commercial market. We don't get a chance to get off into what we really want to do 'cause an album only has twenty minutes per side. For *Faces*, we used four sides and we said, "Hey man, we're gonna give whether anybody buys it or not."

MUSICIAN: Do you think it's possible that some people didn't like it because it sounded a lot like *I Am*? Maybe it wasn't really new enough...

WHITE: Well, there are certain chords that we favor, certain lifts. I favor them. You could call them clichés, like certain kinds of melodies we will sing, certain rhythmic things we'll use in the horns, or particular breaks. We're into that. It all goes back to our jazz days...

MUSICIAN: Yeah, but... I really dug "Let Me Talk" and the title cut, where you got back into some nice improvisation...

WHITE: But the rest didn't really move you?

MUSICIAN: Not really...

WHITE: Hey, that's cool.

MUSICIAN: Don't get me wrong. I love the Earth, Wind & Fire trademark sound, I'm just afraid y'all are imitating yourselves. After all, you've spawned countless imitations...

WHITE: Yeah, I hear us on the radio a lot. Well, those other bands studied us, and that's cool. We've probably been a major influence in their music. One advantage is that they've covered a certain ground for us, so that we can go on somewhere else. More like "Let Me Talk"...

MUSICIAN: It seems now as if, after being influenced by jazz and church music, brass marches and all, that you have become an influence yourself.

WHITE: Sure, a lot of things I hear currently, even things that have transpired in the last five or six years, they came from the influence of, say, my group, Stevie Wonder and many other people. But we, especially Stevie, go all the way back. If you know your basics, your fundamentals, all you gotta do is go back to them. That's part of what we're doing now.

MUSICIAN: What kind of advice would you give to a young

musician coming up?

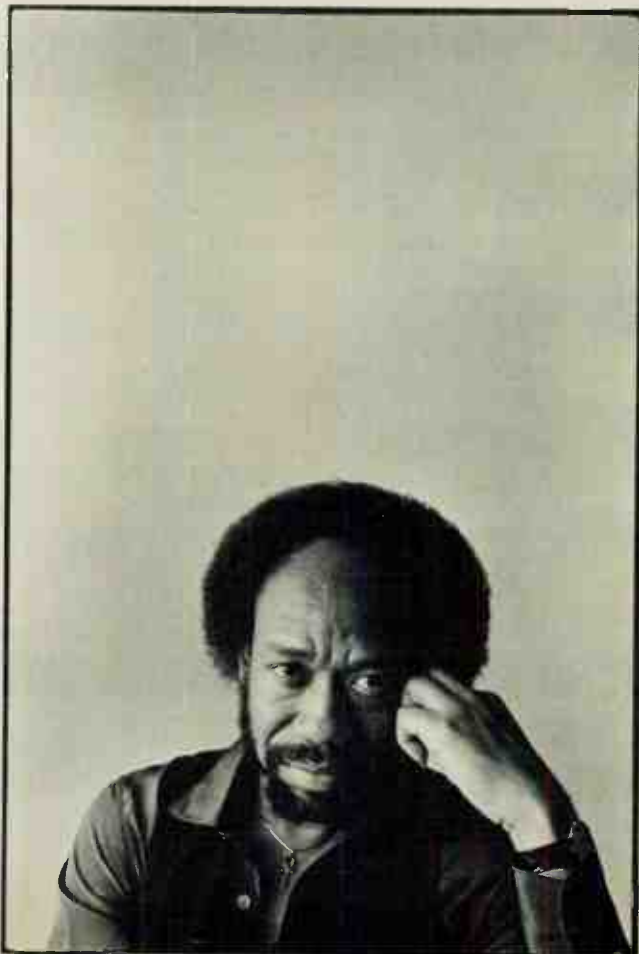
WHITE: First of all, you have to have the craft. Work on your craft. Learn something to appreciate, learn about some type of music that you *don't* play just to appreciate it. Because then you'll be able to appreciate the good things in your own music, the things *you* have. If you have no appreciation for things outside, no yardstick, you'll never be able to make a level of comparison there. Do you dig? That's the first thing.

The second thing is to try and learn everything you can about the business. Read a lot, read about publishing, managers, the studio, learn a lot of different things in the studio so you can be self-reliant. You don't have to count on a producer to direct your objectivity. You can reach it yourself through your own efforts. The industry's different now. You need to know a little about everything. Not a lot, just enough so that it makes common sense to you. If you can do both those things, you'll make it, because if your thing is good enough, they are gonna hear it. But you must learn to appreciate outside talent because then it will create originality in yourself. Originality will give you what you need.

MUSICIAN: Could I ask you why it's so hard to get an interview with you? I've been trying for years. You have had a reputation, whether deserved or not, of being somewhat reclusive, somewhat enigmatic...

WHITE: Well, I'm a little different. Lately, in the past two years, I've cooled down a lot. I'm not as fiery in my temperament as I used to be, I don't have as much to prove. I *am* more at one

I don't really think the fire has been lost... Some of it might be my fault, in a production sense. A lot of times I might be guilty of trying to perfect what I'm doing instead of trying to enhance it.



DARYL PITT/ENCORE

with myself, more at one with the Creator, about the things I want to do. In the meantime, though, I have been, I *am* very reclusive. I have to preserve that part of myself. Being very busy, the way I've been, I have to take time to do the things I want to do. In order to balance my life. Then, of course, some of the stories that are told about me are just untrue, they make me more of a monster than I really am. I'm just a regular guy.

MUSICIAN: That's interesting. You say, a regular guy, and everybody smiles. I mean, I've never seen you outside of your concerts. I didn't know if you were going to arrive in a cloud...

WHITE: That means the promo stuff done real good. But I hear rumors about myself...like I was at a party...

MUSICIAN: Take some of the stuff I've heard: arrogant, pompous, deliberately enigmatic. Manipulative. Dominant...

WHITE: Some of those things are probably true... But I can't say I'm manipulative. I *have* tried to get as much as I could from my group. I don't bite my lip. I feel that Black people have worked very hard for what they've done in music and have been cheated out of most of everything in this particular society. You know what I'm saying. I've been a little like that — and that's why you're in this building right now, this building is from my efforts. I'm one to fight for what I believe in, and a lot of times, I've had to stand alone. Most of the time I've had to stand alone, to be very frank about it, but that's all right. I think I've been able to change things. The industry as a whole has not been very kind to us. We've had to come through a lot of trials and tribulations and there's many things that we haven't done in the way everybody else would've done it. We're just a bunch of guys, man, just a bunch of basic people trying to do good things.

MUSICIAN: You talked about how little promotion "Let Me Talk" got. Is this a general problem for Black artists?

WHITE: Oh, yeah. It's just so rough dealing with the reality that no matter how many hit records you've had, no matter how much success, no matter how many times you've proven that you were good at what you do, you still run into this age-old problem of, you know, the underlying racial situation. It's downplayed and a lot of people don't say anything about it...

MUSICIAN: We've stopped talking about it but it's definitely still there...

WHITE: The thing about it is that we aren't asking for any favors, not asking for anything they wouldn't give any other group. I'm just asking, "Give us the exposure that we're supposed to have. Do us right."

MUSICIAN: How do you view the reorganization of Columbia Records and Black music marketing? They're taking everybody and "integrating" them into other departments.

WHITE: I'm not really happy about it.

MUSICIAN: Does it reflect that downplaying of Black music?

WHITE: It does, it does. It just gives them the opportunity to spend money on more white acts. And I think one reason is that they always refer to Black acts as "minority" acts. They don't want *you* to be the hero.

MUSICIAN: So you haven't found any change?

WHITE: Not really. Not really. It appears that way, and I've been able to do pretty well relative to our group and being able to do what we do, but it's been a hard thing, and will continue to be a hard thing. There's no way in the world that I'm ever going to run from being Black.

MUSICIAN: So you feel that all this emphasis on new wave is really just a way of whitey promoting his brother...

WHITE: I know American music. I know it from a standpoint of blues, of jazz, from all walks of life. I could write you a country western song if I wanted to, I could write a rock 'n' roll thing. I know where all this music came from. It came from Black people, it's an expression of Black people. Whenever you have all these changes in music, when pop music is at a low, Black music is always steady. Everytime we run into a low, you know the music industry is trying to find a new style to push. There is always gonna be a wave, or whatever.

MUSICIAN: Let me give you another example: this very interview. Now, I'm glad to be associated with *Musician* magazine. It fills a void in the contemporary music scene. But when I took

on this interview assignment, one of the things I wanted was to put Earth, Wind & Fire on the cover. But I got into a big disagreement with one of the editors because I think that they'll put any hot white act on the cover; Bruce Springsteen, Steely Dan, Talking Heads... But the last Black cover they had was Jimi Hendrix over a year ago and he looked like he was in his damn coffin. [What?! See Black Uhuru on #37 and Miles on #41. — Ed.] And I said to this editor, "Look, the group deserves it, Maurice deserves it. I shouldn't have to argue about this." So on radio *and* in journalism we keep running into this.

WHITE: It's everywhere.

MUSICIAN: How do you keep your sanity dealing with all of that? Here you are selling platinum, critical acclaim, and so many doors are still closed to you. How do you maintain? Why do you keep trying?

WHITE: I do it because it's necessary for me to keep knocking doors down. 'Cause that means the brothers and sisters behind me are going to have it easier. They can knock the rest of the door down. It *has* to continue. And it has nothing to do with economics, it has to do with *achievement*, trying to make sure that in all of this chaos that we live, something positive can still come through.

MUSICIAN: Do you feel more secure and able to speak openly about this now rather than in the struggling days?

WHITE: Well, in the struggling days I talked about it too. I've always talked about it. You know some of the cats that interviewed me probably never said it, but I always rap about the same thing.

MUSICIAN: It will come out in this interview.

WHITE: I can dig it.

MUSICIAN: Let's talk about the orchestration of EW&F. How did you go about using two trap drummers?

WHITE: You know, that all happened accidentally. First we started with a drummer, and then my brother Fred came in and he was a different kind of drummer. One was very melodic, and the other was rhythmic. And we needed both. It kind of took me back to the days of John Coltrane, he used to use two drummers. And in the same way, one of our guitar players was a highly rhythmic player, all he played was rhythm...

MUSICIAN: I was going to ask about the difference between Al McKay and Johnny Graham...

WHITE: Well, Al is basically a rhythm player and Johnny is a solo player.

MUSICIAN: Al seems to be really coming along. On *Faces* he plays a tune that's really...

WHITE: No, that's not Al. See, if I go into the studio after a sound, I don't mind featuring guest soloists. Like, if I hear a cat like Steve Lukather can play, well, I want to feature that sound. Actually, on *Faces*, Al is not featured that much. Milo Henderson is playing most of the intricate parts on the album.

MUSICIAN: As long as we're talking about the music, I'd like to say that live, you guys are still one of the best shows around. I've told you how I feel about some of your recent albums, you know, going through the motions. But when I saw how you worked the crowd, you renewed the faith...

WHITE: Oh, I dig that. I dig the faith.

MUSICIAN: One of the best live albums ever was *Gratitude*.

WHITE: Well, it was something we were giving to the people. It's hard to capture live performance on record — really the only way to do it is to go out and record your performance 'cause if you play in a studio, you play differently than you do onstage; you're not as inspired, you're not drawing energy from the people sitting there. So we wanted to give that back to our audience, we wanted to say, "Thank you for accepting us. Here's something in return." That's why we did *Gratitude*.

MUSICIAN: You use such amazing effects, the effects with the floating piano, choreography — that was totally new for a Black group.

WHITE: What I think happened was that for years, Black groups have been locked off, and onstage it looked like a drill team. We wanted to get away from that, get to something else.

MUSICIAN: But some of them cats were cool! (Does a Temptations move.)

continued on pg. 95

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World Radio History

THE CARS

By J.D. Considine

The first time I saw the Cars, I was tempted to feel sorry for them. It was 1978, and the Cars were opening for Foreigner at the local sports complex. At the time, it seemed like the Christians opening for the lions. As far as the heavy metal kids were concerned, the only thing worse than disco was punk, and the chances that a smart, new-wavish band from Boston could win the hearts of 14,000 kids waiting to sing along with "Hot Blooded" seemed pretty slim.

Little did I know. Despite the band's severely artsy attire, which ranged from spandex leopard-spots and black leather to exaggerated stripe and polka-dot motifs, the kids didn't look at the Cars and decide they were punks. Instead, they listened to the Cars, and decided they liked what they heard. Some of it they simply loved. The two most obvious crowd-pleasers were "Just What I Needed," which, as sung by the band's good-looking bass player, attracted a lot of feminine attention; and "My Best Friend's Girl," a snappy tune served up by the band's rhythm guitarist, a guy awkward and gangly enough to have passed for Elvis Costello's American cousin.

Their rags-to-riches leap from the Boston club scene to arena glory seemed overnight, but actually concealed ten years of dues-paying. After meeting in Cleveland, gangly guitarist Ric Ocasek and heart-throbbing bassist Ben Orr had moved through Detroit and the Big Apple before settling in Boston. One of their first attempts was a folk trio called Milkwood, which actually released an album in 1972. It didn't do much else, though, and soon afterwards Ocasek and Orr had formed Richard and the Rabbits, which included Marylander Greg Hawkes on keyboards. Unfortunately, the Rabbits died, and Hawkes took off, eventually winding up with Martin Mull's Fabulous Furniture. A few prototypes later, Ocasek and Orr had another hot prospect in Cap'n Swing, which featured Long Islander Elliot Easton on guitar. This, too, failed, but Ocasek and Orr held onto Easton, got Hawkes back and recruited Bostonian David Robinson, who had drummed with proto-punks the Modern Lovers as well as punk rockers DMZ, to complete the line-up. The new band was christened the Cars.

As it turned out, the Cars and their self-titled debut album were the hit of that season. The album went platinum, and the band walked off with every Best New Artist award except the Grammy (which, typically, went to a one-shot disco act, Taste of Honey). What was unexpected was that the Cars didn't turn to formula to hold on to their audience. The band moved ahead, and the fans didn't miss a step following them. And ironically enough, Foreigner itself emerged this year with "Urgent," a single that sounds suspiciously like the Cars.

Small world, isn't it?

Ric Ocasek is sitting in the basement lounge of the Cars' recently acquired and refurbished Boston studio. Although there are still a few bits of carpentry to be done, the studio is sleek and modern-looking, all pristine white walls, dark wood

PHOTO BY YICEL BORRÀ FENGOLD

floors and tasteful austerity. In fact, it looks a bit too new; between the unfinished construction and the unremitting cleanliness, it looks not unlike a model apartment for a new development of Swedish-style condominiums.

Typically, Ocasek is dressed in black from head to toe. Yet as ultra-modern as his appearance makes him seem, his actions are far less imposing. He's sprawled across a canvas-backed director's chair like an oversized teenager, and he speaks quietly, almost shyly. I mention that while working for a daily paper in Baltimore, Ocasek's home town, I had received a letter from his father, objecting to a less-than-enthusiastic review of *Panorama*. Pop Ocasek (which is how he spells it) even provided his own headline, "The Cars Run On High Test, Says Father." His son laughs, and says, "He's in Florida now. He goes into record stores and puts the records in front; and all that stuff."

Who knows, even as you read this he may be checking to see that *Shake It Up*, the Cars' fourth album, is getting the shelf exposure it deserves. I wouldn't worry, though, because the new album is the band's most melodic and accessible.

That's about the only similarity between the two, however; *Shake It Up* isn't so much a return as it is an extension of the ideas explored on *The Cars*. That first album broke some important ground in applying minimalist rock devices, like the clicking rhythm guitar on "Best Friend's Girl" and "Just What I Needed," to standard popsong forms. Although the Cars scraped at the limits of the forms on side two of the first album, it wasn't until *Candy-O* that Ocasek's pop instincts were fully sublimated by the band's modernistic musical vocabulary. This time, instead of being hooked by the simplicity of the rhythm, you were drawn in by the way each bit of melody was wrapped in a new and unexpected sound. Oddly enough, the synthesized soundscape wasn't as off-putting as you'd expect — each weird sound made the music that much more interesting to listen to.

A neat trick, but not an easy one to maintain. *Panorama*, the third album, extended the band's arsenal of acoustic curiosities by lavishing textural detail onto each track, so that every song was awash in burbling guitars and wooshing synthesizers. Unfortunately, this turned out to be a little too modernistic, not because it was unlistenablely avant-garde, but because it was so emotionally remote. At times, it sounded like the Cars were playing at us, not to us.

Shake It Up adjusts for that and more. Not only are the melodies back up front, but they haven't been stressed at the expense of the band's textural tapestries. Perhaps more significant, though, is the amazingly personal nature of some of the songs. Although I wouldn't exactly call it confessional, the forthright emotionality of "I'm Not The One" adds a sense of character and emotion that has been sorely lacking in previous Cars albums. Listening to it, I become increasingly curious to see what turns up on Ocasek's solo album, for which Geffen records has contracted.

It'll be a while before we hear that one. The immediate priority on the Cars' schedule is a quickie tour in early '82. In the meantime, Ocasek is indulging in his passion for production. Just upstairs, Ian Taylor, the engineer who assisted Roy Thomas Baker on *Panorama* and *Shake It Up*, is working with Romeo Void for an album he and Ocasek are preparing.

Right now, though, Ocasek is thinking hard to come up with an answer to the \$64,000 question, *Why are the Cars so popular?*

"I really don't know," he says, "I mean, it's obvious we had no idea that we would have sold so many records. But what do I think did it? You know, I can't pin-point it."

Perhaps, Ocasek suggests, the fans accept the Cars, even at the band's most avant-garde, because they can relate to the mood the music expresses. "I think people like things that are different," he says, "if you don't treat everybody like an idiot. People are smart enough. . . I don't think it's very difficult. We're not Joy Division. It's not very difficult to catch on to the Cars."

"It's pop, basically. It is. I just don't think it's reactionary, like most pop is."

True, the Cars are a pop band, but it's just as true that they're an art band. On the arty side, the Cars are avowed minimalists, but on the pop side, that just works out as keeping the songs uncluttered. "I guess we just filter things out," he says, "and make sure whatever we put in means something, at least to us."

"There are certain things to go for," Ocasek admits. "It's right, it's played well, and it doesn't have things that seem too complicated for someone to learn or pick up. There are things there that are easy to grab on to, and I think that's real important, for the people who are listening to the music to get that."

It's that conscious discipline that holds the pop in place. "It could be real out," Ocasek says of his music. "But I think that's one of the things, the fact that you can remember those lines."

Aside from the music's popish insistence, the other thing to keep in mind about the Cars is the band's notion of modernity. Most avant-garde bands take their futurist perspective too seriously, and see themselves as alienated from the past and most of the world around them. Although the Cars are no strangers to alienation — how many bands would have sounded as at home singing "Misfit Kid"? — they don't see it as the inescapable by-product of modernism. Instead, the Cars see modernism as a reconciliation between the values of the present, and the possibilities of the future.

To Ocasek's way of thinking, pop for its own sake is reactionary because, "it's a reaction to something that has already been done and embellished upon. Being a musician or a writer or whatever I'm in, I'm always looking for an alternative to what I particularly think is pop. There aren't too many pop bands that I really like."

Who, for instance?

"E.L.O."

E.L.O.? Ocasek laughs embarrassedly. "That just came to the top of my head."

Well, it is a ways from minimalism.

"Oh, yeah," he agrees. "E.L.O.'s pretty heavy-duty, everything-and-the-kitchen-sink. But the structure of the songs and the beauty of the melodies is. . . Even though they're very Beatlesque, there's hardly one song you could listen to that doesn't have a very heavy hook in it. Every time I hear an E.L.O. album, I think, 'How'd they do that?' again."

"How'd they do that" is a question that plagues a fair number of Cars fans, too. If writing "things that are easy to grab on to" is the most obvious aspect of the group's pop side, then backing pop with an array of interesting noises is the band's most tangible manifestation of modernism.

"It's funny," says keyboardist Greg Hawkes. "On *Candy-O*, a lot of people used to ask me about the guitar solos, because they thought they were done on synthesizers."

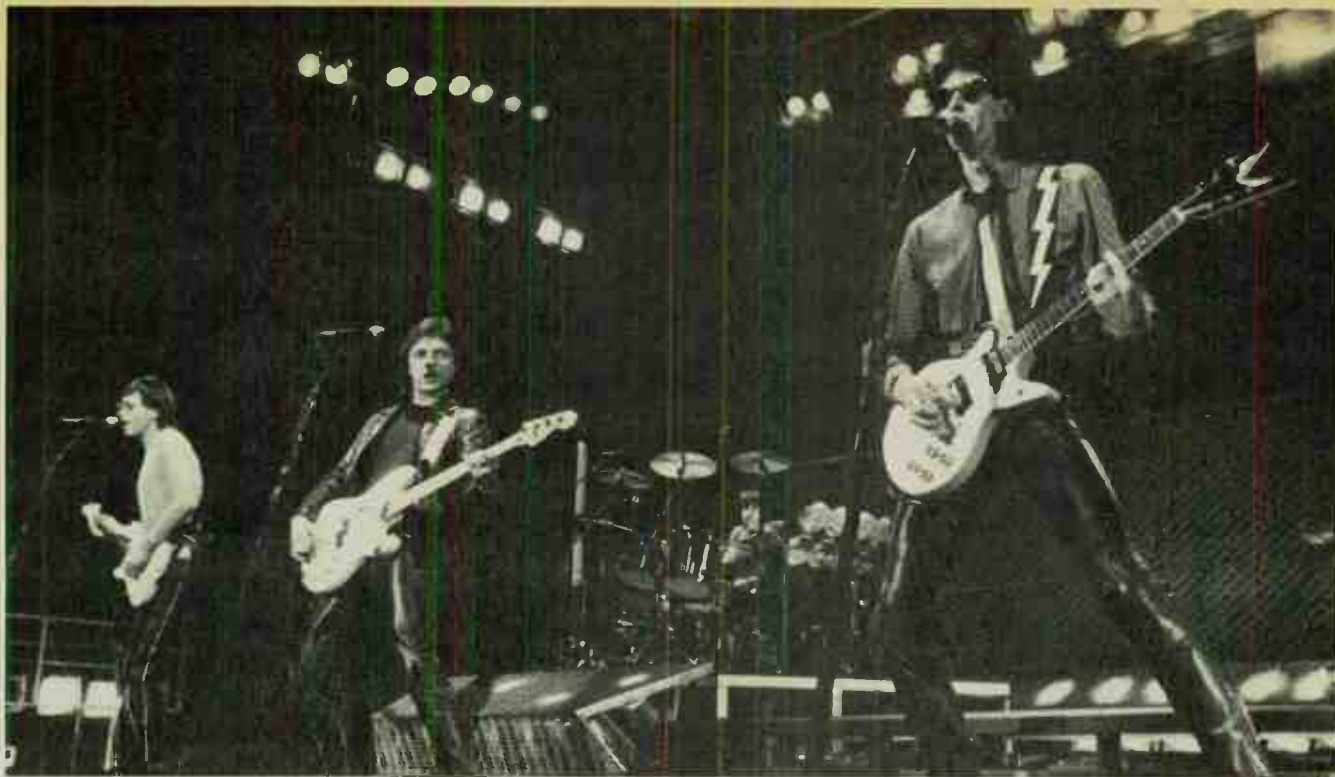
Wait 'til they hear *Shake It Up*. On "Think It Over," there's a buzzing bass line at the beginning with something that sounds like a musical saw. So I ask Ben Orr what kind of gadget he fed his bass through to get that buzzing sound. "That was the Arp Solace," he says, "so Greg played that."

Since Hawkes' synthesizers were doing the buzzing, would it be safe to assume that they also did the sawing? "No," replies Hawkes, "That's a syndrum, so David (Robinson) played that."

An honest mistake, Robinson assures me. "Sometimes there'll be something Greg can't play that we'll do on a syndrum," he says, "just a very simple sound. And he can duplicate a lot of syndrum stuff on his keyboards, even some snare drum noises."

With so many wrinkles to the band's high tech sound, it's easy to empathise with Ocasek's attitude toward his effect boxes. "I pretty much keep a straight sound, personally," he says, "because I feel it's about the only straight sound there."

The Cars may well be the only pop group on the charts that cover bands actively avoid, if only because producing an approximation of what's on the records is so damned hard. It's not that the Cars are merely high-tech; the band quite simply has a sound of its own. Ben Orr says, "I read all the time in the trades about bands now that are 'just another Cars clone,' and it just doesn't wash. But if you ask me if the band has an



CHRIS WALTER/RETNA LTD

"Purple hum, assorted cards;" the Cars' auto-minimalist punk-deco will be scaled down on the next tour.

"I do keep a distance. Maybe it's because there's a certain amount of mystique in it. People are generally cold to people. I don't like to create a false feeling." — Ric Ocasek

influence, yeah, I think it does, simply because it's had so much exposure."

Exposure has been both bane and boon to the band. On the one hand, its prominence on the charts has allowed the Cars to book bands like the New York punk-synthesizer band Suicide as an opening act. Unfortunately, that same prominence has brought in its wake a lot of fans who enjoy the Cars' unconventionality but have no use for or interest in the avant-gardisms of Suicide. Consequently, many of the band's attempts to use its popularity to help other acts have been disastrous, as was the case with Suicide at the Hollywood Bowl in 1979.

The major difference between the Cars and these other bands is that the Cars use unusual sounds to articulate the band's concept of modernity and help define its musical process, while the other bands are tied in too closely to a modernist ethic to use these sounds for any purpose beyond sounding unusual. That may be why the Cars are, as Orr observes, without any real imitators.

On a very basic level, the unconventionality of the sounds employed by the band operates as a secondary level of hook. For instance, try to imagine the riff that opens "Let's Go" played on a saxophone. It just doesn't work, because part of what makes that line happen is the compressed, robotic quality of the synthesizer tone. ("It's a Prophet 5," reports Hawkes. "The break is actually a Prophet doubled with a real guitar, but that part is just a synthesizer.")

To a large extent this succeeds because the Cars value melody first and weirdness second. In fact, the best weirdness is that which reinforces melody, becomes a factor in the melody itself. Because the Cars don't play up a separation between the two elements, breaking up the material into a "melodic" section and a "noisy" section, this never comes off as artificial. Although it's clear that Ocasek is conscious of the importance of melody, he doesn't pander to popish tastes.

"It's enough to say that when you work on songs, you have a certain awareness to forms," he says. "I think it's good to have things that always come back in a song. 'Shoo Be Doo' doesn't have that, and some songs might not."

Most songs do, though, and that's what makes many of the outré effects function. Two-thirds of the way into "Getting Through," there's a passage where David Robinson cuts loose on his syndrums. It sounds like a computer with indigestion — lots of edgy noises and jagged rhythms with no melody to speak of — but what makes it work are the utterly conventional blocks of rhythm guitar underneath the syndrums that provide tonal and rhythmic continuity with the rest of the song.

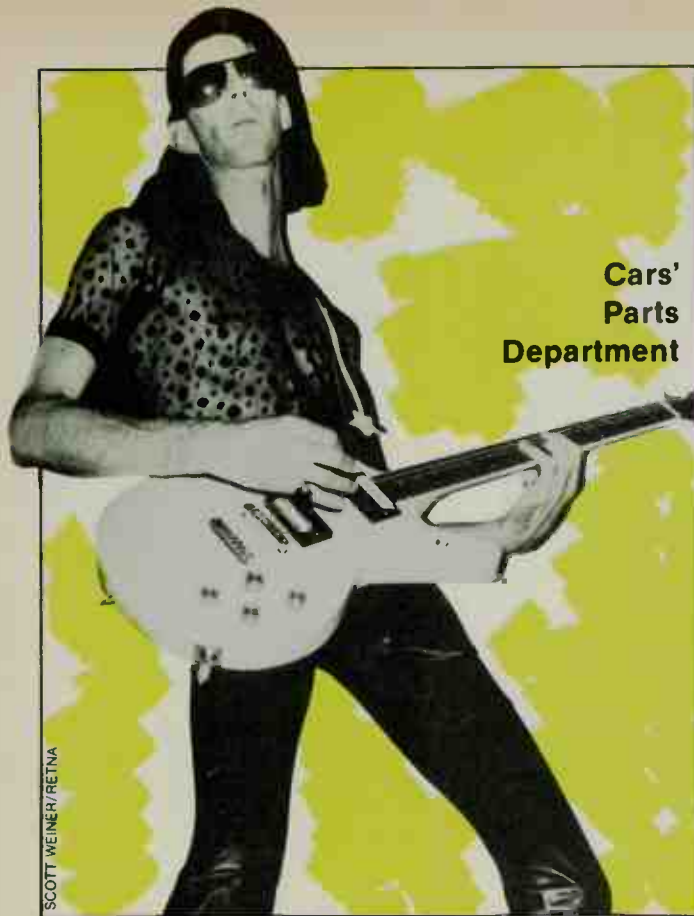
Conversely, "Just a Dream Away," from *Shake It Up*, uses drum machine, synthesizers and backwards guitar to provide a wispy cushion of sound for the vocals. The sounds, taken individually, are rather unorthodox, but the overall effect is not. The Cars understand how to turn technology into interesting textures, and how those textures can focus attention on a melody without competing against it.

Guitarist Elliot Easton provides a large chunk of the sound on "Just a Dream Away," but not so you'd notice. "I even play guitar synthesizer on that song," he says. "There are some parts there that you wouldn't know whether they were keyboard or guitar. There's no way to tell."

Which is precisely what Easton is after. "It's more an interacting of parts than a bunch of solos," he says of the band's approach. "That's a pretty antiquated concept — you play two choruses and then for some reason it's assumed that you have to demonstrate your expertise at improvisation. That's not necessarily true of music and the construction of music."

The Cars are a group in the plainest sense of the word. Although Ocasek writes all the band's material, no one personality dominates. In fact, after meeting them it's hard to imagine that any one could. Ocasek, modest to the point of diffidence, insists that he never forces a song on the group; if anybody objects to a new number, he'll abandon it rather than fight to get his way. Selflessness? Perhaps, but more likely it's a reflection of the immense respect Ocasek has for each member of the team.

It runs both ways. Each member of the Cars seems supremely content to play what Ocasek writes. Elliot Easton, a quintessential guitar player, seems happy to sit and talk instruments and approaches; David Robinson, who with his extreme



SCOTT WEINER/RETNA

Cars' Parts Department

The significance of musical equipment varies from Car to Car. Elliot Easton, for example, asked if I would settle for a summary in place of a complete listing of his hardware, because, he said, "I have at least forty guitars. It could take *days*."

Ric Ocasek, on the other hand, admitted that "I'll get a guitar for its color, quite honestly, and I'll use it onstage because it has that color."

Nonetheless, each individual Car has a pretty impressive array of instruments at his disposal, plus a nice little studio in which to play them (more on that later). In order to keep things under control, therefore, we agreed to limit this to equipment used either on the road or on *Shake It Up*.

Let's start with Easton's short-form guitar list.

The Fender guitars he used on the album were mostly the Telecaster and the Lead II. "I didn't play the Stratocaster on the whole album, except for 'Cruiser,' that crazy thing where it ends slamming the door."

Easton also used two Gibsons on the album. One was a Les Paul, which contributed the Robert Fripp-like solo to "Since You're Gone." The other was a 355-mono, "the B.B. King/Chuck Berry one. It's normally a stereo guitar; in the '50s, it was kind of rare but occasionally they made mono versions. It's the full, ebony-necked deluxe version, but without that silly Y-chord." The 355 can be heard on what Easton calls "the Keith bit" through the chorus of "Shake It Up."

Under miscellaneous guitars, Easton used a Takamine J-115e electric-acoustic guitar on "This Could Be Love." He also used a Greco guitar from Japan — "I don't know the model name, but it's not available in this country anyway, so it doesn't matter." On the upcoming tour, Easton plans to take the 355, a Les Paul, a Telecaster, a Stratocaster and maybe a Dean. "You've got a Fender guitar, a Les Paul guitar and a hollow guitar," he said. "It gets to a point where things become redundant." His strings are Ernie Ball's Stainless Steels, the middle set (high E is .009 gauge). "Onstage, I'll swap the .009 for a .010," he said, "just to break 'em less."

His effects include a Delta Lab digital delay unit — the DL-4, he thinks — as well as a Roland analog delay and an MXR digital delay; he also uses a Roland stereo flanger and a Roland Dimension D. "The Delta Lab is used for the bubbly, under-water sound I like to get, and the analog is an easy slap-echo, i.e. 'Best Friend's Girl.'" He also used a Roland guitar synthesizer on "A Dream Away." In the studio, it was all fed through either a 50-watt Marshall amp, or a Fender Deluxe amp. Onstage, he uses Norlin Lab amps.

Ocasek's guitar line-up is much simpler. His favorite guitar is an eight-year old Fender Jazzmaster, painted pink. "I used it on this record a lot, and I use it on every record, all the time," he said. But he

didn't use it on the last tour. Instead, he took an old Fender Jaguar Easton found for him in a hock-shop. It cost \$80. "I think it was just the idea of it being old and beat up," he said. "So I used that on the tour. I should have used the other one, because it sounds cleaner."

He has a Dean guitar that he uses in concert, but not in the studio "because I think it's too bright." He has a '55 Les Paul double-cutaway that he uses a lot, and also an SG and a regular Les Paul, but "not a heavy one, because I can't hold 'em up. I'm too skinny." His strings are D'Addario mediums, and his amp is an Ampeg V-4, "because I can twist the midrange up a lot. I like midrange in a guitar."

As for effects, well, "I'll use echo sometimes," he said, "but I pretty much keep a straight sound." Andy Topeka of the Cars crew built him an effects board, "but I rarely use it. I either forget that I have them or, in a big hall, there's so much swishing around I just don't use it."

Ben Orr's apartment burned down last year, and he lost all of his guitars, "including," he said, "an immaculate Vox Teardrop bass that had been sitting in a hockshop for about 14, 15 years. I was really depressed about that."

Since then, however, he's found an instrument that almost takes its place. "I found a new bass I'm really happy with," he said, "the new Steinberger. It's *wonderful*, a marvelous bass guitar." In fact, his only complaint so far is that he hasn't found a place where he can get replacement strings. Another new gadget for Orr is the Roland guitar synthesizer and bass pedal setup, which got him so excited he wanted to go back and redub all the synthesized bass on "Think It Over," except, he said, "I was really happy with the way they turned out. Still, if I had an exclusive thing, I'd probably just take the Roland and the Steinberger on tour this year."

Before the Steinberger stole his heart, his principal instrument was the Fender Precision Active bass. In fact, he has a fretless model on order, although he added, "we'll see how that one works out." He uses Fender strings, and runs the basses through an Alembic bass amp, with a speaker system using two 415's and a special horn designed and built by Andy Topeka.

Like Elliot Easton, Greg Hawkes has a mess of equipment. His major instrument is the Prophet 5 synthesizer, "because it seems to be the most versatile one I've come across so far. Plus it's the one that I'm most familiar with, so that makes a big difference." In addition to two of those, he has an Arp Omni "which I use for string sounds a lot," a Mini-Korg monophonic synthesizer, a Roland Vocorder, an Arp Solace, and a Roland electric piano. "Plus I have them hooked up to a couple of monophonic sequencers, which control the Prophets, and they're all clocked off a Roland rhythm machine, generally the CR-78.

On the album, he also uses a Yamaha grand piano, and a Hammond B-3 on "Cruiser." The Hammond was used only because "it was the only keyboard in the studio when we did the track. Otherwise, I wouldn't have picked it. I don't need the aggravation."



PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

Greg Hawkes' sense of the ironic perfectly complements the Cars' delusory desperation.

He limits his effects to a Roland chorus-echo, and runs the whole shebang through Yamaha power amps and Northwest cabinets, with Tad drivers, Audio Arts cross-overs and Parametric equalizers.

As for David Robinson, he has two matching Slingerland sets, "one's chrome and one's red." He also uses timbales, a Ludwig snare drum, Sonor foot pedals, Ludwig cymbal stands, Zildjian cymbals — 14" high hats, 14" thin crash, 16" medium crash, 18" medium crash, 22" ride and one which varies from year to year, though it's generally a 16" swish. His drum heads are all Remo Ambassador all-white rough coats, except for the timbales, which take Remo Diplomats.

Robinson also uses two drum machines, the Roland TR-808 and

"one which is the cheapest you can buy." He also has two Syndrum boards. "One is the newest model, and the other is one of the first ones, which has been modified to do different things." Robinson also has a switching system set-up in his drum kit that activates the syndrums without his having to turn around. It was designed by Robinson, his drum roadie Hegg, and other members of the Cars crew.

If all that equipment isn't enough for you, there's the new studio.

"It was another studio before this," Ocasek explained, "but it was only the one room upstairs. We ripped all the walls out, rewired it, built a room on the back and did all this down here." The studio now boasts a control room, main studio, drum room, guitar/reverb room (dubbed the "loud" room because, as Robinson put it, "it sounds like a little gymnasium") and a lounge. All are wired so you can plug directly into the board, and there's even a set-up for closed-circuit TV, so those in the downstairs rooms can see those upstairs, and vice versa.

Perhaps the most impressive room is the drum room, which has its floor on the basement level, but its ceiling stretching to the studio upstairs. This added height makes the room very live, although it wasn't live enough while the Cars album was being recorded. Consequently, producer Roy Thomas Baker had to doctor the acoustics slightly. "He put white bathroom floor tile all over the floor," reported Robinson, "just spread them out, then put up some old sheet metal he got at the dump. We spent all this money fixing the room up, nice lighting and everything, and then we filled it with crap.

Now, moving reflective panels make the sound more controllable.



PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

David Robinson pounds a backbeat out of Ocasek's patterns.

As for hardware, the main machines are Baker's 40-track Stevens 2, and an MCI JH 24 24-track machine. There are two 1/2-track 1/4 Ampex ATR-100's; one Studer B-67 1/2-track, and an Ampex 440. The board is an MCI JH-600, "loaded as high as it will go," according to Andy Topeka, with 36 full channels and 8 "wild" faders not directly assigned so, said Topeka, "you can use them for just about anything."

haircut-and-dye-job looks far more artsy than any other Car, even throws in a plug for his drum roadie, Hegg. ("You ought to talk to him," he insists. "Those guys would make an interesting story.") Greg Hawkes seems as owlishly intent about his array of synthesizers as his vaguely gnomish appearance would lead you to believe. Nonetheless, he's really not much of a technocrat, and admits that the main thing that has kept him away from micro-processor assisted keyboards is "first, I'll have to learn a basic computer language." Considering that his brother performs all sorts of computer esoterica for the government, I doubt he'll have much trouble.

Perhaps the most convincing testament comes from Ben Orr. With his photogenic propensity, affable personality and fine, clear voice, Orr would seem a logical front man for the Cars, yet he's quick to insist that Ocasek should sing as much as he does. "A lot of people didn't want to hear Ric sing before," he says. "They'd say, 'Here's a vocal part, Ben. Why don't you do it?' I thought that was a bunch of rubbish. We've got both styles, his and mine, and whatever best suits the vocal goes on."

Ocasek feels that it was this spirit of cooperation that made the Cars click. "There was more concentration on good songs," he says. "Things got more concise, more to the point. And in turn, I think it was an inspiration when it sounded so good to write better songs.

"It seemed like the people in the band were not getting in each other's way, as far as musicianship and arrangements went. There were no attitudes of 'Let's play a 20 minute guitar solo because I play guitar,' or 'Let's do a 15 minute drum solo.' Basically, the solos were structured to mean something immediately, and when they fail to mean something, get out."

"Ric is a songwriter first," says Easton, "and when Ric is in a band, that band does Ric's songs. So all those different incarnations were more or less just bands based around Ric's songs." Greg Hawkes feels that the direction Ocasek gives has come full circle: "I think some of the melodies that Ric comes up with are melodies he's heard me playing, so I feel that his sense of the keyboard parts has been influenced by me. I also feel the way I play keyboards has been influenced by him, because he does come up with parts that sound great." "We are all on the same wavelength," adds Easton, "and rather than the differences being a disruptive factor, they just add to the overall picture. We all have the same attitude to what we're doing, but we're all doing different things. You can't believe it, but it works out right."

The band's sensitivity to Ocasek's songs extends to his oft-used sense of irony or absurdity. One example is Hawkes'

synthesizer line behind the B-strain of "Victims of Love" on the new album. Its asymmetrical phrasing throws the vocal line wonderfully off balance, perfectly undercutting the lyric's sentiment. Says Ocasek, "That's definitely Greg's way of approaching things, which I really love and respect. Those are the kind of things I love to hear. I love the way the Cars throw a different mood into the instrumentation of the songs other than what the lyrics would call for, like putting something that's happy in a song that's really not. I like that ironic touch."

Irony is fine as a technique, but it gets a bit tedious when it becomes part of the fabric of a group's work, and Ocasek is dangerously fond of irony. Perhaps it's because irony allows Ocasek an extra margin of distance between his writing and his feelings. "It feels like I do keep a distance," he admits. "Maybe it's because I feel there's a certain amount of mystique in it... People are generally cold to people. I don't like to create false feeling."

But is it avoiding false feeling, or merely being afraid to accept responsibility for feelings in general? I'm reminded of the time the Cars hosted *Saturday Night Live*, and refused to actually say anything. Consequently, all you saw was the band on screen, and a message at the bottom of the screen reading "We'll be right back..." Cute, sure, but also something of a cheat for the fans who wanted to hear the group talk. Do the Cars live by this aesthetic because that's the way they see art and the world? Maybe, but I can't help but suspect that the view is as convenient as it is aesthetically serviceable.

A lot of Ocasek's songs are oriented toward such emotional confusion. "Since You're Gone," on *Shake It Up*, fluctuates between melancholy and a restrained joy as easily as the music itself shifts modes. The opening itself is an excellent example. A percussion cadence is established by what sounds like a lone tap-dancer ("It's a real cheap rhythm box," reports Robinson. "It's supposed to sound like hand claps, but if you turn it up, it does sound like tap dancing"), and is joined by Ocasek's distortion-heavy rhythm guitar, playing fifths. Bass and piano enter ominously, answering Ocasek's fifth with a portentous ninth. After that brief rumbling of dark clouds, the sun breaks through as the rest of the band strikes up the poppish progression the verse is built on.

"Since You're Gone" maintains its ambivalence throughout. Ocasek's vocals make much of the protagonist's plight, but don't seem anxious for a reconciliation. Like Jonathan Richman, he takes a mock-serious stance as he overstates his case: "I can't help it, everything's a mess/I can't help it, where's the tenderness?" It's hard to know whether to respond with pity or to dismiss him as a selfish crybaby, and

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RON POWNALL

Elliot Easton uses a thick, screaming tone in tasteful, melodic dabs.

most of the backing tracks — Hawkes' synthesizers in particular — do little to clarify the situation one way or the other.

One aspect of the Cars' music needs no clarification: the rhythm. "When I write, I write from a rhythm thing, says Ocasek. I work a lot with drum machines and I love rhythm. That whole section. I'm more interested in that, the drive of the rhythm or the subtlety underneath."

"So basically, my concentration is on that. I just keep my part the same, and it holds the bed of it together. It has to almost work on its own, and I think if it does, there's no reason to change that bed. Any embellishments in the song will be what's on top."

Ocasek's rhythmic orientation dovetails nicely with Robinson's approach to drumming. His playing is highly regimented with few superfluous notes, and like Ocasek, he usually locks into a pattern and stays with it. Nonetheless, his playing isn't a reflection of Ocasek's, but a convenient parallel. "I would probably approach anything I was playing the same way," he says. "When I learn a song, I go through a bunch of different parts and narrow it down until there is one part that I think is really perfect for a whole verse. And I'll always put the cymbal crashes in the same place, normally. I really like it to be well thought-out."

Unlike most bands, which use the bass and drums to anchor the rhythm, the Cars' rhythmic axis is the rhythm guitar and drums. That can make shaping a part a little rough for bassist Ben Orr. "Sometimes I find it really frustrating," he says. "Occasionally, I like to have something develop around me. Once in a while it happens, but it doesn't happen that often. It gets classified as the Cars-beat."

"I try to play around the drums, too. I don't know where that comes from — probably the old Earth Opera album on Elektra, about then, twelve years ago. Some of the early Beatles stuff also didn't follow the drums, so you gotta keep that in mind."

To guitarist Elliot Easton, texture and sound quality are as important as the notes themselves, an attitude that is particularly in evidence in his solo on "Since You've Gone." Passionately subdued, it strongly recalls the work of Robert Fripp. "It does, doesn't it?" Easton comments.

"I wasn't trying to get Fripp's sound. The way the part was conceived, I wanted a sound so thick and sustaining that I could slide my finger up and down and play the entire solo on

one string, picking a minimum of notes. I wanted it almost sounding like a synthesizer.

"I was trying to get a hold of a device called an E-bow. It's a magnetic generator, and I thought that would keep the string vibrating so I could slide my finger up and down it. Perfect, right? Well, apparently they stopped making it, so I had to go for sheer volume. All I did was plug a Les Paul into a Marshall on ten, and open up both pickups. That's how it came about — it had nothing to do with Fripp."

Technique aside, Easton's remarks point up a key factor in his approach to the band's music: an acute awareness to instrumental color and texture. "Since my thing in the band is more *sounds* oriented, or parts oriented," he says, "I'm constantly altering levels, bringing certain things out, coming back into the band and stuff like that. So I think in terms of, 'How would I do that?'"

"I just work instinctively on those things. I'll hear the sound in my head before I'll decide what guitar or amp or effects box it's gonna be."

"The way it took place this time was to use some lead guitar breaks, but on the whole use more guitar parts. More orchestration of the guitars using a lot of tracks."

"But really, the solo is nothing compared to the other stuff, to working myself in, between Greg's keyboard parts and Ric's rhythm guitar. Finding that hole, filling in that tapestry of sound."

Like Easton, Greg Hawkes is also very sounds-oriented. Talking about his keyboard influences, he rattles off some favorites — Kraftwerk, Cluster, Wolfgang Reichman, Brian Eno — before remarking, "It's funny, because it's all keyboard music that doesn't have much individual soloing in it."

Instead of marvelling over technical proficiency, Hawkes is more interested in the approach a keyboardist takes, "starting with the way the Beatles used keyboard parts. You know, all their 'Strawberry Fields Forever'-type stuff. My first interest in keyboards developed out of those records. Up until that time, actually, I had been playing guitar in bands, rhythm guitar. I just switched my interests to keyboards, more to different textures. And the keyboard seemed the best way of getting the most possible sounds."

The group thus sees each part as a piece of a larger whole; "It's not unlike a jigsaw puzzle. You try to do bits," says Hawkes. All the musical causes and effects are ultimately mixed and sorted in the studio.

The band begins with Ocasek's 8-track demo. "Some songs I take in more complete than others," he says. "Some songs I take to the band with somewhat finished ideas, and whether they want to use the idea is entirely up to them. I'm not very dictatorial in those situations. I feel that everybody in the band has good taste, and will play for the benefit of the song."

How much input do the other members have in realizing those songs? "Some of them Ric does all by himself," reports Hawkes. "Some of them we did here, and it was really a five-way kind of thing. It varies from song to song. There are a couple I've done with Ric. It comes out in all sorts of ways."

But there's always some input from the band. "Even when Ric has a complete demo," Hawkes says, "it will be elaborated upon, and will go through quite a few alternations before it comes out. We don't, when we're recording the album, necessarily try to duplicate the demo."

Because the mix provides the context for the sounds the Cars have labored over, it is almost more crucial to the realization of the band's intent than anything that has preceded it. No surprise, then, to find that the mix on *Shake It Up* is packed with detail. Even the smallest thump of a drum machine is placed with care to give the optimum effect.

As with the instrumental textures themselves, the ultimate consideration in working the mix is to convey the idea of the music. "It comes about just from listening to the mood of the song and the way it's flowing," Ocasek explains, "and deciding whether a guitar part is important and should be up front, or whether it should be somewhere in the bed to carry it. In mixing, it's always the feel of the song. If that guitar is up

instead of down, I imagine the flow of the song would change. It easily could.

Helping to hold all these details in place is producer Roy Thomas Baker. In many respects, Baker would seem to be an odd choice for the band. For one thing, he's best known for his work with Queen, hardly the sort of thing one would expect of a producer with "new wave" affinities. For another, Ocasek himself is no slouch behind the board, and has more than enough production experience to get the job done.

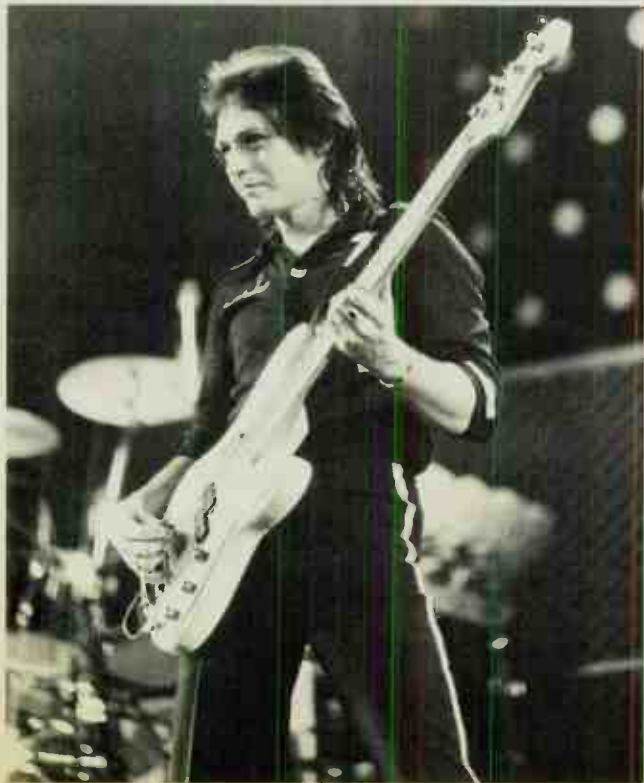
"Why didn't we do it ourselves?" Ocasek says, anticipating the question. "Well, Roy's a great friend, for one, and I like him to be here. Plus, I feel like a Cars album is different from when I do my own productions. If I was to produce the Cars' album, I would have to be in the middle of everything at once. I'd have to be on the board, I'd have to be out there playing, doing this, doing that. It takes quite a lot to do a good record. I feel so confident that Roy and Ian (Taylor, Baker's engineer) know what they're doing as far as that goes that it's one thing I don't have to think about when they're here. I don't have to go in and work on a drum sound and then go out and do the take. I know it's gonna be there, and I can think about how the song's going, the arrangement, parts, things like that. Things I'd *rather* concentrate on.

"One of the greatest things about Roy is that he'll let a band do what they want. Roy's not the kind of person who would try to force anything on anybody. For instance, two of the songs on the record are demo tapes that we recorded probably six months ago, here by ourselves in this studio. One of the best production decisions he ever made was, 'Why do this song over? It's done.' See, Roy can do that. While some other producer might say, 'Well, I didn't do the basics on that, I think we should do it again,' he knew that the feel was there. He could hear it, it was obvious. Why change it?"

With *Shake It Up* finished, in fact in the stores as you read this, the next project on the Cars' agenda is a tour, tentatively set for January-February '82.

The band's last tour, behind *Panorama*, was surprisingly elaborate for a bunch of self-professed minimalists. With its huge aluminum-and-polyurethane stage set and elaborate lighting effects, it clearly catered to the coliseum circuit and left the Cars looking like an archly modernistic version of Queen (hmmm, maybe *that's* the connection...). If that wasn't

Originally the lead vocalist, Ben Orr encouraged others to sing.



RON POWNALL



ANN SUMMA/PHOTO RESERVE

"Flying like a cement kite"; Ric Ocasek's oxymoronic lyrics may not connect all the dots, but somehow they make sense.

enough, it also made the show stagey and cumbersome, numbing the effect of music that already seemed a little too distanced for its own good.

This tour should avoid some of those problems. To begin with, *Shake It Up* is a far more personable album than *Panorama* was, and it should be interesting to see how a ballad like "I'm Not the One" translates to live performance.

Nor will it be as elaborate as the last tour. Asked about his plans for future tours, Ocasek is insistent: "Scale 'em down, scale 'em down! This year in particular. In fact, we're only going to tour for a month and a half."

Why? "I like to be excited at the end of the tour," he explains, "as well as at the beginning. I love to play in front of people, as long as I'm excited. I don't like it at all when it goes over the top timewise and I'm just *out* there, because I could be doing so many other things that are much more important. Making records is much more important to me, personally, than a live group, but there's no way that I wouldn't want to play live every year, just like I always have.

"So it's gotta be interesting, even at the end. And when you go out for six months, it can't be."

One thing that may keep things interesting on the tour is Ben Orr's *pink* bass. Pink bass? "There are going to be four guitars," he explains, "and they're all going to be pink. Ric has his old Fender Jazzmaster, Elliot's getting a Stratocaster, Greg's getting a Telecaster, and I'll be playing a Precision bass. Just a little flash for the folks, I guess."

In the meantime, there are rehearsals for the tour, but Ocasek says that shouldn't take too long. "We don't rehearse a long time to go out," he says. "Live can never be a record, and with live, I think it's too unsteady for us to be concerned with whether or not it's perfect. I mean, you can do a bad show and people will come up and say it's great. That's happened so many times that I'm convinced it's an uncontrollable situation.

"Doesn't bother me in the least, though," he adds with a grin. "In fact, I look forward to it being uncontrolled, because I don't particularly *like* control." **M**

GIL EVANS

The jazz arranger who wrote the book, *Jeweler Gil Evans* has created warm and subtle settings for a great number of epic soloist gems and at 69 continues to be a vital musical force, an orchestral innovator without peer.

By Zan Stewart

Twenty years ago, Tommy Bee, a classically deep-voiced disc jockey on KBCA, Los Angeles' 24-hour jazz station, opened his daily mid-day shift with Johnny Carisi's "Springsville," from the album *Miles Ahead*, featuring Miles Davis blowing on originals and standards orchestrated by Gil Evans. Bee so loved the album that he played it before and after every set, and even though one heard such tunes as "Blues For Pablo," "New Rhumba" and "My Ship" literally hundreds of times, the sparkling treatments never became tiring or uneventful. *Miles Ahead* was then, and is now, magnificent music.

By 1957, when *Miles Ahead* was recorded, jazz musicians already associated Gil Evans' name with the finest contemporary jazz arrangements, and knew him to be a composer and arranger of startling originality whose works could be graceful and lithe or biting and brilliant but always rhythmically energized. But it took two other dates with Davis — *Porgy And Bess* and *Sketches Of Spain* — to firmly plant Evans in the jazz public's mind as one of the leading writers of that or any day. No one in jazz had made those incredible *sounds* with an orchestra before — although there was precedent for them in the final reed voicings of Duke Ellington's "Concerto for Cootie" among other compositions, and in the classical impressionist orchestration of Debussy and Ravel — timbres generated, like Ellington's, by ultimately mysterious combinations of instruments. Pastel effects, reed sections turned into organs of subtle breath by the addition of flutes, brass sections mellowed and burnished by french horns, tuba, bass trombone: although the sonic palette could not have been less Ellingtonian, the difference between watercolors and rich oil impasto comparisons with Ellington were inevitable for reasons of quality. No one since Ellington had come up with so comprehensive a series of orchestral innovations, nor had anyone done so much to enhance the genius of a soloist, although Ellington worked with a number of them and Evans' true vocation seemed to be that of jeweler crafting settings for the diamond of Miles.

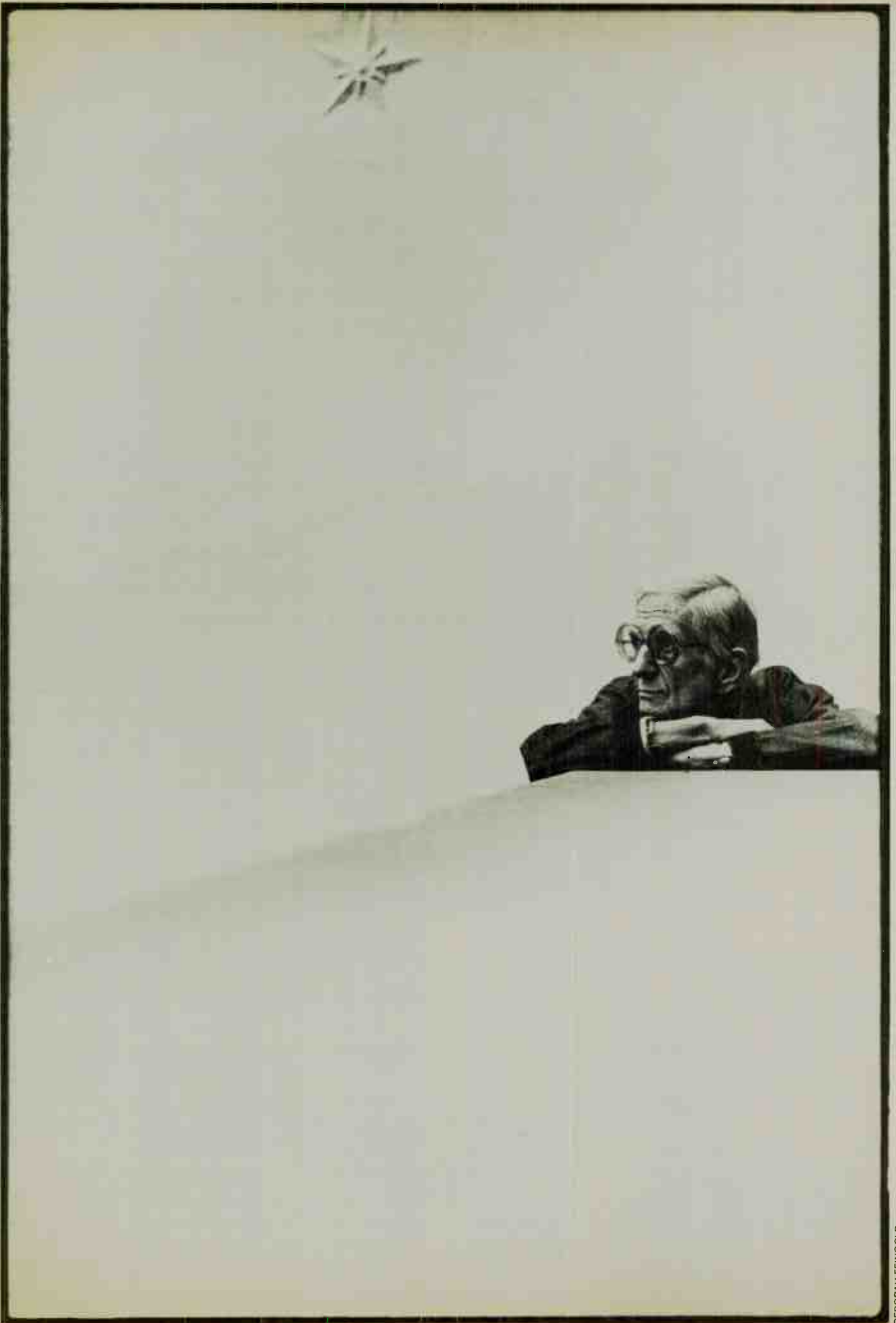
Now, at 69, though he looks 50 and probably feels 40, tall, svelte, silver- and white-haired Gil Evans remains the major force in music he has been for 40 years. He continues to be a writer of daring and surprise, a leader who chooses combinations of musicians — his bands have included such modernists as drummers Elvin Jones and Billy Cobham, saxmen

George Adams, Dave Sanborn, Arthur Blythe and Billy Harper, trumpeters Johnny Coles, Lew Soloff and Hannibal Marvin Peterson, bassist Ron Carter, and trombonists George Lewis, Jimmy Cleveland and Tom Malone — that allow for fresh, unpredictable performances. Where other writers have become mired in genre, Evans has preferred to, in his words, "thrive on vagueness." He explores any and all varieties of jazz: straight-ahead, slow ballads, uptempo free pieces, and hard-charging funk tunes, and sometimes mixtures of them all. His concerts and albums segue from one realm to the next, keeping the listener, like Evans, alert.

Evans came to prominence in the early-to-late 40s while arranging for Claude Thornhill's orchestra, where he contributed lush, soft tunes with melodies crooned by six clarinets and adventuresome renderings of such bop classics as Charlie Parker's "Anthropology." Undoubtedly his work helped inspire Thelonious Monk to comment at the time that Thornhill's band "is the only good big band I've heard in years." Miles Davis also liked the sound of Evans' writing and heard in it a new possibility: playing jazz that had a quieter, cooler, yet full sound that retained the rhythmic vitality of bop, and used new instruments — tuba, trombone, French horn, baritone sax — to achieve this end. The trumpeter enlisted Evans' participation in a series of recordings made in 1949-50 that became known as *Birth Of The Cool*, with Evans arranging "Boplicity," a Davis line, and "Moondreams," in addition to other charts by Davis, John Lewis, Gerry Mulligan and Carisi.

Davis continued to champion Evans' cause and through his efforts Evans recorded *Big Stuff* for Bob Weinstock's Prestige label in 1957, his first date as a leader and pianist. During the 50s he added two other solo dates, *New Bottle, Old Wine*, where such classics as "King Porter Stomp" and "St. Louis Blues" served as fulcrums for solos from Cannonball Adderley, and *Great Jazz Standards* (both re-released as *Pacific Standard Time*), as well as the wonderful *Porgy and Bess*, where shimmering and propulsive backdrops set up Miles' moonstruck horn again. In late 1959, Evans worked his longest continual club job, six weeks at Manhattan's Jazz Gallery.

1959 was also the year of *Sketches Of Spain*, the now famous meeting between Evans, Davis and the musical aura of the Iberian Peninsula. Using compositions by Joaquin Rodrigo, Manuel De Falla and Evans, spectacular brass orchestrations and Miles' impeccable soloing drew critical acclaim. Composer-critic Bill Mathieu's comments of the time



represented a clear understanding of the album: "This record is one of the most important musical triumphs that this century has yet produced. It brings together under the same aegis two realms that in the past have often worked against one another — the world of the heart and the world of the mind."

By now Evans was, if anything, overfamiliar with the double binds that confront the jazz composer trying to make a living in the world. Too much the artist and too idiosyncratic to turn out hackwork for the music factories of the world, Evans had either to lead a big band to get his music played, or hope for suitable commissions from star soloists like Miles Davis. Both work and albums were intermittent. 1961 brought an extended gig at the Jazz Gallery, which in turn made possible the beautiful *Out Of The Cool* on Impulse, which in turn begat Evans' sponsorship of Cecil Taylor and John Carisi's *Into The Hot*, issued under Evans' name.

The Individualism Of Gil Evans found the composer-arranger consistently breaking new ground in 1964. In '65, Evans produced a set of striking charts for Kenny Burrell's *Guitar Forms*. In 1971 *Svengali* (the title is an anagram) appeared, Evans adding synthesizer effects for the first time and dabbling in rock rhythm, though swinging as mightily as ever. Rock and electronics played a still more central role in *Gil Evans Plays The Music Of Jimi Hendrix and There Comes A Time*, both cut for RCA in the mid 70s. Evans' cool, regal music had come closer to earth with the years, and while he could still provide cool intimations of subtle grandeur, a stronger feeling for blues had emerged, a spikier sense of humor, and a gift for following inexplicable tangents to sometimes no apparent conclusion.

From the RCA dates to the present, the bulk of Evans' work has been overseas — he did fill in on Monday nights at the Village Vanguard for vacationing Thad Jones / Mel Lewis from 1973-76 — including numerous tours to Europe and a few to Japan. The U.S. dates have been isolated, as with this year's Kool Festival in July and 1980's Public Theatre concerts; the Kool date suffered badly from the band's lack of work and rehearsal time. At presstime, Evans had been contacted to work a club date in Manhattan and was contemplating playing piano with only percussion accompaniment.

The following conversation took place at Evans' residence in Westbeth, the artists' complex on Manhattan's lower west side, where he shares a large, two-floor apartment with his sons Noah and Miles (their mother, Evans' ex-wife and still good friend, Anita, lives two flights up) and an assortment of cats, snakes and lizards. Furnished comfortably, the apartment reflects Evans' tastes: a baby grand piano and various drums and percussion instruments are in the living room, with abstract paintings on the walls. As might be expected, records and music are stacked here and there, and one glimpses albums by everyone from Charlie Parker to Stevie Wonder; an eclectic collection of an eclectic artist.

MUSICIAN: How long have you been in New York?

EVANS: I moved here in 1946, expecting to stay three years and it's more like thirty-five. But where else can you go?

MUSICIAN: You came from California?

EVANS: To New York, yes, but I was born in Toronto. I moved across Canada with my mother, and we finally settled in Stockton, California, where I used to hear the broadcasts of Ellington, the CasaLoma band, Don Redman, all the greats.

MUSICIAN: It's been said that you're self-taught.

EVANS: Well, I've learned from everybody I've heard, that's what I mean by self-taught. I didn't have any training at home, like in the classics. But I was fascinated with jazz. In high school, I met this friend whose father had built a rumpus room in the basement with drums, piano, and there were all these records by Red Nichols, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington. So I started copying records. I learned by copying those arrangements.

Then I eventually led a band in Southern California that became the Skinny Ennis band — we worked for the Bob Hope show — and later I worked for Claude Thornhill, whom I'd met on Skinny's band. Claude had an insurance policy he

was going to cash in and he told me, "I can't decide whether to go to Tahiti or to go back to New York and organize a band." He chose New York and when his arranger got drafted, he called me and that's how I came to New York.

MUSICIAN: What was New York like in the bop heydays?

EVANS: It was a thrill. Everybody was there. As soon as I got to town, I went to 52nd Street. I didn't even have a place to stay — I checked my bags in a cloak room. I didn't care where I went to bed. The first person I ran into was Bud Powell. I said, "Bud, you're the greatest," and he came back with "Yeah? Get me a job." That's all. He knew he was the greatest, right? I never bobby-soxed again after that.

I was on salary from Claude Thornhill's band, and I got a room on 52nd Street, in a basement. I just left the door open and people came in and out all the time for the next couple of years. We'd play chords and compare notes. That's how Miles and I got together. He used to come down all the time, sit and play, compare harmonies, that kind of thing. He'd heard some of the last things I'd done for Claude, some ensembles, that he liked. We had this thing — this sound — in common. We heard the same sound in music. Not necessarily the details; the first thing you hear when somebody plays or writes something or even talks is the sound, the wave form, and having that in common made it possible for us to be good collaborators.

MUSICIAN: What made you so sound-conscious?

EVANS: I don't know, but I guess I always have been. All my feeling for music I learned from Louis Armstrong. Starting in 1928, I bought every record he ever made. So I learned all the pop music from him, and along with the pop music, I learned phrasing, jazz phrasing. That was what I learned from him: the sound and the phrasing.

You know, Miles changed the tone of the trumpet for the first time after Louis... the basic tone. Everybody up to him had come through Louis Armstrong, though they might not have sounded exactly like him, as with Roy Eldridge. But then all of a sudden Miles created his own wave form... it became another sound. Miles didn't even realize this, he just knew he had to have a certain sound. I mean you can describe it any way you like, but it's a different sound and the whole world took it over.

MUSICIAN: But there's such a difference between the original and the copy. No one can sound *exactly* like Miles.

EVANS: Yes, he has to get that sound each time he plays and that's what people don't realize about someone who originates a tone... they have to recreate that tone every time the way they did it originally and it takes a lot of physical effort. Once you hear a sound, you can copy it mentally and it doesn't take that much effort. So when Miles plays he has to put out all that energy... that's why he took a five-year vacation, because he did it for thirty years and he was exhausted. His total organism told him to quit. Of course, he had some bad physical luck, as well. About ten years ago, his hip joint disintegrated, so a piece of shin bone was used to make a new joint but that disintegrated, too, so they put in a plastic one. And he's had problems with brittle bones in his legs and bursitis. Some of his bursas, the oil sacks between the joints, dried up, causing the joints to rub together, especially in the wrists and shoulders, which are the worst places for a trumpeter. Sometimes I'd be up at his place and we'd be working on something, because for a while there we were out to do something but it never materialized on account of the money, and he'd be sitting at the piano, trying to play some chords and he'd say, "Oh, ouch, ouch, ouch!" It was agony for him to try and play those chords. But a good diet and vitamin treatment, which he's gotten into, has helped that.

MUSICIAN: So you're in touch with Miles?

EVANS: Oh, yeah, he's family to me.

MUSICIAN: Back on 52nd Street, did you have any meetings with Bird?

EVANS: We hung out at times. Right before he died, he wanted me to go with him to Massachusetts. He knew somebody up there who could give us a job caddying on a golf course. He said, "We'll get our health back." I said okay but he died a week or so later. I never played with him. I remember sitting in the White Rose, which was a bar at the corner of 6th

Avenue and 52nd Street, and the place had two doors on the street side, I was in there by myself when who should walk in one door but Bird, and through the other... Pres. It was hard to believe. Bird had that heavy walk like he was pulling a load [Evans demonstrates by walking with a slow, stomping action] and of course Pres, he was floating, right? He used to act very swish and all that. He and I used to get together and it took a while for him to hear what other people were saying about him, about how swish he was, so he said one time, "So Lester's a good girl, huh? Those motherf---s couldn't wear my drawers" (laughs). Anyway, they came in like that and they hadn't seen each other in some time, and the conversation was unbelievable. I just sat there, not believing my eyes and ears.

MUSICIAN: Who are some of the musicians that have influenced you?

EVANS: On piano, my first love was Earl Hines, whom I heard through Louis Armstrong. He had that intensity. In fact, I didn't hear anyone who had that intensity, as far as I'm concerned, until I heard Bud Powell. Of course, there are a lot of players that I dug and still dig. And Monk, I love Monk. He took the piano out of the parlor. He created his own world... the world according to Thelonious Monk. He swings so hard.

MUSICIAN: Do you write every day?

EVANS: No, I haven't written at all. I just started writing again last December. I hadn't written anything for years except stuff to get by on. I was domesticated, I spent all my time with my family. I only got a band together because I was tired of sitting at the piano. I sat in front of that piano for thirty years trying to find different ways to voice a minor 7th chord, so I put a band together around 1970. But writing is on the schedule. That's what I'll be doing mostly now.

MUSICIAN: Do you hear in your head or work from the piano?

EVANS: Mostly, I'm a slave to the piano. For years, I would just turn on the tape recorder when I sat down to play and now I'm going to go through those tapes and see what's there. I'm also going through the stacks of things I've written, like rhythms, melodies, harmonies. Once I sort through all that I'll have an idea of where I should go next.

MUSICIAN: You have written so many wonderful pieces of music that must have sold great numbers of albums and yet here you live in comfortable but hardly luxurious quarters. There's no sign of bitterness. How do you manage to rise above the fact that you haven't received your financial due?

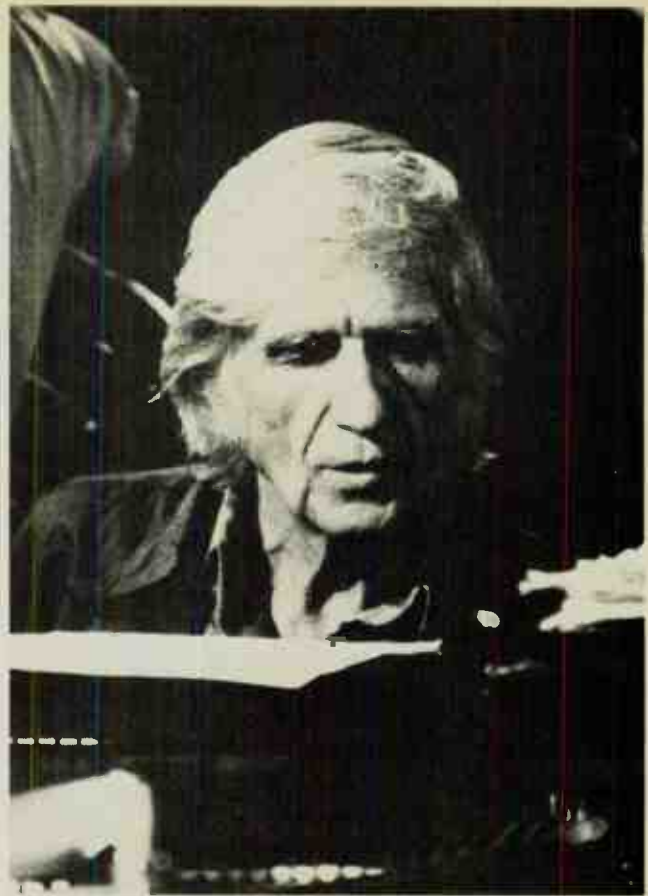
EVANS: You know, an arranger's job is kind of a loser's job, in a sense, because once you get paid for the arrangement, that's the end of it. You see, I've never gotten any royalties for the albums I've made unless I was the artist. Like for the Miles Davis sides — *Miles Ahead*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Sketches Of Spain* — I got paid and that's it. The people who wrote the original lines get the royalties. But at the time I never thought about it. I was having such a good time writing that music that it never dawned on me that years later I wouldn't be getting those checks in the mail. But I don't think about it unless somebody brings it up. I read an interview in the *International Herald Tribune* with a man who was celebrating his 100th birthday and they asked the usual "How do you account for such a long life?" and the man said, "A poor memory." That's all he said and I knew what he meant exactly. So I never think about that stuff.

MUSICIAN: Well, some of the *Sketches* tunes were yours, weren't they?

EVANS: Yes, but I gave the royalties on those to my first wife, Lillian, in lieu of alimony, and I just found out from a man who collects my royalties in Europe that she's received over \$240,000. I haven't received any of the composing royalties, that was just for the publishing. But we've turned that around and I'll start to receive some checks for *Sketches* soon.

MUSICIAN: You've managed to keep yourself in what appears to be excellent health. Do you follow any special diets or exercise programs?

EVANS: The main thing is not to eat too much. I went to a Reichian therapist about ten years ago and he advised me to cut down on animal fat, eliminate all dairy products, including



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

The young people are playing swing from memory; it's not really their thing. It's too automatic, you're going to be bored. I just ask them not to swing, to play, for want of a better word, funk.

eggs, and no sugar. Well, I managed the animal fat and the dairy, but I couldn't quit the sugar — I had to have ice cream. I remember an interview with Muhammad Ali after a fight. He said he wasn't concerned about winning or losing, he was just so glad it was all over so he could go home and have fifteen scoops of ice cream.

I'm halfway into a certain kind of diet. For protein, I'll eat nuts or soybeans and I have a food processor where I make applesauce and carrot juice, and so on. Moderation and balance is the key.

MUSICIAN: So you're feeling fine?

EVANS: Yeah, I feel good every morning. I may feel a little rough when I go to bed, but in the morning, I'm fine.

MUSICIAN: 1981 has been an active year for you, hasn't it?

EVANS: Well, I went to Europe twice. In May, I went to Bergen, Norway, where a great acoustic band was organized for me for two concerts. Some fine players, too, like Palle Mikkelborg on trumpet and Eje Thelin and Albert Mangelsdorff on trombones, and a French horn player from Oslo. He was a surprise to me. He'd never played jazz at all but he could phrase that music. I didn't know the saxes, but Jon Christensen was the drummer and N.H.O. Pedersen was on bass. I'd seen Niels' name for years, but never played with him. What a great player. He played Fender, too, and so gracefully. The band played two concerts, one for students and another in a concert hall like Lincoln Center, and if we'd known how well it was going to turn out, we would have done a tour of Scandinavia, or even Europe. Then back in town, I played the Kool Festival, and then we went on the European tour.

MUSICIAN: The Kool concert at Town Hall had some excellent moments, particularly Hannibal Peterson's solo on "Hotel

Me", or as you sometimes call it, "Jelly Rolls".

EVANS: Yes, he played that one so well in rehearsal, I told him he could have it for the whole tour. As a matter of fact, I have a new version of "Hotel Me" coming out that I recorded in 1971, that features Johnny Coles. He's such a beautiful player, what a sound! Every note he plays is a note. This album was recorded for Capitol but when a new president came in, he scratched my project. John Snyder had advanced me some money at Artist's House in 1977, so I turned the tapes over to him. They've been mixed and we're just waiting for them to come out.

MUSICIAN: What else is on that album?

EVANS: Kenny Dorham's "El Matador," Billy Harper's "Love Your Love" and John Benson Brooks' "Where Flamingos Fly," those last two both featuring Billy Harper. Billy just played a concert here at Westbeth, and, as usual, he was superb.

MUSICIAN: Did the same band that worked Town Hall tour Europe?

EVANS: No, there were a couple of changes. Bill Evans played saxophone at Town Hall and had planned to make the tour, but at the last minute Miles decided he was going to work. Miles went up to Boston and played those four nights and he was feeling so good that he decided to get booked around, he wouldn't let Bill go. On the night of the Town Hall gig Bill told me he had to drop out. He felt terrible, having to cancel at the last minute but I told him, "You'll get used to that. Your career will make you do that sometimes." So luckily Steve Grossman was able to go at the last minute. He's a bebop player. I hadn't known that before. We'd be playing all these out things and he really wasn't comfortable on those. He'd be playing a lot of runs and stuff. So when I finally realized what was happening, I started playing some chords and stuff behind him and that centered him right down. I found out about him in Pori, Finland. I came downstairs and heard someone playing bebop piano in the banquet room and it was Steve. He plays great piano.

So, let's see, we had Dave Sanborn, who joined us in London, and Grossman on saxes, George Lewis and Dave Bergeron, trombones, Hannibal and Lew Soloff, trumpets, Omar Hakim, drums, Peter Levin, synthesizer, myself on piano, Hiram Bullock, guitar and Luica Hopper, bass. As soon as we got to the continent, Luica's wife got sick so we had to fill in the bass part. At first Pete did it on synthesizer, then in Paris I got Buster Williams, who had a night off from Cedar Walton, to work, Steve Lacy came down for that, too, so we had three saxes. Howard Johnson, who was over with Richard Abrams' big band, played tuba in London, then later in Antibes, Julius Farmer, who's a nephew of Art, played bass on some dates. He's living in Milan, teaching. And on top of this, Hiram got a job as Chaka Khan's musical director, so he left early, too.

MUSICIAN: Sounds like a pretty loose group. You must have had a good time.

EVANS: Yeah, we had a great time, every night was different, and we improvised a lot. The guys were very cooperative, and finally the band took care of itself. I'd be sitting at the piano — I'm like a cheerleader on the tour — and they'd be making up their own endings as if the whole thing was written out. Oh, it was wild! It got so I'd just go to the piano and start playing a few notes and the band would come in and we'd get a thing going with nothing predetermined.

MUSICIAN: What tunes did you play?

EVANS: Some older things, like Bird's "Cheryl" and "Dr. Jackyll" by McLean, a lot of originals, some tunes by Masabumi Kikuchi, like "Lunar Eclipse," and some Hendrix songs... "Stone Free," "Little Wing" and "Castles Made Of Sand."

MUSICIAN: At Town Hall, you played "Cheryl" with a funk beat. How did that rhythm come out on a blues by Bird?

EVANS: I can't play those rhythms today the way they were first written because the people who play those rhythms naturally, who grew up playing that music, are not available to me. The young people who are playing it are playing it from memory, it's not really their thing but they've learned how. So it becomes too automatic, it doesn't have the proper feeling. Because the bass players, the drummers, too, they go on in a

straight-ahead swing thing and all of a sudden you're going to be bored. I've always used the rhythm of the time because I've just followed jazz and jazz has always used the rhythm of the time, whatever people danced to. So when we went on the road, I just asked them not to swing, to play, for want of a better word, funk, as far as it would be fitting with those old tunes. So it worked out okay. Omar Hakim was great — he landed on his feet every time.

MUSICIAN: You mentioned Hendrix. How did your album of his music come about?

EVANS: Alan Douglas contacted me and we were going to make an album without singing, Jimi would just play the guitar and I was to write the charts. Alan had played Jimi a couple of the Miles albums that I had written for and he liked them and we were supposed to meet on Monday but he died the previous Friday. I never really met him. I saw him once, when I was mixing an album at the Record Factory and he was there practicing, but we didn't know each other. I bought all his records and I realized what a good songwriter he was. He was the kind of person who'd write a song every time something would happen to him. A true songwriter. But nobody ever told him not to mix barbiturates and alcohol. Funny, you'd have thought the word would have gotten around because some famous people have died like that: Dorothy Kilgallen, Tommy Dorsey. It's a loser. But, Hendrix, as a guitarist, was an innovator. He set the tone for the guitar, right?

MUSICIAN: It seems you haven't made a studio album domestically since the ones for RCA: the Hendrix album and *There Comes A Time*. Why not?

EVANS: I haven't been able to get a deal. And the RCA albums are out of print, I don't even have them. It's too bad the Hendrix album isn't available because it could always be a steady seller. RCA cut it out because each new administration has its own projects, and an album that's making money will be cut to make room for someone's personal project. I can understand it but it's tough to get caught in the crossfire. I know RCA will get around to re-releasing my albums someday but I'm not interested in posthumous recognition.

MUSICIAN: Well, you do have some things happening with Trio Records in Japan, don't you?

EVANS: Yes, Kikuchi produced a live Public Theatre concert for Trio, which we recorded in February, 1980, and which has been released. We just mixed Volume Two last week, which he took with him to Tokyo, so that should be out soon. That'll be the last time I'll put out a live album for a while. I've got six on the market now, two from England in 1978, a couple from Germany which shouldn't even have been put out, they were the lowest nights of the 1979 tour, and the two from the Public Theatre. So Kikuchi's trying to get a contract from Trio Records for an all-electronic studio album. I'm planning to use three keyboards, guitar, bass and drums. He loaned me a Korg 3200 Polyphonic synthesizer that I'm fooling around with now. In fact, I just met a synthesizer player who moved into the building, Richard Teitelbaum, and he's going to come over and show me some things.

MUSICIAN: Do you teach or do clinics?

EVANS: No, I just tell people to listen to the records, that's all I know. I just turned down a clinic in Banff, which was a drag because it's so beautiful up there.

MUSICIAN: What about your kids, do you give them advice?

EVANS: Yeah, I've told them "It's not a fair world and I'm the greatest unfair person you'll ever meet." I try to tell them what's happening but gradually, so they won't be shocked and become chronically bitter. It's hard when you're raised in a winner/loser culture, where every situation is win or lose and you very rarely get a decent kind of sharing thing. Last year my motto was "I want a certified fair share." The word "share" is not in the vocabularies of most people who are bosses, owners, and so on. But you just have to live for today because who knows about tomorrow? I've read that there are thirty sources of nuclear war material pointing at us constantly, and us at them, too. So we live for our life, let's live our lives. That's what we're here for anyway... to live our life. **M**

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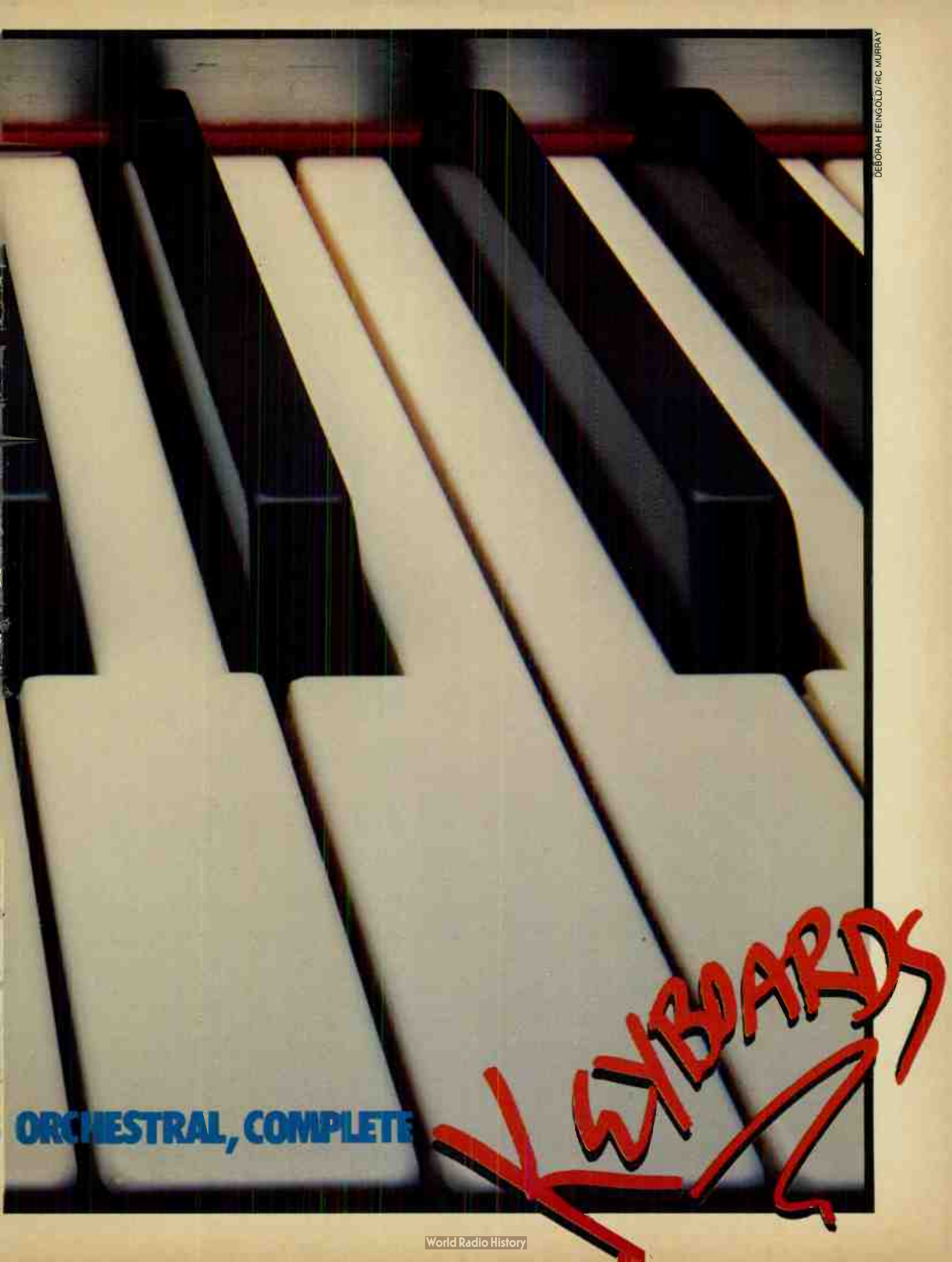
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KEYBOARDS

By Chris Doering, J.C. Costa, Robby Clyne

Today's keyboards come in all different shapes and sizes, and they produce, thanks to synthesizer technology (which is ideally suited to the switching action of the keyboard) an infinite variety of sounds. One thing most keyboards do not lend themselves to, however, is drama. Oh sure, Little Richard and Elton John can dance on top of their pianos, Jerry Lee Lewis could kick over his stool and play with his foot. Serious keyboard work, though, requires the player to sit in one spot.

Any competent player will find that spot to be the "cat-bird seat". He will have the tonal range (often the timbral range as well) of the entire orchestra at his fingertips. And since those fingertips are attached to two hands, he can play two separate parts at the same time, either accompanying himself, or doing the work of two musicians. These advantages have made the piano and its descendants the main tool of composers, the first choice of bandleaders, and the favorite vehicle for the solo player. As any musician can tell you, keyboard players can always find work.

The keyboard does pose some special problems along with its unique opportunities. Most instruments require that the hands work together, but the keyboard player has to learn two parts, and then put them together, a process that requires a special concentration. When he goes to meet his audience, the keyboard player faces severe portability problems. Acoustic pianists are still at the mercy of concert promoters and club owners, who have widely divergent ideas about what constitutes a good piano (last summer at Carnegie Hall, I watched Herbie Hancock discover a sticking key in the middle of his solo). Electric players and organists get to use their own instrustack, along with the amplification system required, they probably feel more like moving men than musicians.

A subtler problem is that most keyboards are fixed-pitch instruments. Until the recent appearance of lead synthesizers with their pitch-bend wheels and joysticks, the keyboardist was denied the slurs, slides and bends that add so much to the expressive potential of the wind and string families. Ever since Bach, keyboard players and composers have solved this problem by making everyone play along with the twelve-tone tempered scale on which all European music is based. It's no coincidence that today's growing interest in ethnic music, which often contains indefinite or "in-between" pitches, is paralleled by the appearance of keyboards that can play these pitches.

As technology continues to develop, the new generation of digital synthesizers are making possible, not just one-man bands, but one-man orchestras. So it should reassure any number of players of 'old-fashioned' wind and string instruments to discover that most of the players we polled still prefer the acoustic piano. Cumbersome, complicated and difficult as it is, the acoustic piano still puts less between the player and the music than any other keyboard.

Jerry Harrison



EBET ROBERTS

Stevie Winwood — Traffic survivor, solo Diver

Favorite Keyboard — Although I enjoy synthesizers, the piano is really my very favorite.

Keyboards — Prophet 5 and 10, Multi-Moog, ES-80 Yamaha, Hammond organ and acoustic piano.

Effects — AMS Tape phase simulator (transforms most particularly the Prophet keyboard), Lexicon digital echo, various BDLs, Moog filter pedal on both Multi-Moog and Prophet.

Amp — None; I haven't toured for years.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Barry Beckett, Wally Baderou, McCoy Tyner, Horace Silver and too many other favorites to list.

Major Influences — Ray Charles, Miles Davis, Hank Williams, Vaughn Williams, Duke Ellington, Little Richard, George Jones.

Own Best Live Performance — Time does tend to mellow memories; however, one of my most favorite was Traffic at Budapest, Hungary.

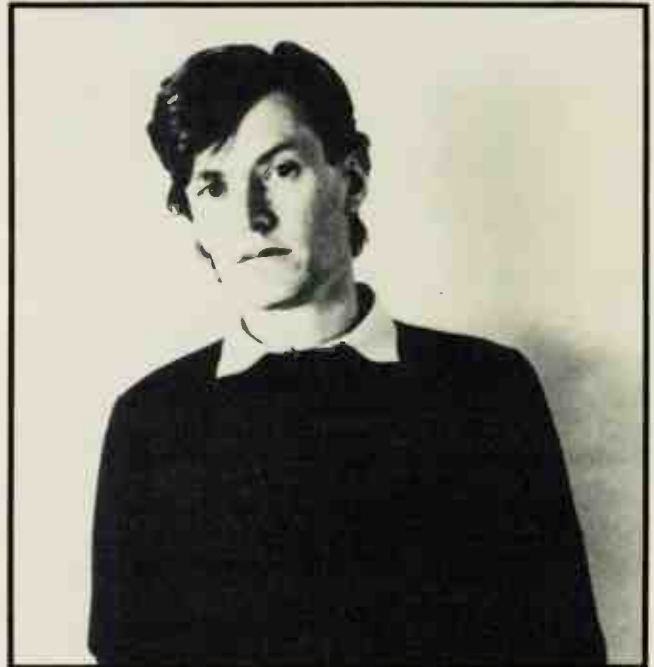
Favorite Concert — Weather Report in London at the New Victoria Theatre a few years ago.

Own Best Record — *John Barleycorn Must Die*, *Traffic* and *Arc Of A Diver*.

Favorite Albums — The new ELO (*Time*), the Otis Redding album that included "Satisfaction" and the records by my favorite artists listed above.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Paganini

Stevie Winwood



Jerry Harrison — Talking Head gone solo

Favorite Keyboard — At home, or in a small group, it's more fun to play an acoustic piano or a clavinet, where you can fill things up, and the instrument gets louder when you hit it harder. But once you start fitting parts into a piece of music on a record, and creating sounds, the synthesizer is better, more versatile.

Keyboards — Prophet 10, Yamaha CP-70 electric piano and YC-30 organ; in the band we also have two Prophet 5's and a Clavinet.

Effects — Roland Space Echo.

Amp — Roland Jazz Chorus, Gallien-Kreuger with a 4 x 12" JBL cabinet.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Bernie Worrell, Stevie Wonder, the guy in the Soft Machine's first album.

Major Influences — John Cale, Jimi Hendrix, Garth Hudson, Fela Anikalupu Kuti, the members of the Talking Heads.

Own Best Live Performance — The Sun Plaza in Tokyo last February was a special night.

Favorite Concerts — Recently, the Neville Bros. at the Roxy in L.A., the Tina Turner show at the Ritz.

Own Best Record — "Crosseyed and Painless," "Houses in Motion" and "The Overload" from *Remain In Light*.

Favorite Albums — Fela Anikalupu Kuti, *Africa '70 Vols. I & II*; *The Zombie*; James Brown, "It's Much Too Funky In Here;" the first Soft Machine album; the first three Velvet Underground albums; the first Stooges album and parts of the second; Jimi Hendrix; *Was/Not Was*; Parliament; K.C. & the Sunshine Band; Stevie Wonder.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — David Byrne



Lyle Mays

Lyle Mays — *Pat Metheny's partner in pastel*

Favorite Keyboard — The acoustic grand piano. Because it's been around for so long, the instrument has developed to a point where it allows a huge degree of personal expression, which no other keyboard can match. Personally I love the dynamic and emotional range of the instrument.

Keyboards — Hamburg Steinway, reworked with Brenner hammers and action; Oberheim 4-voice, Prophet 5, Yamaha YC-20 organ, New England Digital Synclavier II and three autoharps.

Effects — The Synclavier and the piano go through a Lexicon 224 Digital Reverb at the mixing board, while the other keyboards go through a Lexicon Prime Time and an MXR Digital Delay.

Amp — Stereo bi-amped system custom-made and designed by Mark Process.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Art Tatum, Keith Jarrett, Bill Evans.

Major Influences — Miles Davis, Eberhard Weber, The Beatles.

Own Best Live Performance — Brown University, Providence RI, Oct. 15, 1981 (last night). Our first concert in Tokyo, in 1979.

Favorite Concerts — Mahavishnu Orchestra and Frank Zappa in Milwaukee, Wis. when I was in high school; Stravinsky's "Rites of Spring" in Minneapolis (also when I was in high school); Keith Jarrett at John Harms Plaza in Englewood, NJ, last summer.

Own Best Record — *As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls*.

Favorite Albums — Bartok, *Concerto For Orchestra*; Keith Jarrett, *Facing You*; Eberhard Weber, *The Following Morning*; Miles Davis, *Four And More*; Bill Evans, *Live At Montreux Vol. 1*.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Wayne Shorter

Anthony Davis



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Ian Stewart — *The Stones' left-hand man*

Favorite Keyboard — Older Bechstein pianos, either uprights or grands. They're very strong in the left hand. I prefer older pianos generally, because I haven't got much technique, and I need all the help I can get. An old piano which has been nicely played in has a much looser feel, and doesn't fight you. For rock 'n' roll you want a piano with harder hammers, one that rings a little. Most newer pianos have softer hammers, which is fine if you use the pedals a lot, but I just like to hit the thing. I play with my arms, not my fingers.

Keyboards — On the Stones' tour we're using a Steinway 6' baby grand, a Prophet 10 (preset with a B-3 sound), a Yamaha CP-80 electric grand, and a Wurlitzer electric piano. I pretty much stick with the Steinway and let Ian MacLagan handle the other things

Amp — Yamaha mixer, Cerwin-Vega power amp, and 3 or 4 Cerwin Vega horn-loaded cabinets.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Art Tatum, Sammy Price, Ellis Larkins, Nat Pierce, Sir Charles Thompson, Billy Preston, Chuck Leavell, Bill Payne.

Major Influences — Albert Ammons, Amos Milburn, Jimmy Yancey, Big Maceo, Count Basie, Fats Domino, Johnny Johnson.

Own Best Live Performance — The Half Note, London with Rocket 88; Dingwall's, London, with The Blues Band; sitting in with George Thorogood recently in L.A.; with the Stones in Seattle, Oct. 1981.

Favorite Concerts — Aretha Franklin at the recording of *Amazing Grace* in south L.A., Count Basie at Mick Jagger's birthday party in New York, 1963, Little Feat in Amsterdam in the 70s. Any time I've seen Lionel Hampton or the J. Geils Band has been great.

Own Best Record — "Black Limousine" from *Tattoo You*, also "Sweet Virginia," "Down The Road Apiece," "Around And Around" and "Run Run Rudolph," Led Zeppelin's "Rock And Roll."

Favorite Albums — Aretha Franklin, *Amazing Grace*; *Exile On Main St.*; Joe Turner, *Boss Of The Blues*; Count Basie, *Basie Jam #1*; Rusty Bryant *Live In Cincinnati*; Lionel Hampton's Clef records recorded in the 50s; anything by Albert Ammons.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Big Joe Turner

Ian Stewart



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Anthony Davis — *Avant-garde jazz head*

Favorite Keyboard — Steinway, Mason & Hamlin or Bosendorfer grand pianos, pipe organs. I like the three pianos I mentioned for their tone, touch and action. I like a little heavier action, but not extremely tight. I've never liked electronic sounds, but I've always been fascinated by the possibilities of the pipe organ.

Keyboards — My piano at home is an Emerson baby grand, which I've had since I was quite young. I'm looking for a new one though.

Favorite Keyboard Players — James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Cecil Taylor, Ursula Oppens.

Major Influences — Duke Ellington, Stravinsky, Alban Berg, Olivier Messaien, Charles Mingus.

Own Best Live Performance — January 1980 at The Kitchen in New York; December 1979 in Florence, Italy with James Newton, Pheeroan Ak Laff and Rick Rozie; 1978 at the Public Theater, solo.

Favorite Concerts — The Balinese Concert this past year at Asia House, Cecil Taylor solo in Munich, Germany.

Own Best Record — *Lady Of The Mirrors* on India Navigation; *Episteme* on Gramavision.

Favorite Albums — Smithsonian 1940 Duke Ellington collection, and the *Second Sacred Concert*; *Pre-Bird: Mingus Revisited*; *Thelonious Monk At Town Hall* (arranged by Hall Overton); *Wozzeck* by Alban Berg; Messaien's *Quartet For The End Of Time* by Tashi; "Carolina Shout" by James P. Johnson.

Musicians I'd Most Like To Duet With — Abdul Wadud (cello), James Newton (flute), George Lewis (trombone), Jay Hoggard (vibes).

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Joe Sample — *The Crusaders' southern knight*

Favorite Keyboard — The acoustic piano. With the acoustic, preferably a concert grand, I play hard. It's the only keyboard that can give me what I'm looking for in terms of the power I generate. It just stands up to me and says "I can take it." It gives out, too.

Keyboards — Rhodes 73, Polymoog, Minimoog (live) Oberheim, larger Moog (studio).

Effects — I gave them up, because I had too many hassles with stuff breaking down. I can't stop playing when we're playing live, because I have to keep the rhythm and ideas flowing.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Oscar Peterson, Horace Silver, Dave Brubeck, Art Tatum, Errol Garner, Tadd Dameron, Chick Corea. I like everyone who's good.

Major Influences — Sonny Rollins, Miles, Dizzy Gillespie, Paul Desmond and Clifford Brown.

Own Best Live Performance — In our younger days we could drive across the country in a station wagon, jump out of the car in Philadelphia or someplace, and do a matinee. Even though we were very tired, those were some of our best gigs. I still get tired on tour, but I forget about it when I'm playing because I'm having a good time.

Favorite Concerts — I had some time off in Copenhagen recently, and I heard a lot of good players there. The city really impressed me as a jazz city.

Own Best Record — In the Crusaders, there was a period between '74 and '79 when Wilton Felder was playing bass, and I think we got a very wonderful spiritual feeling at that time.

Favorite Albums — Lately I've been listening to Fats Waller, bebop and swing.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — John McLaughlin



T. Lavltz

Steve Kuhn — *Impressionist jazz*

Favorite Keyboard — A 9' Hamburg Steinway concert grand. It's consistently even from the bottom to the top. The bass is very ringy and rich and the treble is clear. I like a little stiffer action, but not too stiff.

Keyboards — My piano at home was custom-made by the Nassau County chapter of Piano Technicians. It uses Baldwin and Yamaha parts, on a 5'8" Fisher frame from 1916. It has a fairly stiff action for practicing, and it sounds about a foot longer than it actually is.

Amp — I put a mic in the piano and a guitar amp by my left ear.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis, Pinetop Smith, Pete Johnson, Art Tatum, Earl Hines, Errol Garner, Bud Powell, Wynton Kelly, Red Garland (when he was with Miles), Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea.

Major Influences — Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Miles Davis and the European classical tradition in all of its periods.

Own Best Live Performance — With the Steve Kuhn Quartet at the Molde Jazz Festival in Norway, summer 1980 (this set was broadcast on National Public Radio last January and February).

Favorite Concerts — Miles Davis' Quintets with Coltrane and Bill Evans, also with Hank Mobley and Wynton Kelly; Art Tatum and Lester Young at Jazz at the Philharmonic in the 50s; Bird at the Hi-Hat in Boston in the early 50s; Gunther Schuller's concerts of contemporary classical music at Carnegie Recital Hall in the 60s.

Own Best Record — *Ecstasy*; *Last Year's Waltz* and *Playground*, all on ECM.

Favorite Albums — Alban Berg's Violin Concerto; Hans Henkemans' Violin Concerto; the complete works of Anton Weber; the complete works of Carl Ruggles; the complete works of Lily Boulanger; Ravel; Debussy.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Sheila Jordan



Joe Sample

T. Lavltz — *The Dregs' pyrotechnic chameleon*

Favorite Keyboard — Acoustic grand piano. That's where it all started. I love the action and the sound, and you can cover most styles with the grand piano. So if I had to have just one, that'd be it.

Keyboards — YAMAHA CP-70B electric grand, Rhodes suitcase 88 (with Dyno-My eq mods), Crumar organ, Oberheim OB-1 and OBX-A synthesizers.

Effects — Echoplex (on the synths), Castle Instruments phase shifter.

Amp — Biamp mixer, McCannon Research stereo 2-way electronic crossover, Crown DC-300A powering a beefed-up Leslie (for the organ), McCannon Research power amp driving two Fender cabinets, one 2' x 15" with Gauss speakers and one 2' x 12" with JBL's.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Jan Hammer, George Duke, Stu Goldberg and Joseph Zawinul for synthesizer, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock and Keith Jarrett for piano.

Major Influences — Keith Emerson, Steve Morse, Jaco Pastorius, Michael Brecker.

Own Best Live Performance — At the Bottom Line a couple of years ago, when we were auditioning for Clive Davis and Arista Records.

Favorite Concerts — Weather Report; Pat Metheny Group; Chick Corea in Atlanta last year. I used to see the Allman Bros. and the Dead every chance I could. When I was in high school, I went to a festival in Hollywood, Fla. and saw Mahavishnu for the first and only time.

Own Best Record — "Kat Food" and "The Hereafter" from *Unsung Heroes*. Steve Morse is an extremely demanding producer, and he just won't let me leave a solo or an ensemble part until it's perfect. Because of that, I'm happy with all of my work with The Dregs.

Favorite Albums — Early Allman Bros., Jeff Beck and Jan Hammer live, *Crescent* and *Giant Steps* by John Coltrane, *Thrust* by Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea (I have a ton of his records), Yes, Mahavishnu, Little Feat, Steely Dan, The Police, the Doobie Bros. with Mike McDonald, The Producers.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — There are so many great ones, I couldn't pick just one. It would depend on the type of music. If I was just playing the acoustic piano, I'd probably pick a guitarist, but if it were keyboards I'd pick a drummer.

Steve Kuhn



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

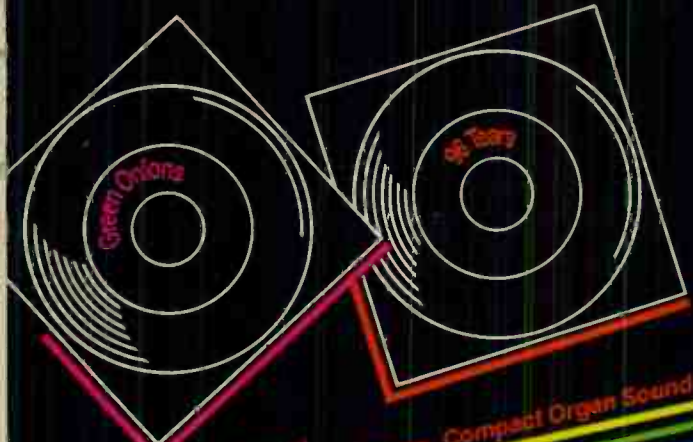
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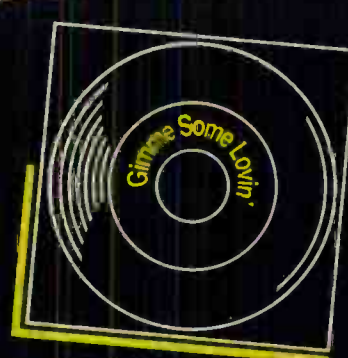
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Roy Blttan

Jan Hammer — *Futurock pyrotechnical showman*

Favorite Keyboard — Anything that feels good and has a strap. I like to play and feel free, to feel the music going through my legs. I like to be able to move around on stage to where the music sounds good. Sometimes I like to go and stand by the drums, other times somewhere else. The portable keyboard is a 100% boost in excitement for me, for the band, and for the audience.

Keyboards — Live, a portable unit made by Royalex (Jeremy Hill), which is connected to a six-voice Oberheim. In the studio, the same, plus Polymoog, Prophet, Mellotron, Fender Rhodes, and Steinway acoustic grand.

Effects — MXR Flanger analog delay.

Amplification — For a "chainsaw" sound, either Marshall or Hiwatt stack. For a "crystal" sound, direct to the board.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Once you get away from piano and electric piano, you get into very murky territory. Today there are quite a few piano players using preset synthesizers, and then there are some who are creating their own sounds. I thought Steve Winwood's album had some very fluid and organic lead synthesizer playing, but I mainly like guitar players — Neal Schon, Eddie Van Halen and Andy Summers.

Major Influences — Jimi Hendrix showed me how a solo instrument can abandon all rules. In the broader area of pop music, John Lennon.

Own Best Live Performance — The Roxy in LA, 1979 (with my own group).

Favorite Concerts — I don't go the concerts. I like one or two songs by several bands today, but I couldn't sit through a whole show. The things I've enjoyed listening to the most have been shows where I was playing. That's the secret of a good live gig, anyway. You have to stand above the music and be objective about it without losing the passion.

Own Best Record — *First Seven Days*, *Untold Passion* (the new one, with Neal Schon).

Favorite Albums — My playlist has some Bob Marley on it, the first Dr. John album, all the Beatles, most of Hendrix (everything recorded while he was alive), Chopin, Bach, some Indian music, some Police...

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — John Lennon

Jan Hammer



Roy Blttan — *E Street expressionist*

Favorite Keyboard — The acoustic grand piano, because it has the most dynamic range, and allows you to express yourself with more sensitivity. I never get tired of the sound of the instrument, because to me it seems like the sound is natural.

Keyboards — Yamaha C-7 acoustic grand, Yamaha CS-80 synthesizer.

Amp — They both go to the board, and the sound comes out of my monitor.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Nicky Hopkins, Leon Russell, Artur Rubinstein, Professor Longhair.

Major Influences — Everything I heard that I liked, and everything I heard that I didn't like.

Own Best Live Performance — In a hotel room in Cleveland, 1974.

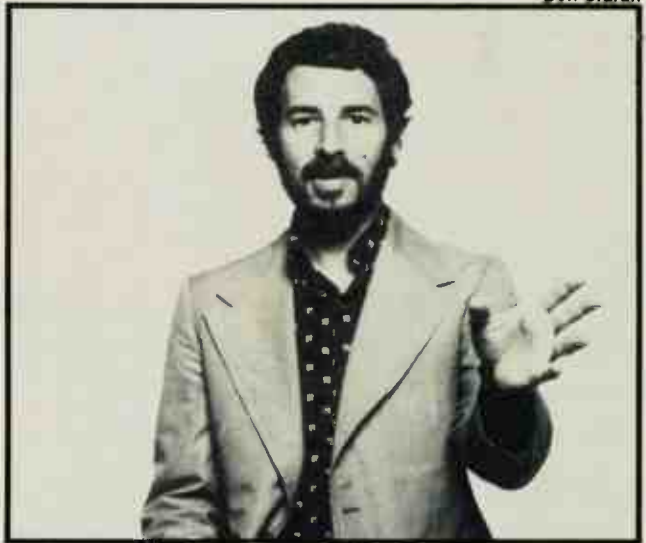
Favorite Concerts — The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (any year), especially Professor Longhair, the Byrds in 1968.

Own Best Record — "Point Blank," "Jungleland" and "Back Streets" (all with Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band).

Favorite Albums — *Blonde On Blonde*, all the Motown collections, Beatles, Stones.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Mark Knopfler

Ben Sidran



Ben Sidran — *Pianist producer, vocal charmer*

Favorite Keyboard — A 7' Yamaha grand piano. There are better pianos, but I couldn't name them by brand as easily. The Yamaha is a real consistent instrument — I know what it's going to feel and sound like before I even touch it. You can control the piano in a 300-seat hall, or a 3000-seater, and because it's a fairly bright sounding instrument, it's very easy to hear my percussive style of playing. Sometimes I won't be able to hear what's coming out of the monitors too well, but I can always hear the piano itself.

Keyboards — My piano at home is a 5'8" Kawai. I find most of the clubs I go into have Kawai or Yamaha pianos.

Amp — I use whatever's on hand, and put myself at the mercy of the sound-man. I seem to have had good luck with Community Light & Sound monitors, but it's hard to tell between the speakers, the room and the guy behind the board.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Sonny Clark, Wynton Kelly, Horace Silver, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, McCoy Tyner and all the new ones, of course.

Major Influences — Blue Mitchell, Nat King Cole, Bob Doreau, Mose Allison, Sam Jones and Jackie McLean.

Own Best Live Performance — The most fun I've had was at the Tribute to Eddie Jefferson concert at Carnegie Hall in July, 1980. In November of '80 I did a duo with Ron McClure at Boston's Symphony Hall that went very well.

Favorite Concerts — Miles Davis at the Savoy a few weeks ago, Oscar Petersen's solo concert at Montreux this summer.

Own Best Record — The last one (*The Cat In The Hat*, A&M) and the next one (*Easy Street*, Island).

Favorite Albums — My favorites are the roughly 100 classic jazz albums. Lately I've been listening to the Horace Silver Quintet's *Horace-Scope*; *Gauche*, Steely Dan; *In Harmony*, Sesame St.; *Live In Concert*, Ray Charles; Marvin Gaye, Cannonball Adderley, and David Sanborn.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Richie Cole



Barry Beckett

Lionel Richie — *The Commodores' maestro of whipped cream*

Favorite Keyboard — There's no substitute for a grand piano. To me that's everything. If you put a grand piano in a room you can take all the other furniture out.

Keyboards — Kawai acoustic grand at home, Yamaha electric grand on stage.

Amp — Showco monitor system

Favorite Keyboard Players — Herbie Hancock, Oscar Peterson, Andre Previn, Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel.

Major Influences — James Carmichael, Elton John (circa *Madman Across The Water*).

Own Best Live Performance — One night in Pittsburgh I got a little hoarse, and I stopped singing in the middle of a song. The song kept right on going, because the crowd was all singing along. The rest of the night I was playing a game with the audience, stopping in the middle of songs and trying to catch them all singing along. We did a concert in the park in Chicago this summer where we had people leaning out of office buildings across the street, and waving and singing along. But every city has its own personality.

Favorite Concerts — Lena Horne on Broadway, Kim Carnes, the Stones and Wayne Newton in Vegas last year.

Own Best Record — Everything we've done is #1 to me, because when I go back and listen to the albums, I can see my life in the songs.

Favorite Albums — Old Motown, James Taylor, light classical. I listen to a lot of dentist's office music to clear my head.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Diana Ross

"Junie" Morrison



Barry Beckett — *Muscle Shoals' master of soul*

Favorite Keyboard — The old Wurlitzer electric pianos. They have a sound similar to an acoustic piano, but a little darker, a little bluesier. There are so many possibilities of sound, and so many feelings and inflections you can get out of the instrument. The Wurlitzer has a touch that you can play into. With synthesizers you can play some nice funky lines, but it's the same volume whether you're playing hard or soft. With the B-3 you have to work the pedal a lot. But with an acoustic or a Wurlitzer, you can control the sound with your hands.

Keyboards — In the studio we have a Baldwin grand piano, a Mini-Moog, a Prophet 10, a Korg, a harpsichord, a Hohner Clavinet, a Wurlitzer electric piano and an Arp String Ensemble. Everything just goes direct into the board.

Favorite Keyboard Players — Richard Tee, David Briggs, Clayton Ivey, David Paitch.

Major Influences — Floyd Cramer, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin.

Own Best Live Performance — With Traffic at the Winterland Ballroom in San Francisco, 1974.

Favorite Concert — I love Bob Seger's shows, but I don't go to enough concerts to judge.

Own Best Record — "Still Crazy After All These Years" and "Kodachrome" with Paul Simon.

Favorite Albums — Deodato; *Theme From "A Summer Place,"* Percy Faith; *Star Wars* soundtrack; *Your Mama Don't Dance*, Loggins and Messina; *Honky Tonk*, Bill Doggett; *Cannonball*, Duane Eddy.

Musician I'd Most Like To Duet With — Paul Simon

Lionel Richie



Walter "Junie" Morrison — *Vibro-physical funkateer*

Favorite Keyboard — There are only two, you know — the polyphonic synthesizers and the acoustic piano. I try to use anything I can get my hands on, but I've found my old Moog and my Steinway to be the most versatile as far as movement of the hands is concerned.

Keyboards — Oberheim OBX-A, Prophet 5, Steinway and Yamaha acoustic grands, Yamaha CP-80 electric grand, Casio 202, Yamaha CP-30 electric piano, Moog Polyphonic.

Effects — There are so many sounds in the synths themselves that I don't really feel the need for effects.

Amp — Yamaha mixer, Crown power amps.

Favorite Keyboard Players — I can be fascinated by anyone that plays, whether it's a small child or whoever. What techniques a person uses, the mathematical aspects, how a person hears or envisions their music, are all interesting to me. The electro-neural responses to the vibro-physics really trip me out.

Major Influences — My first contact with the outside world was with the Ohio Players, so the members of that group had a big influence on my playing and arranging.

Own Best Live Performance — The nightclub gigs I did with the Ohio Players in 1969 and 1970, before our first album came out.

Favorite Concert — Parliament's live act has a lot of art in it.

Own Best Record — I always seem to be a little out of phase — a little ahead or a little behind the times, but I've had a great time doing everything. "Loving Arms" from my first solo album has some nice symphonic things; I also like "Super J" from *The Freeze*, "Susie Thunder Tussy" from *Susie Super-Groupie*, and "Bread Alone" from *5*.

Favorite Albums — I love music. There's so much that you can take in, why leave anything out?

Musicians I'd Most Like To Duet With — Fats Domino, Bernie Worrell, Theresa Almond and Lynn Mabrey.

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CLASSIC KEYBOARDS

A survey of the great electric keyboards which, because of a timeless, personal signature, have become part of everyday listening.

By J.C. Costa

Go up to just about any keyboard musician currently working the rock 'n' roll circuit and mumble something about an "SG." Chances are, he or she will know that you're referring to a classic solid body guitar made by Gibson. Move over to the resident flash guitarist in the same band and casually drop a few suffixes like "B-3," "C-3" or "147," and he/she/it will probably think you're talking about a hotel room number for a late night rendezvous. These, of course, refer to the most desirable Hammond "Tone Wheel" organs and an accompanying Leslie tone cabinet. But given the fact that the organs and electric pianos don't easily lend themselves to rock 'n' roll mythology on the grand scale, only day to day artisans of the music industry's inner circle, keyboard players, would know or care about which of these bulky beauties are particularly in demand.

After all, acoustic and electric guitars seem perfectly suited to the shuck 'n' jive fanaticism coursing through the "classic/vintage" market. They're small, made by hand (in relative degrees), feel good against your tummy and most of them have clear-cut audio/visual personalities that relate to specific artists and kinds of music. As an operative term, "vintage" takes on real significance with guitars because even if you bypass the ad nauseum debate about whether or not they were made better in the old days, the better acoustic and electric instruments from Martin, Gibson and Fender tend to get even better with age. With the notable exception of the Hammond Tone Wheel organs which were discontinued in 1974 because of unrealistic manufacturing costs, most of the classic keyboards alluded to in this survey are still available in updated versions that are as good, if not better, than the originals. So, apart from acoustic pianos like the Steinway Grand, electric keyboard instruments rarely get "warmer" or "mellower" with the passing of time; they just get older.

"Classic keyboards" is then a convenient catch phrase for an electric piano or organ (apologies to all you synthesizer fans out there) that either through careful planning or fortuitous circumstance produces a sound and texture that creates an immediate, empathetic response in even the most untutored listener. Some obvious examples: the spine-shattering G⁷ chord used by Steve Winwood to kick off "Gimme Some Lovin'" (Hammond B-3 with Leslie speaker), the definitively redundant chord progression running through Question Mark



Battered B-3, a twenty-year veteran of rock 'n' roll combat.

& The Mysterians' "96 Tears," the percussive back-up for (Sir) Douglas Sahn's "She's About A Mover" (Farfisa organ) or the distinctive rhythmic sound pumping up Ray Charles' "What'd I Say" (Fender Rhodes piano). These and many other recorded



The Farfisa organ, essential for that "garage band" sound.

examples confirm the age-old axiom, "I'll know it when I hear it." Artists like Jimmy Smith or "Groove" Holmes may in fact be identified with a single keyboard instrument (Hammond organ) throughout their entire career. But many modern keyboard musicians tend to be multi-instrumentalists, and those who can afford it will often include a variety of these classic instruments to lend more variety or authenticity to their sonic repertoire.

Synthesizer pioneer Bob Moog was uncharacteristically lavish with his praise when describing the aforementioned Hammond organ in a recent issue of *Contemporary Keyboard*: "In the realm of the sustained-tone (organ-like) polyphonic electric keyboards, the Hammond Tone Wheel organ is king." And with good reason. These massive instruments (the B-3 weighs in at 425 pounds with pedalboard, and that's one of the lighter ones!) produce a richly variegated and majestic sound that, in tandem with a companion Leslie rotating speaker, swirls through a room, literally enveloping the listener.

Each note on these organs has a matching tone wheel mounted on a spinning rod. Little teeth on each wheel periodically pass over a pickup coil magnet and reduce the space or air gap between the two, triggering an electrical signal. A complex set of filters then processes the signal, producing a nearly pure sine wave with no audible harmonics. In purely technical terms, this kind of sine wave is one of the main reasons behind the recognizable sound of the Hammond, the Fender Rhodes and certain electric guitars. Add to this the superior quality of Hammond's mechanically scanned delay line (read "vibrato"), a heart-stopping, velocity-sensitive attack and a super-fast expression pedal, and you have the basic elements of the Hammond sound.

Certain Tone Wheel models are more in demand than others (the B-3 and C-3 continue to dominate) and there is even a company in Orlando, Florida (Keyboard Exchange International) that specializes in old Hammonds that they either sell as is (a B-3 goes for about \$3,500 in good condition) or in special cut-down "customized" versions which weigh less and are easier to transport than the originals. They also sell the accompanying Leslie tone cabinets (popular models here tend to be the 122 and 147 models) which are just about mandatory if you want to get the full Hammond effect.

Being a "classic" necessarily means spawning a host of imitators, and the Hammond Tone Wheels are no exception. Even the parent company came up with an electronic antecedent closely patterned on the original — Hammond B-3000 — which comes pretty close. The Korg CX3 organ boldly states

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in its ad copy that it's equal to the "B-3+ 147." And, because of its interesting "overdrive" and "key click" features (the latter simulates the percussive attack of the Hammond) and a built-in variable speed rotary speaker effect, it probably comes as close as anything available on the market. Roland (VK-1 and VK-09) and Crumar (T-1B) also make some excellent organs that offer very good approximations of the Hammond. In fact, Roland has devised a very clever campaign for the multi-purpose VK-09 organ by keying the various sounds it produces to legendary chart-toppers like "Green Onions," "Green-Eyed Lady" and "96 Tears." Acknowledging that these are all more than acceptable substitutes, especially in the studio where you have the luxury of extensive signal tailoring and modification, there is still a perceptible gap between parent and offspring. As Moog points out, electronic organs don't produce inharmonic overtones (acoustic pianos and Hammonds do, which is why they sound "warm"), their attack may be smooth and quiet but ultimately lacks real character and "few electronic organ manufacturers have taken the trouble to build superior expression pedals, a feature of paramount importance to organists who really cook." So, as usual, listen and make up your own mind while remembering that we're talking about a weight differential of close to 400 pounds.

Harold Rhodes is an educator and inventor who initially came up with a small three-octave piano to help his students get into his teaching system involving chord progressions and melodies in the early stages of development. He went on to design a compact portable piano which was blueprinted for armed forces veterans convalescing in hospitals after the Second World War. This led to a presidential medal and, after a brief farming sojourn in Texas, Rhodes hooked up with guitar/bass pioneer Leo Fender in California during the late fifties. This in turn led to the development of the legendary Fender Rhodes electric piano, introduced in 1965.

Offered in "stage" and "suitcase" (built-in amp) models with either 73 or 88 keys, the Rhodes generates tones when a hammer strikes a wire-shaped tone bar which vibrates in a particular relationship to a resonator bar mounted over it. Passing over the specifics of how these are mounted, how they interrelate with one another and how the tone bar can actually distort the pickup coil's output waveform on louder tones, I'll leave it to the ubiquitous Mr. Moog to sum up the reasons why the Fender Rhodes has carved out its own major niche in the keyboard firmament: "The 'Rhodes sound' has three features that contribute greatly to its aural appeal: (1) a bright, bell-like attack, (2) velocity-dependent brightness that decreases

continued on pg. 102

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RECORD REVIEWS

King Crimson

Discipline (Warners/E.G.)



Discipline, and the resurrection of King Crimson, signal Robert Fripp's re-entry into the rock arena (or medium-sized

all, to be more exact) after seven years of experimentation and exploration in the arctic wastes of the avant-garde. Fripp's achievement on this record is twofold. He has assembled a great band, and they have been able to bring most of the new ideas and techniques he explored on the last four Fripp albums into the arena. The result is music that sounds like nothing you've heard before, yet is still recognizable and enjoyable as rock.

The music does have some obvious antecedents, of course, including Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*. But while most avant-garde work (including Fripp's previous experiments along similar lines) comes off as an intellectual exercise that serves mainly to prove Ellington's Hypothesis (It don't mean a thing...), the new King Crimson is playing music that has emotional resonance and rhythmic urgency, as well as intellectual rigor. Minimalist repetitive structures, electronic noise, and dissonance have been around for a while in various manifestations, and these players have become comfortable enough with the ideas and techniques to use them as means of expression.

All of which is to say that this is one hell of a rock band. Adrian Belew is such a perfect match for Fripp's guitar that it's nearly impossible to tell who's playing what, although I suspect that the single-note motifs on which "Frame by Frame" and "Discipline" are built are Fripp's, and most of the weird noises (especially the "Elephant Talk") are Belew's. Bill Bruford exhibits admirable restraint, cutting loose only on his "Indiscipline" solo, elsewhere blending tune percussion and traps into a seamless rhythmic flow with the chattering 'rhythm' guitars. The key to the rhythm is Tony Levin's bass.

His spare, melodic style makes maximum use of space, while emphasizing the syncopations and anchoring the groove. In the midst of "Thela Hun Ginjeet's" machine-gun spray of 16th notes, the bass takes on the role of the kick drum, providing a stable point of reference.

Writing lyrics to music this powerful is not easy. Adrian Belew gives it a good shot, and comes close on "Frame by Frame" to finding a group of phrases whose mythic power can stand up to the instrumental onslaught around them. Most of the time, though, he takes the easy way out. The made-up words are fine, but the self-referential tricks are at best coy, and one couplet, "When was a night so long?/Long like the notes I'm singing", nearly spoils the dreamy romance of "Matte Kudesai". When the music has so much feeling behind it, it seems a shame to garnish it with lyrics which remain intellectual exercises. But, as "Elephant Talk" (a lyric about lyrics) states several times, "It's only talk". I haven't really gotten off on a lyric since "Visions Of Johanna" anyway, so I consider the words a very minor flaw on a great record, the most satisfying rock album I've heard this year. A lot of pop can grab me on a first listen, but the strategies have become so boringly obvious to my jaded ears that the impact fades almost immediately. Fripp and his partners have devised an emotionally compelling music that is complex and innovative, and actually gains in power as it begins to become more familiar to my ears. Rock hasn't pulled that trick on me in quite a while. — *Chris Doering*

Elvis Costello

Almost Blue (Columbia)



with veteran C&W producer Billy Sherrill, still offers a revelatory peek inside the oft-cryptic Costello psyche. And, while

I may not listen to it as obsessively as I do *This Year's Model*, *Armed Forces* or his Tamla tribute, *Get Happy!*, Elvis Costello's latest strikes me as his most personal work to date, even if he didn't write any of the songs.

Unlike such other slavish exercises in nostalgia as Joe Jackson's *Jumpin' Jive*, *Almost Blue* is far from a startling stylistic departure for Elvis. This is not merely the case of an English musician guiltily paying his debt to a native American idiom. Instead of imitation, Costello makes this revival all his own by penetrating the usual country clichés of booze, boose and broads, instilling them with the urgency of his own ability to unearth the message behind the myths. In fact, if it weren't for their origins and the ubiquitous pedal-steel of ex-Clover guitarist John McFee (who backed Costello on his debut, *My Aim Is True*), these ditties might even be mistaken for Elvis originals. Thus invoking the fury of country purists who wonder how this limey punk with the sacrilegious name would dare tamper with the legends of George Jones, Patsy Cline, Jerry Lee Lewis, Hank Williams, Merle Haggard, let alone such cherished "newcomers" as Gram Parsons or Emmylou Harris.

Actually, Elvis' obsession with country music has always been evident, and it wasn't just the obvious tunes like his version of George Jones' "Stranger In The House," either. From "Alison" through "Radio Sweetheart" to "Shot With His Own Gun," Costello has used the surface imagery of country, if not the actual music, to drive home his savage critique of contemporary relationships. By immersing himself in the lyrical conventions of country music on *Almost Blue*, Elvis ironically reveals more about himself in the process than many of his own convoluted, punning lyrics themselves manage to.

It is sentiment, though, not words, which makes *Almost Blue* so affecting. Thanks to an open-minded, modernistic production by Sherrill, Costello doesn't just mine this vault but effortlessly renews a glittering set of standards. This is not your orthodox twangin', pardner, despite the gloriously swelling strings and stirring harmonies provided by the

Nashville Edition on the first single, another George Jones weepie, "A Good Year For The Roses". It is, rather, a way of pointing out the unbroken circle which links the warring camps of punk, rock, pop, country and R&B, showing us they have more in common than our prejudices would, at first, have us realize.

In *Almost Blue*, Elvis Costello stands emotionally naked, wrenching every bit of gut he can out of a music usually bathed in bathos. It's almost enough to make this urban cowboy cry. — Roy Trakin

Earth, Wind & Fire

Raise! (Columbia ARC)



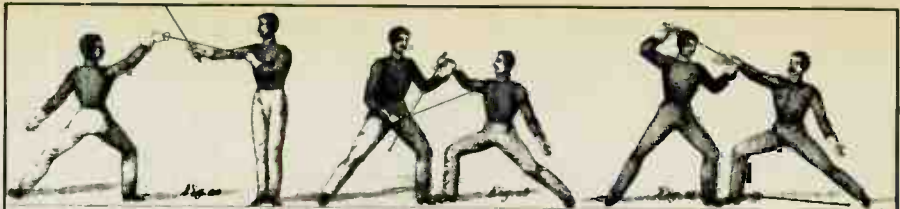
There probably isn't much I can say about Earth, Wind & Fire's newest that'll matter. Over the years they've proven themselves to be the alchem-

ists of soulful pop, turning their thickly layered blend of funky, spongy music into gold. With *Raise!* the Midas touch — and I mean in the classical sense, though their music could probably sell mufflers along with radios, cola and universal love — should continue. But, that's up to you.

The supposed evolution/revolution through universal love is probably up to you, too. Maurice White's message is one of reconciliation — the bringing together of the diversities of humans, that expresses itself in "computer technology, higher consciousness, higher elevation of space, and higher ideas," into a unified whole. It is a strange concoction of R.D. Laing's *Politics of Experience*, the communal village and "I'm Okay, You're Okay."

The message remains the same, from the cover — a half-sphinx, half-space-ship — down to the mostly optimistic love songs. Yes, love can still get you through. It may cause a little pain and require a little sacrifice, but it's love nonetheless. Of the love songs, "Wanna Be With You" and "My Love" are the most striking. "Wanna Be With You" is a relaxed shuffle-bump-boogie based around a ten-note piano vamp. The handclaps provide a solid back beat while the horns and altered vocal yelps and falsettos exclaim the obvious. The strut of "My Love" is padded with multiple vocal harmonies interwoven with a lone saxophone.

There are also message-to-the-people songs on *Raise!* "Evolution Orange" is a brief discourse on the value of patience and self-reflection; its bouncy rhythm, swirling, darting horns, scat singing, and gospel-ish vocal breaks exude self-assurance. "You Are a Winner", with its New Orleans-influenced horn introduction, polished yet scratched-out-rhythm, and heavy metal type guitar break, is another credo



Independent Records: The Year's Best

This has not been the best of years for independent recorders, at least in the U.S. No group has gone from an underground smash (sales of ten thousand, approximately) to a major label, as in the past. The basic problem of distribution remains unsolved, and appears unsolvable, as Rough Trade, the British indie experts, seem to have discovered. However, I.R.S. Records, a "semi-independent," has at last gone Top Forty with the Go-Go's, and the top-of-the-line labels (99 in particular, plus 415, Shake, DB, Fetish, and others) are still very much in business. Little by little...

Note: Groups, such as the Go-Go's or X (JEM/Passport), that have an intermediate corporate status, are excluded from consideration here on grounds of affirmative action for the truly needy.

Norman Nardini and the Tigers — *Eat'n Alive* (Sutra 1012), LP. On any given night somewhere in the Northeast, Norman Nardini is probably giving the best "traditional rock 'n' roll" performance in these United States. This set was such a night, at the Agora in Cleveland last January. Fierce, raunchy tunes about girls and sex, neither Heavy Metal nor Punk, nor (thank God) power-pop. You can always sing along.

Pylon — *Gyrate* (DB Records), LP. After almost a year, my Pylonmania is undiminished. No question about it: note for note, the best new-music band in America. As rhythmically exciting as the purest "dance band" (say, the B-52's); as melodically/texturally original, albeit a lot less atonalist, as the most serious "art" (read U.K.) group. Beware: only a trio plus singer, so it doesn't get fancy. "Wild Thing," not "In-a-gadda-da-vida."

Babylon Dance Band — *When I'm Home* These guys came from nowhere (Louisville) to dazzle New York's critics. They play genuine punk with all the sincerity of an Andy Hardy movie; no leather jacket crap. Here an urgent vocal hook upfront contrasts with distant, mournful clangor from a yearning guitar over great drums — upon first exposure required four times daily.

Outsets — *I'm Searchin' For You* (Contender Records) An undeservedly ignored record, perhaps because it didn't fit anyone's categories for New York groups — too pop, no funk, too fast, no junk. Lightweight like a stiletto, bitter-sweet, this is an ultrapop song where the guitars are so pretty as to be vicious, the voice high and boyish enough to be hysterical, the tempo simply homicidal.

Pop Decay — *Don't Ask Questions/One Gone Egg* Folk harmony, beatnik lyrics, acid guitar, and soulful sax on a most peculiarly charming New York record. It's the songs you remember, but they're hard to describe: a little like early Airplane maybe. It would be a mistake to dismiss this as folkrock, late model. Too much toe-tapping.

esg — *ESG* (99-04) Five songs from a family/group of four sisters from the Bronx, this sounds like the most brilliant, self-conscious and delicate, extremely minimalist white-funk. Ha ha. They don't know and couldn't care less about the proper genre, they're not White, and they're not trying to be "minimal," or anything else.

Liquid Liquid — (99-07), EP Another five-song 12 inch EP from the same label, this actually is delicate ultra-minimal white-funk; in fact it's so sparse it's hardly music anymore. Basically a percussion ensemble, with a little bass, marimbas, and yowling, it's eerie in a nice way. I wish I could think of the drug this reminds me of. It's a good one.

Richard Lloyd — *Get Off Of My Cloud/Connection* (Ice Water 45) The elegant coverphoto says it all: human waste with puffy skin and a dangling cigarette. Just too cool, jerk. In Television, Lloyd proved he was among the very best, a transcendent electrician. Since then he's proven he doesn't care. The A-side is evidence (four years old, they say) of what he once could be — it sounds like the Beck/Page Yardbirds filthy drunk and careening off the Stones' chord changes.

Richard Bone — *Digital Daze* A snappy little electronic ditty, with oddly moving rhythmic embellishments. It holds its own with the new English electropop leaders — Soft Cell, Depeche Mode, etcetera, no mean feat. Bone manages to be neither fatuous nor gothically grim and austere, the common extremes of rhythmboxland. Like Our Daughter's Wedding, but better.

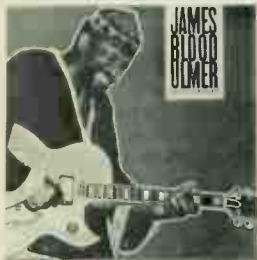
The Nails — *Hotel For Women* (Jim-boco 12" EP) Quite a shocker. The Nails have seemed in the past to be only a derivative pseudo-ska act of no distinction other than energy. I don't even like ska. But this is so well-produced, so far from the jumpy-bumpy idiocy, that it gets to me: a luscious-voiced girl, lots of echoed reggae fills on organ, a real bump and grind.

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of self-confidence.

Despite the often mundane and fad-dish mystical qualities, E,W&F's eclecticism and optimism are still refreshing. This is especially true as pop/rock's care-free or cynical anti-human lyrics offer little relief for the dying interest in global human rights. — Don Palmer

James Blood Ulmer
Free Lancing (Columbia)



Here is a case where the term *fusion* is inadequate and outpaced. Ulmer's music is faster and creates more tension than a speeding GTO on the rain-soaked Edsel Ford Express-

way at two o'clock in the morning, telescoping fifty years of blues and funk — from the delta to New York via D'troit — into a hyperactive, manic, modern-day R&B. He has managed to capture the essence of the blues — that almost surreal combination of ultimate joy and abject sadness, tension and melody — without resorting to the plodding structure of yet another twelve-bar blues, or vocals backed by horn vamps. Instead every player is allowed to create their own melody line, but not with total disregard to the rhythm or to the relationship between different voicings — call-and-response and harmony are prominent in Blood's music.

In this regard the most interesting cuts on the album are with Ulmer's trio — Ulmer, guitar; Amin Ali, bass; G. Calvin Weston, drums. The melodies — like those of the itinerant blues guitarists (or

even sedentary ones such as Robert Pete Williams or Henry Townsend) — are shifting and jagged. And when I say jagged I don't mean angular, because that implies something more measured. Ulmer's notes sound as if they are the cries and shouts of not only those who are ridin' the rails but of those who spend all day splittin' the rails. "Time Less" features fits and starts of guitar over a rolling and tumbling bass and drum. "Free Lancing" is introduced with a whining guitar playing what sounds to be a fractured riff from Robert Johnson's "Walking Blues." The slashing guitar slows up amidst Weston's boogadie-boogadie drumming, briefly alluding to the song's theme. Ali provides a bottom ranging from a solid four note funk vamp to ferocious string snapping — an element of black music since Mississippi blues guitarists used it for bass patterns.

The remainder of the album is not the powerful harmolodic funk that could sandblast ghetto dwellings, but it's not all bad either. "High Time," "Hijack" and "Rush Hour" have fairly rigid horn charts. David Murray, Oliver Lake and Olu Dara don't play as much or as freely as on the poorly mixed but exciting *Are You Glad to Be in America?* Nonetheless, there are moments of Olu Dara's bleating spacious trumpet under the range-riding funk of "Hijack" and Murray's screaming tenor balanced against Ulmer's spitting, cursing and jabbing guitar on the loping blues "High Time." Ulmer's vocals — Hendrix-influenced mumbles, Sly Stone-styled panther squalls and speaking in tongues (The Charlie Patton Translation Plaque for anyone who understands all the words) — are the focus of "Pleasure Control," "Where Did All the Girls Come From?" and "Stand up to Yourself." The words are backed by Ulmer's guitar, sounding vaguely like Hendrix, silken voiced singers and brooding, insistent bass and bass drum lines, creating a danceable funk drone. Although *Free Lancing* may not compare with the harmolodic furor of Ronald Shannon Jackson or even Blood's earlier work, it is a more balanced album. And, perhaps, more importantly for Blood, it does compare with the experimental funk of Funkadelic, Sly Stone and Hendrix. — Don Palmer

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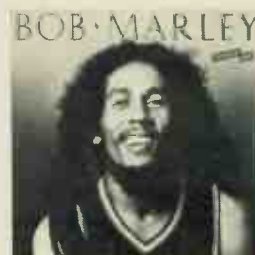
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Bob Marley
Chances Are (Cotillion)



Posthumous releases tend to be shoddy affairs. Typically, they are raw, poorly produced leftovers hastily assembled to make a buck.

As Marley himself sings on this album, "strike the hammer while the iron is hot."

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Ironically, the problem with *Chances Are* is that it is not raw or poorly produced. If you're looking for something that rivals the energy and spirit of the recordings Marley made for Leslie Kong and Lee Perry years ago, *Chances Are* is definitely not it. In fact, next to those relatively primitive recordings, this collection of eight songs recorded between 1968 and 1972 with a variety of musicians sounds like state-of-the-art audio. This is a lush, full production and it's not just the sound quality that seems sanitized; it's the music as well.

You won't find Marley decrying the sins of Babylon on this album; rather, you'll find him exhorting people to "Reggae on Broadway," crooning above doo-wop harmonies on the title track, or otherwise listlessly occupied with a love song. No Rastaman mumbo-jumbo here to confuse American consumers. This is the Bob Marley who early on displayed a sweet tooth for soul confections. And these are the recordings that were made when the burgeoning sound of reggae was more pop than political, more tuneful than rhythmic, more polite than pointed.

There is scant difference between the lyrics Marley wrote on this album and those he didn't. They are all singularly simple-minded ditties which, like some of Marley's earliest recordings with the Wailers, betray his debt to such R&B groups as the Moonglows, the Drifters, and The Impressions. But Trenchtown is a long way from Motown and the simple honesty of the Wailers' early Studio One sessions make these songs appear shamefully calculated by comparison.

Still, they are a revealing part of Marley's legacy, reflective of a commercial awareness that colored his judgment, for better or worse, right up to the end. Maybe future releases will have something more to recommend them than that. — Mike Joyce

Lester Bangs and the Delinquents *Jook Savages on the Brazos* (Live Wire)



If rock stars wrote record reviews, they would be lining up for the chance to review Lester Bangs' first LP. Bangs, of course, is the former editor of *Creem* magazine, and an infamous rock critic whose pen has wounded more than a few superstars over the years in publications like the *Village Voice*, *Rolling Stone* and this one. One can imagine Born Again Bobby Dylan, for example, decrying "Accidents of God" as "an example of an atheist using the Lord's name in vain. On top of that, he really needs a producer." Or Paul McCartney, who Bangs once tore into for his "silly love songs." The ex-



DEBORAH FEINSCOLD

George Russell

By Cliff Tinder

Electric Sonata For Souls Loved By Nature, Vertical Form VI (Soul Note)

Imagine stepping onto the streets of New York City at rush hour. Hundreds of sounds and rhythms confront you. Each sound and pulse emanates from an independent source but you hear only the composite mass. At this instant, linear, "horizontal" time seems to dissolve as you are drawn to the "vertical" interlocking of layer upon layer: a grand architectural edifice rises towards the sky.

You are experiencing what George Russell calls Vertical Form. It is by no means a new concept; African drum ensembles have been working with it for thousands of years and in today's music Ornette Coleman calls a similar view his Harmolodic Theory. This kind of stacked and layered use of polyphony is not only the structural basis for most African music, but, in a simpler way, the cornerstone of jazz. In essence, the development of swing was the displaced African's polyphonic answer to rigid Western meter. With swing, Afro-Americans potentiated the Western "weak beats," adding a richer rhythmic dimension to their music. As jazz evolved, it often renewed itself through polyphony, gravitating even further back to the rhythmic and textural complexity of its African genesis.

George Russell has always been concerned with re-evaluating the most basic assumptions of music in order to press forward, placing himself at both the roots and the vanguard. His earlier theory, *The Lydian Chromatic Theory of Tonal Organization* (also a book of the same name), was a redefinition of the concept of tonal centers and their harmonic consequences. Now, with the addition of the Vertical Form, his music has developed into the most organic and complete of his career. For all the structural and theoretical gravity of this music, his latest releases are full of life, vitality and celebration. Both albums, especially *Vertical Form VI*, represent some of Russell's best recorded work ever, and since he has been one of jazz's

seminal composers for thirty years.

Featuring an excellent small group — Lew Soloff, Robert Moore, Victor Comer, J.F. Jenny Clark and Keith Copeland — with room for extended improvisation and Russell's electronic tapes, *Electric Sonata* offers an intimate and compound view of Russell's music. Broken into 14 disparate "Events," the sonata floats from hot ensemble sections underpinned by funky bass lines to mysterious electronic segments to tapes of African drummers, yet maintains Russell's distinctive compositional continuity and expressive range.

But for me, the real masterwork is *Vertical Form VI*. Had he written nothing else, this marvelous extended work would be enough to place Russell at the pinnacle of modern jazz composition. Assigning various sections of the large orchestra their own rhythmic and melodic motifs, his sound sculptures rise and fall with the addition and subtraction of orchestral strata. He juggles a mass of simultaneous material and controls his overriding design brilliantly. His sense of counterpoint is perfect; no flotsam drifts about his creations. The richness of texture is almost tactile. The image is of monumental objects in gradual revolution. And amazingly, Russell's edifices swing. Tenaciously.

Conducting these proceedings must have been challenging to say the least, but Carl Atkins, assisted by Russell, does a magnificent job. It might be impossible to find as consistently perfect a large jazz ensemble in this country. The Swedish Radio Jazz Group's execution and interpretation of this difficult music is breathtaking.

"Nature likes those who give in to her, but she loves those who do not," Russell likes to quote. And while his compositions reaffirm some very basic natural principles, it is his consummate ability to mold and shape these principles in a way that enhances the natural beauty and life of his music that makes his work so powerful and free.

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Beatle might single out the "sicko anti-social attitude" of "I'm In Love With My Walls" ("It's Friday night and I just got paid," sneers Lester. "Phone's been off the hook and I ain't taking no calls/If I was a square I'd just get laid/ But I don't care 'cause I'm in love with my walls"), criticizing Bangs for writing relevant, topical songs like "Nuclear War" instead of "nonsense rhymes and romantic clichés that are the proper territory of *real* songwriters like me." Or Lou Reed, after years of biting Bangs' bullets, might condemn "Kill Him Again" (best track here in my opinion), as "that lame rock crit's pathetic attempt at imitating the kind of minimal punk that Iggy and I invented years ago."

Me, I think *Jook Savages* beats anything that the above-named and certified rock stars have cut in years (excluding Reed's *Street Hassle*). Though Lester

sings like a drunken frog — not really a problem as Dylan and Reed will tell you — he's got a distinctive, idiosyncratic voice well suited to his down-to-earth material. Always a real witty guy when it comes to reviews and articles, Lester doesn't disappoint in the lyric department either. His humor and sarcasm are abundant as Medflys in California. Sample lyric (slurred pathetically as if singer is drunk) from "I Just Wanna Be A Movie Star": "I know this ain't the prettiest face/In the history of the human race/ But I'm tired of sleeping under the bar/I just want to be a movie star/Movie star/ No more oil burnin' car/Girls up the kazoo/Sittin' talkin' to you." This is followed by an orgy of kazoo honks and squeals.

Bangs is accompanied by an Austin, Texas garage band, the Delinquents, that he performed live with for several

months last year, while cutting the album. The sound is raw and primitive. The Delinquents follow in the footsteps of such nearly forgotten groups as the 13th Floor Elevators, the Seeds and the Shadows of Knight. This is real blood and guts stuff. The notes may not all be in place, but who cares? The feeling — the *attitude* — is there. *Jook Savages* is the kind of minimal masterpiece that should sit just fine with fans of the Stooges' *Raw Power*, Beefheart's *Trout Mask Replica* and the Velvet's "Sister Ray" (a song Lester seems to be quoting, at least tangentially, during a brief instrumental break of guitar noise at the end of "I Just Want To Be A Movie Star").

But don't take my word for it. Ask Bob or Paul or Lou. Or, if you can't get ahold of them, just think about what *they've* been selling us lately. (If your local record store doesn't carry this album, write to Live Wire Records, 5254 Meadowcreek Drive, Austin, Texas 78745.) — Michael Goldberg

Marianne Faithfull

Dangerous Acquaintances (Island)



To hear Faithfull's voice is to know that if she's singing about love, there are no happy endings involved. Has there ever been a singer

whose voice seemed so imbued with despair? From the phlegmatic resonance of her low notes to the way she chokes off her phrases like sobs, Faithfull almost sounds incapable of expressing joy. Yet, rather than let her albums degenerate to "It's my record and I'll cry if I want to," Faithfull wisely reinforces her despair with anger. This lets her have it both ways; the edge on her complaints keeps them from inviting pity, while her own obvious victimization precludes charges of malicious intent.

Neat trick that it is, Faithfull's vengeful victim approach doesn't necessarily guarantee a good listen. The key to last year's *Broken English* wasn't so much the jaded malaise of "Guilt" or even the willful obscenity of "Why D'Ya Do It," but the way the emotional content of those two songs played against the rest of the album. Unfortunately, while *Dangerous Acquaintances* refines the method of *Broken English*, it lacks its predecessor's dynamic range, and at times comes off as a single, unending *kvetch*.

Aside from a burst of Mexicali brass on "Intrigue," the instrumental accompaniment is distressingly monochromatic. Considering the contours of Faithfull's voice, it would have made sense to parlay the white-funk rhythm work into an ice-hot groove similar to what eventually develops in "Truth, Bitter Truth." Instead, the rhythm section trudges behind Faithfull as if it were they,

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not she, who wanted to stop and lick their wounds.

In part, this low-key rhythmic approach may have been intentional. Faithfull's most effective ripostes are so underplayed that their sting has a delayed effect, and perhaps keeping the backing tracks in check was her method of not giving away her hand.

But the most disappointing thing about *Dangerous Acquaintances* is though it often smolders, it never catches fire. Without an occasional burst of passion, Faithfull's emotional vendettas turn into drab, vaguely nasty exercises in cruelty. And by then, we don't care who's on the receiving end. — *J.D. Considine*

**Prince
 Controversy** (Warner Bros.)



As a single, "Controversy" seemed the ideal follow-up to Prince's highly acclaimed, sex-obsessed *Dirty Mind*. Vaguely surprised that

people would have gotten upset over an album that included songs extolling the virtues of incest and oral sex, Prince shrugged, "I just can't believe all the things people say/ Am I black or white? Am I straight or gay?" Prince, sly dog, wasn't telling, either. He just let the feverish funk speak for itself.

Imagine my distress when the album turned out to be, in Prince's own phrase,

"a double drag." Being a victim of controversy is one thing; playing up to all those wagging tongues is something else again, and that's exactly what Prince does on *Controversy*. The album-length version of the title cut, for example, tops the single's snappy sentiments with a recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the chant, "Some people say I'm rude/I wish we were all nude." What, me naughty?

Controversy isn't so much shocking as it is disappointing. Aside from the puerile obviousness of "Jack U Off" and "Do Me, Baby," which treat sex with all the insight of a junior high school dirty joke, the album is littered with our hero's observations on what's wrong with the world. It's kinda funny to hear a guy who closed his last album with an anti-draft chant singing "Ronnie Talk To Russia," although not quite as amusing as the notion that Reagan could talk the Soviets into nuclear disarmament. As a social philosopher, Prince is a pretty good guitar player.

All of Prince's lyrical inadequacies would be forgivable if the music on *Controversy* had some substance to it. Instead, it comes off as reheated *Dirty Mind*, which, for all its audacity, never measured up to the poppish verve of Prince's classic "I Wanna Be Your Lover". With only a few decent groove tunes sprinkled in among the rinky-dink melodies of "Jack U Off" and "Ronnie, Talk To Russia", Prince shouldn't be worried about what people think of him. He should start worrying about how long they'll continue to think of him. — *J.D. Considine*

PICK HITS

Pick Hits is a monthly survey of what our learned staff feels to be the cream of the current crop of album releases and concerts. Each critic is allowed up to five "Hot" votes (one of which can be an "oldie" that they've been listening to), and one "Cold" vote — plus one "Live Pick" concert vote. A guest musician's choices will also be included each month.

GEOFFREY HIMES: Hot: **The Iron City Houserockers** — (MCA) **The Rolling Stones** — *Tattoo You* (Rolling Stones) **Luther Vandross** — *Never Too Much* (Epic)
John Anderson — *I Just Came Home To Count The Memories* (Warners)
Fleetwood Mac — *Tusk* (Warners)
 Cold: **Debby Harry** — *Kookoo* (Chrysalis)
 Live Pick: **Aretha Franklin/Luther Vandross** — Constitution Hall, Wash. D.C.
VIC GARBARINI: Hot: **Rolling Stones** — *Tattoo You* (Rolling Stones) **King Crimson** — *Discipline* (Warners) **The Germs** — *What We Do Is Secret* (Slash) **The Pretenders** *Pretenders II* (Sire) **Martha and The Vandellas** — *Martha And The Vandella's Greatest Hits* (Motown)
 Cold: **Queen** — *Queen's Greatest Hits* (Elektra)
 Live Pick: **King Crimson** — Painter's Mill, Baltimore, Md.
BRIAN CULLMAN: Hot: **Pete Shelley** — *Homosapien* (Island UK) **John Hassell** — *Dream Theory In Malaya* (EG) **Bela Bartok** — *Complete Music For Violin And Piano* (Nonesuch)
Desmond Decker — *Compass Point* (Stiff) **Carla Bley** — *Amarcord Nina Rota* (Hannibal)
 Cold: **Queen/David Bowie** — *Under Pressure* (Elektra)
 Live Picks: **The English Beat** — The Ritz
RAFI ZABOR: Hot: **Artur Schnabel** — *Beethoven Piano Sonatas Opus #109, 110, 111* (Seraphin) **Old & New Dreams** — *Playing* (ECM) **Neville Brothers** — *Fiyo On The Bayou* (A&M) **Teddy Edwards** — *Teddy's Ready* (Contemporary Reissue) **Various Artists** — *Phases Of The Moon/Traditional Chinese Music* (CBS Masterworks)
 Live Pick: **Johnny Copeland Band**, Joyous Lake, Woodstock, NY.
FRED SCHRUERS: Hot: **Rodney Crowell** — *Rodney Crowell* (Warners) **The Kinks** — *Give The People What They Want* (Arista) **Lindsey Buckingham** — *Law And Order* (Asylum) **The Neville Brothers** — *Fiyo On The Bayou* (A&M) **The King Kong Compilation** (Island) **The Who** — *Quadrophenia* (Polydor)
 Cold: **Journey** — *Escape* (Columbia)
 Live Pick: **The Kinks** — Boston Garden



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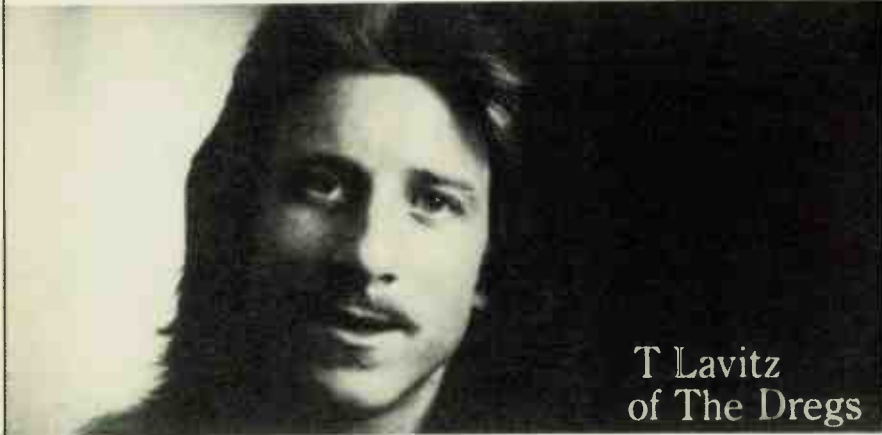
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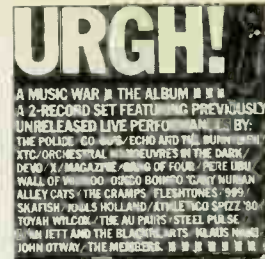
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Urch! A Music War (A&M)



Quick Quiz:
what do the
following art-
ists have in
common: A)
X and Klaus
Nomi? B)
Gary Numan
and Pere Ubu?
C) The Police

and the Au Pairs?

If you answered "Nothing," you're right, and you've illustrated the primary problem with this double LP collection of twenty-seven live performances by punk and new wave bands, recorded live and filmed at a series of concerts in L.A., New York, Paris and London. It's virtually impossible to listen to a side of *Urch! A Music War* without encountering something you despise.

Michael White and Miles Copeland, the organizers of the Urch! events, worked from the fallacy that there is some kind of shared consciousness among the followers of the loosely-labeled "new music." If nothing else, this concert record, and probably the yet-to-be-released movie of the record, demonstrate how exceptionally fragmented the contemporary rock audience has become.

You get a little bit of everything for your money here: pop new wave (the Police, Toyah), hard punk (X, the Alley Cats), English politicopunks (the Au Pairs, Gang of Four), American and English eccentrics (Pere Ubu, Skafish, John Otway), some cabaret (Jools Holland), some reggae (Steel Pulse), and a veritable army of poseurs, no-talents and hacks. Removed from any proper geographical or audience context, even the best of these bands have no impact whatsoever. The individual performances that do betray some real power or spirit, like the ones by Los Angeles' Alley Cats and Go-Go's, are quickly forgotten in the album's cloudy, next-act-please vaudeville framework. So much for the idea of a new wave Woodstock.

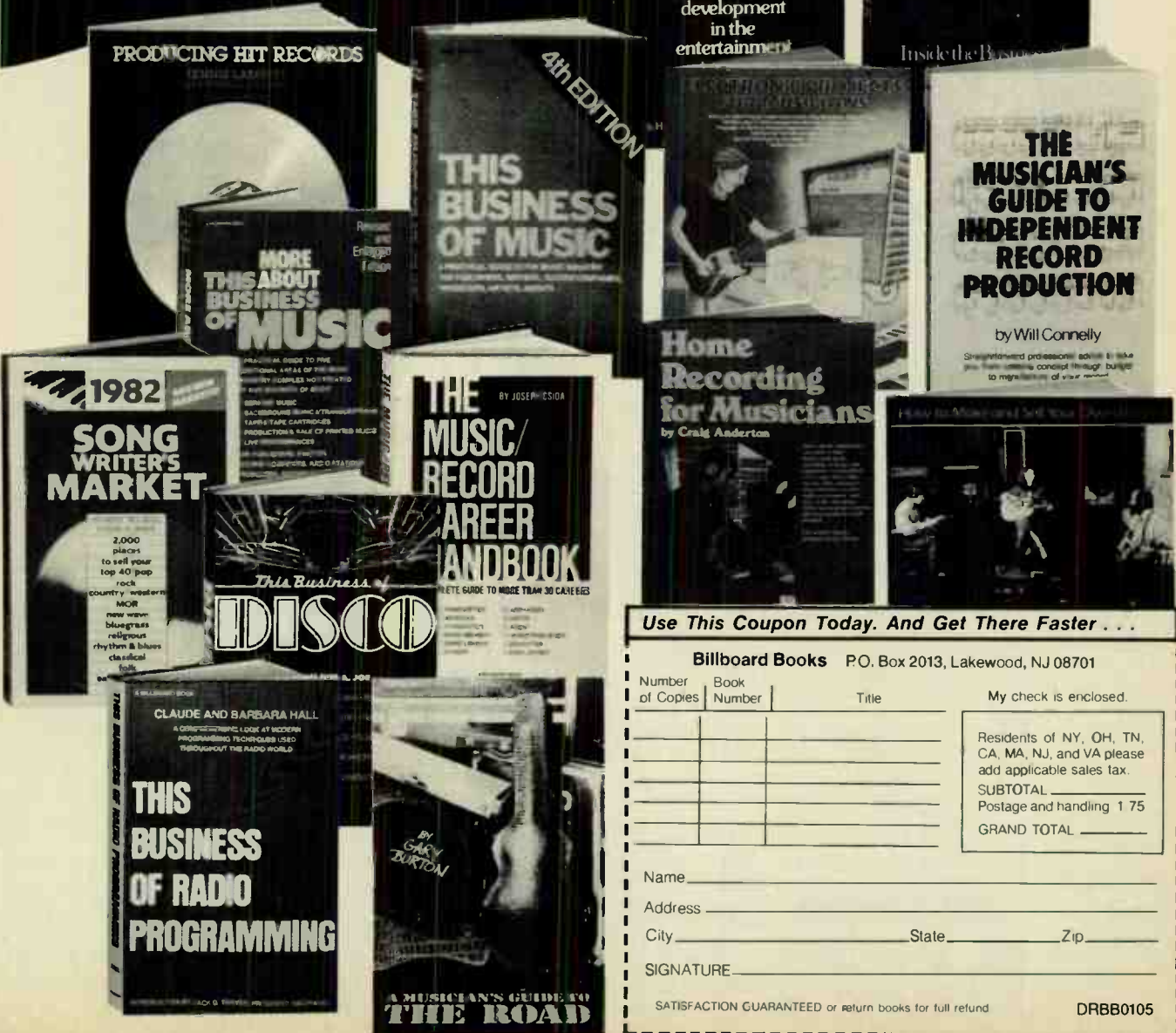
Beyond the album's self-defeating structure, there are other problems with *Urch!* The sound at the two Santa Monica concerts I caught last summer was pretty execrable, but I thought that it may have been the result of the attention paid to the film and record sound mixing. Not so, unfortunately: the sound on the *Urch!* album is as muddled and sludgy as it was in the hall. The material also seems questionably selected as well. Certainly, there were more intense moments in the Pere Ubu and Magazine sets that I saw last August.

Questions of quality and discretion aside, the most pressing query to address concerning this album is, "Who was it made for?" It's absurd to assume that any one consumer could like all twenty-seven groups here; it's equally

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preposterous to figure that a kid will shell out big dough for a two-record set to obtain the half-dozen or so tracks that he or she wants. *Urgh! A Music War*, the record and the movie, is a curious animal: a consumer item without a consumer. — Chris Morris

Dan Fogelberg

The Innocent Age (Full Moon/Epic)



The Innocent Age is a time of life that Dan Fogelberg obviously wishes would never end, for he's spent the better part of

his career painting an aura of simpler, more romantic times. Consequently, this two-record "song cycle" is hardly surprising, nor are the melodies and sentiments within.

Fogelberg so skillfully summoned a wistful ambience of young innocence lost on his gorgeous and most affecting debut, *Home Free*, that one wonders why he once again explores a territory he covered almost perfectly before. But aside from a mildly experimental disc with Tim Weisberg and spicing his sound with the strains of California country-rock a la Eagles, Fogelberg's never really broken the mold he cast on his early albums, and the familiarity of his themes, melodies and arrangements are starting to wear thin.

The Innocent Age sounds much like any other Fogelberg album — ringing acoustic guitars, crying electrics and his prettily prancing voice once again meld into a soothing symphony of sap — and even vocal contributions by Joni Mitchell and Emmylou Harris, saxophone work by Michael Brecker and Tom Scott, a classical brass duo and subtly arranged strings don't add much variation to his singleminded vision. "The Innocent Age" is a cut that all but repeats the melody of "Captured Angel," while "Stolen Moments" lives up to its name by copping the verse almost note for note from "Sunday Will Never Be the Same" by Spanky and Our Gang (one would expect Dan to dig a *little* deeper for chord progressions to recycle).

In his search for the cosmic rhyming couplet, Fogelberg strives for meaning and emotion but ends up sounding like a woody, new-age Kahil Gibran, composing lyrics like he's stuck in "The Freshman Age." When he sticks to simple story lines like in "Same Old Lang Syne," his recent hit, Fogelberg can still tug one's heartstrings until your eyes grow misty, but the evidence is all over this barely coherent concept set that it's time Dan Fogelberg left "The Innocent Age" and let his music grow. — Rob Patterson

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EW&F, cont. from pg.50

WHITE: Yeah, but a drill team for ten years. Time for a change. So actually, we were trying to emulate theatre. I know when my mother used to go to the big shows to see Ella Fitzgerald and all those great people sing, man, it was like theater, it was like the epitome of show business. Show business happening.

MUSICIAN: You really have done so little on TV. Is it because they aren't interested, or you aren't interested?

WHITE: It comes down to the same old thing, to us being Black. The TV people say, "Even if we did a special on you, you wouldn't have mass appeal." Even though we sold 30 million albums. You know, they still say that. I don't want nobody putting us on TV with a 60-watt light bulb, making us look like Kukla, Fran and Ollie. It has to be done in a certain kind of way.

MUSICIAN: Speaking of TV, I think a lot of people found your commercial a breath of fresh air, a little street fantasia.

WHITE: TV of course, can really destroy your whole mystique, and that's another reason I stayed away from it. But to do this commercial for Panasonic was all right because we were advertising something that we actually use. In other words, I can't see myself doing a Budweiser commercial. I don't drink beer (Laughs) But, if it's truth, you know, I think anything done in truth is not risky.

MUSICIAN: You're now almost forty?

WHITE: Yeah, I'll be forty in three years.

MUSICIAN: The rock 'n' rollers like the Stones and the Who went through all kinds of crises when they broke the thirty barrier. Can you be a rock 'n' roller after thirty? Or more importantly, can you be funky at forty?

WHITE: I've never been a rock 'n' roller.

MUSICIAN: I mean the essence of...

WHITE: That's what I'm saying. It's easy to continue what I've been doing because it's not superficial. I think a lot of these cats had to *turn on* to be rock 'n' rollers. Hey, this is my lifestyle. It's no big thing. I'll be living like this 'til I'm sixty. Take some of the old brothers who played blues. That's living like that all their lives. It's the same with me. Funk is a part of me. I was born in funk, you know, so I can't deny that. I didn't have to sit down and try to learn how to play the funk. I never said, "Hey man, so what do you do in order to be funky?"

MUSICIAN: Speaking of the funk, it always seemed to me that you and George Clinton of Parliament-Funkadelic have really been two separate but related leaders of Black music in the 70s. What do you think of him?

WHITE: I think we're roughly about the same age. He has his roots together, he's still expounding upon Black music. He's taken it to another dimension, that's all. And we're taking it too... it's just like you have two soloists. We had a period when there was Lester Young and Charlie Parker. One cat had one interpreta-

tion and one cat had another. But they were both playing their asses off.

MUSICIAN: Do you feel you might lose a certain kind of fighting edge? You've got this big building and studios, a nice pad, a certain amount of money...

WHITE: But see, it's all in your objectives. I never lived to have a whole lot of money. I never did.

MUSICIAN: It's kind of a nice bonus, is what you're saying...

WHITE: Yeah, it's cool to have it but that doesn't mean we're doing all right. I want to make things better for everybody. I know how it feels, I know how it feels to

have no hope, no hope about what's going down. That's the most important thing.

MUSICIAN: It's really reassuring to see that you're still going strong, that your energy doesn't burn itself out.

WHITE: I think it's all in purposes. See, I never knew that I would "make it." My intentions were never really that. My intentions were to play the music. I started as a musician and I remained a musician. So my ultimate goal is still music and nothing else. I'll always have music, even if I don't have a quarter in my pocket. **M**

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ROCK

By David Fricke

SHORT TAKES

Mink DeVille



Carly Simon



Steve Hackett



Frank Zappa



Mink DeVille — *Coup De Grace* (Atlantic) The rose in Willy's Spanish Harlem blooms again on album four, the color in DeVille's mulatto R&B heightened by the cool rock breeze of Jack Nitzsche's gritty unadorned production. Those of you seduced by the lush sensuality of *Le Chat Blue* may feel cheated that songs like "She Was Made In Heaven" and "So In Love Are We" don't get the tenement opera treatment. But those are the same people that probably wouldn't want to meet a switchblade rocker like "Just Give Me One Good Reason" in a dark alley alone.

Carly Simon — *Torch* (Warner Bros.) Wherein we discover they don't write songs like they used to, only Carly and the session boys don't play their Sondheim, Carmichael, Rodgers and Hart, etc., like they really mean it. This soft candlelight schmaltz — all romantic hot-air orchestration and air-brush production — may sound sweet with a glass of bubbly and a picture window view of Manhattan at midnight, but in the harsh light of day it's strictly Ellington (among others) for elevators. Is this what Eno meant by ambient music?

Crusaders — *Standing Tall* (MCA) An album of competent treadmill fuzak instrumentals sparked by the appearance of John Belushi, sorry Joe Cocker's alcoholic roar on the soppy ballad "I'm So Glad I'm Standing Here" and the flabby funk-out "This Old World's Too Funky For Me." Considering his pratfalls in the past, it's to Cocker's credit that he's the only thing standing tall here.

Steve Hackett — *Cured* (Epic) From the pastoral romanticism of his first post-Genesis solo outings, guitarist Hackett gradually steps up to a brisk poppier

approach not unlike early Yes. That's no small achievement either, since it's just Hackett, keysman Nick Magnus and a drum machine. Good for what ails art-rock lovers everywhere.

Billy Idol — *Don't Stop* (Chrysalis) Billy Idol is more like it. Almost a year after he blew out of underrated U.K. pop-punk band Generation X to make his own fortune, all he's got to show for it is a corny Hollywood-punk cover of "Mony Mony" and two originals as ordinary as his singing. This EP's only saving grace is the boisterous dancefloor killer "Dancing with Myself" and *that* was Gen X's finest, final hour.

The Kings — *Amazon Beach* (Elektra) The last album by this Toronto pop 'n' metal quartet had only one decent tune on it, "Switch Into Glide." If only the same could be said for this one.

Chuck E. Weiss — *The Other Side Of Town* (Select) Weird scenes inside the Tropicana Motel from a good friend of Tom Waits and the subject of Rickie Lee Jones' hit "Chuck E.'s in Love." His singing is rough but colorful, his Waits-like raps ("Luigi's Starlite Lounge") engaging, and the hard bluesy stuff ("Sparky," "The Other Side Of Town") would have been at home on the jukebox at Morrison Hotel. See if you can spot the Rickie on "Sidekick."

Joe Ely — *Live Shots* (Southcoast/MCA) It's about friggin' time. Previously available only on import, this is Ely and his honky-rock Texas rangers caught live on tour with the Clash early last year. At least MCA tries to make amends by adding a free EP of recent concert takes.

T.V. Smith's Explorers — *The Last Words of the Great Explorer* (Epic) Smith's "One Chord Wonders" recorded in '77 with his old band the Adverts was

the last word on the British punk revolt. With the help of a few more chords and uplifting (if somewhat cliched) *pop moderne* arrangements, Smith bares his sharp lyrical teeth and arty melodic chops to intriguing advantage. Clue: in "The Easy Way," he marries his most caustic lyric to his prettiest tune.

The Look (U.K.) (MCA) Not to be confused with the Detroit Aerosmith clones of the same name, this perky British foursome arrive Stateside touting a boncing beauty of a single ("I Am The Beat") epitomizing their fun fusion of 70s Chinichap rock candy and Squeeze's more sophisticated tunesmithing. And at least half of this debut album is just as good.

Kool and the Gang — *Something Special* (De-Lite) For all their recent success, I still prefer the hearty party sounds of "Jungle Boogie" and "Funky Stuff" to the more sweetened soul here. In giving Kool's Gang hits, producer Eumir Deodato has taken away that something special which made them such a muthafunkin' great dance band in the first place.

Equators — *Hot* (Stiff America) A dark horse sensation on the 1980 Son of Stiff tour, this black British ska, etc., band is caught between reggae and a hard place. Not roots enough for the dreads and not slick enough for the U.S. R&B market, they simply make great JA party music that's haile danceable. As for this album, the title is a dead giveaway.

Frank Zappa — *You Are What You Is* (Barking Pumpkin) Frank Zappa makes records for himself and people like him and so far he's released fourteen sides of the stuff this year alone (*Tinseltown Rebellion*, his recent three-LP mail order set of guitar solos, and this double *continued on pg. 100*

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JAZZ

By Jon Pareles

S H O R T T A K E S

In a daring break with tradition, this columnist would like to start out by recognizing the accomplishments of AC/DC, Manhattan Transfer, Foreigner and Stevie Nicks — said accomplishments adding up to the fact that Atlantic Records apparently considers itself solvent enough to write off six reissues of albums that never should have been deleted: **Ornette Coleman's** *Twins* (a 1971 compilation), **Mingus' Pithecanthropus Erectus** (1956), **Hubert Laws' The Laws of Jazz** (1965), **Joe Turner's The Boss Of The Blues** (1956), **Kelth Jarrett's Somewhere Before** (1969) and **Milt Jackson's Plenty, Plenty Soul** (1957).

Three of the four tracks on the Mingus LP have rightfully appeared on Atlantic's two best-ofs; the restored-to-print one is the 15-minute "Love Chant," a blues-bop-and-vamp outing with some fine spiky Mal Waldron piano. It's also a pleasure to read Mingus' own liner notes, which say how the music is put together and then shut up. *The Laws Of Jazz*, with young Chick Corea's *bomba* infiltrating Laws' blues, features the best jazz piccolo I can think of, and makes me wish Laws had never discovered strings or classical paraphrases. *On Boss Of The Blues*, Joe Turner shouts great good-hearted joy as always, and the horn section work from 25 years ago is better than any money could buy these days. *Plenty, Plenty Soul* had Jackson fronting a nonet (side one) and a sextet (side two) with horns arranged by Quincy Jones, including Cannonball Adderley, Frank Foster and Lucky Thompson. The nonet was kicked into gear by Art Blakey, which makes Connie Kay sound even more mild-mannered than usual on side two; the tradeoff is that pianist Horace Silver gets more space to be sly. Jackson is at minimum polished, and in "Heartstrings" Adderley encourages him to drop a few tears on his tux.

Heard now, *Somewhere Before* sounds like Jarrett, Charlie Haden and Paul Motian were warming up for *Expectations* — as if the volumes of Jarrett's jazz encyclopedia were still on opposite shelves, marked "melodic" and "de-ranged" — but they had already worked out their intersecting-tangents trio style. As for *Twins*, which comprises Coleman outtakes from *Free Jazz*, *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*, *This Is Our Music*,



Ornette and Change Of The Century — i.e., 1959-61 — the performances are a bit more relaxed and playful than those on the other LPs, and every bit as worthy, especially the double quartet's "First Take."

Listening to *Twins* back-to-back with the new live *Old And New Dreams* LP, *Playing* (ECM), brought home the difference between the band with and without Coleman. Simple: the blues. At their headiest, *Old and New Dreams* can sound like Rapidograph doodling — all exquisite fine lines — begging for a big funky blot. Don't get me wrong, they're a helluva band and they know exactly what they're doing, but it's quite a ways from Coleman's earthiness to *Old and New Dreams'* one-worldism. *Playing* is even breezier than last year's ECM debut; the time together shows mostly in Cherry's wonderful sense of leisure amid the band's bustle. Hey Manfred — howzabout some bass on the bass drum?

The happy surprise of the month is a band (and album) called **Commitment** (Flying Panda Records, 62 St. John's Place, 1st floor, Brooklyn, NY 11217, or via New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, NYC, 10012. I've never heard of Jason Hwang (violin), Will Connell Jr. (flute, alto sax, bass clarinet), William Parker (bass) or Takeshi Zen Matsuura (drums), which is definitely my loss; Commitment is one of those abstractionist bands that makes you forget you're listening to separate instruments as the music pulses and twines. Hwang's violin, once I wrested it from its quizzicality that reminds me of Peking Opera sopranos; his compositions use stillness and sustained notes pur-



posefully. The closest comparison is to *Air*; Commitment is less droll and telegraphic, more earnest and meditative, and thoroughly individual.

More deliberate and less successful *Air* lore comes from the Swiss trio of percussionist **Pierre Favre**, bassist **Leon Francioli** and reedman **Michel Portal**, whose *Arrivederci Le Chouartse* (hat Hut 2R22, via NMDS), could have used stricter editing in the players' heads and in the studio. Favre and Francioli both get around their instruments well and have a way with funny noises, but the full trio settles too often for derivative freebop.

Contemporary (Box 2628, Los Angeles, CA 90028) has reissued two good 'uns: **Hampton Hawes, Vol. 2 The Trio** (C 3515), with Hawes as a voracious youngster, ca. 1955-56, using more angular harmonies and a little more out-and-out flash than he would later on, and **Teddy Edward's Teddy's Ready!** (S7583), his 1960 solo debut, everything you could ask from a mainstream tenor album (and rarely get). Edwards' laconic phrases and unsentimental tone put new twists into "Scrapple from the Apple" and "What's New?," even "Take the 'A' Train;" and "You Name It" is an Edwards original that should have entered the standard repertoire. Billy Higgins earns the tune dedicated to him by actually not playing where he doesn't have something to add.

Best blues of the month is **Memphis Slim's I'll Just Keep On Singin' The Blues** (Muse MR 5219), a 1961 session on which the Chicago-based (yes) piano man sang with such intensity that Matt "Guitar" Murphy's licks barely

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Jazz from pg. 98

touch him. You can hear the generation gap on **Big Joe Williams'** 1961 *Walking Blues* (Fantasy 24724), with Williams on his beat-up, out-of-tune 9-string guitar backed up by Willie Dixon on bass and Larry Johnson on harmonica; they all have a different idea of where G is and how regular the downbeat ought to be. If you turn down the right channel, though, Johnson sinks into the background, out of the way. Back to mono?

It's a mixed month for trumpet LPs. Best-of-mailbag goes to **Abdullah's Live At Ali's Alley** (Cadence Jazz CJR 1000, Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679), recorded in 1978. "Happiness Is Forever" rumps for 22 minutes on a 5/4 theme that sounds like Miles meeting the Coltrane quartet, with Chico Freeman somehow calypso-ing in the roil. Most of side two is devoted to "Inchworm," but the album's gem is Abdullah's unaccompanied incantation of Mingus' "Self Portrait In Three Colors," with bent notes and cries and an acrid wit worthy of its composer. The punch-less rerecorded sound doesn't do justice to Abdullah or his sextet; Muneer Abdul Fattah's cello virtually disappears in the mix. **Ted Curson's Snake Johnson** (Chiaroscuro CR 2028) is a latter-day Lee Morgan-style session of bluesy hard bop, fine on its own but a comedown from Curson's best elegies (like

Tears For Dolphy). Then again, Curson on cruise is a helluva lot more palatable than **Freddie Hubbard** going all out to imitate Chuck Mangione on *Mistral* (Liberty), dragging Art Pepper down with him. No class, no shame.

Even more shameless is **Amiri Baraka/Lerol Jones**, who somehow got David Murray and Steve McCall to back him on *New Music-New Poetry* (India Navigation IN-1048). New Music-Old Hat is more like it. Murray and McCall rebound Baraka's word rhythms and supply some countermelodies while Baraka indulges in self-satisfied ranting, reprinted on a two-page lyric sheet. In the first cut, for instance, Baraka puts down Abbie Hoffman for not being a true revolutionary: "We know you never really left." While Hoffman was organizing in upstate New York, heroic Amiri Baraka was fulfilling his revolutionary destiny by teaching at Yale and getting grants and giving poetry readings; right on, I guess we know who's really "Against Bourgeois Art."

More shame: **Carly Simon's Torch** (Warner Bros.), on which she tries "Body and Soul," "I Got It Bad..." and Alec Wilder's "I'll Be Around," is just plain embarrassing, because when she wants more emotion she tries to power her way through, which is bad strategy. It's a sincere mistake, though, unlike **Richard Perry's** pernicious *Swing*

(Planet). A man with his nose to the demographics, Perry thinks there's a big-band revival going on since *Billboard* said so, and he figures that if America's about to undergo another depression, he's just the one to sell us a little glamor. *Swing* offers *brrrraassssy* big bands behind vocalists singing about such contemporary preoccupations as limos, with electric bass in the rhythm section alongside the Perry pop trademark, booming drums. The anachronisms are deliberate (and not necessarily bad; "Let The Good Times Roll" might sound good with a Kansas City horn section), the hubris overwhelming; the album's one instrumental, hedged with a hint of disco beat, is a medley of Ellington's "Caravan" with Perry's own "Mirage." Perry's crassness blows the whole scam, however. He's chosen vocalists so uninvolved they make Manhattan Transfer sound soulful, so his fancy tracks are no fun. If his heart was in swing, he'd know that you can't just be precise — you gotta relax, too.

Of course, the future of the big band is out of Perry's hands. The 20s and 30s repertoire is being reclaimed and upheld by **Panama Francis & The Savoy Sultans**, who've just released *Volume II* (Classic Jazz CJ 150); I'd rather hear them stretch out on something besides "Perdido," but nevermind. As for moderns, there's a new **Toshiko Akiyoshi**



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Low Tabackin Big Band album, *Tanuki's Night Out* (Jazz America Marketing, JAM 006, Suite 300, 1737 De Sales St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036), with tributes to Don Byas, Sonny Criss and Ben Webster. Tabackin's Rollins-crazed tenor is perfect for boggling friends in blindfold tests. Moving toward the fringe we find **Gil Evans' Blues In Orbit** (Inner City IC 3041), from sessions in 1969 (with Jimmy Knepper, Hubert Laws, Elvin Jones) and 1971 (with Billy Harper, Alphonse Mouzon), loose-limbed and wild-eyed, with a haunted-house version of the Evans/Davis (Miles) tune "General Assembly."

Finally, lest we forget: *Sunrise In Different Dimensions* (hat Hut 2R17) by the **Sun Ra Arkestra**, alternating sides of interplanetary squall and more-or-less — usually less — traditionalist versions of big-band numbers by Tadd Dameron, Horace Henderson, even Strayhorn's "Take The 'A' Train." Don't miss the silly-putty rhythm warps of Sun Ra's arrangement of "Round Midnight," or his calliope organ cameo on side C. Yeah man! **M**

Rock from pg. 96

album). He makes no apologies for it either and why should he? The playing is tight, the songs as entertaining as they are pointed, and if his manner of expression is a bit strong for you, well, "The Meek Shall Inherit Nothing" (saith the song here) But threatening critics with legal action for quoting lyrics — isn't that going a little too far?

Quarterflash (Geffen) David Geffen takes a break from the daily grind of signing superstars to throw his weight behind this Northwest band. There's no ignoring the corporate gloss in John Boylan's production or the similarities to Fleetwood Mac and the new wave Ronstadt in the loping guitar-oriented West Coast-rock arrangements and singer Rindy Ross' Nicks tricks. Songs like "Harden My Heart" and "Right Kind Of Love" hath charms to soothe the savage consumer, still you may get the feeling you've heard it all before.

The Unknowns — *Dream Sequence* (Sire) Let's see...the Syndicate of Sound meets the Cramps? Dick Dale goes six rounds with Screaming Lord Sutch? The term psycho-surf punk does not do justice to this 12" EP or this California four-piece. The singer (the one with the cane) howls and hiccups like a werewolf Elvis (Presley or Costello depending on the song) and guitaris Mark Neill sounds like he grew up in Transylvania listening to the Ventures Unknown? Not for long.

Billy Burnette — *Gimme You* (Columbia) The other son of rock 'n' roll takes a busman's holiday from his working band: to cut album number two with the Muscle Shoals rhythm mob. The result is a bigger, better bottom and an R&B upper

cut that nicely complements his one-two pop-billy punch. Daddy Dorsey would be proud.

Ultravox — *Rage in Eden* (Chrysalis) There are at least two schools of thought on Ultravox. One — they are sub-Bowie poseurs whose vision of a grave new world is as bleak and humorless as their chilly electronic scores. Two — underneath all that Euro-romantic smoke-screen is a remarkable band whose seamless fusion of cool Bowie melodrama, Germanic techno-sheen and compositional grace is to the dour new wave 80s what Roxy Music was to the flamboyant glam 70s. With last year's *Vienna* came a third theory — they could be one hell of a dance band ("Sleepwalk," "Passing Strangers"). Since there's nothing as physical on *Rage in Eden*, I'll resubscribe to number two.

Tommy Tutone — 2 (Columbia) Guitars ringing out in Anglophilic harmony, a drawling lead singer heavy on the "street" presence, songs of love around the corner and out the door showing a 60s look with 80s lines. Not bad, actually. Too bad Tom Petty did it first.

Kix (Atlantic) Much like their U.K. counterparts Def Leppard, Maryland mayhem merchants Kix are part of the new young heavy-metal breed breathing life into the old monster with melody (a little, anyway) and enthusiasm. That can make pulverizers like "Poison" (good hook), "Love At First Sight" (good riff), "Yeah Yeah Yeah" (good night) sound fresh and arrogant in such a stylistically bankrupt genre is a testament to their spirit and stamina. Kix are for kids, alright, and anyone who wants to be. **M**

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 World Radio History

Classic Keyboards from pg. 80
 as the sound gets softer and (3) a warm, moving quality." Ray Charles did lots of the pioneering work with the Rhodes back when it was looked down on as a poor imitator of its acoustic counterpart. Miles Davis also insisted that Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea use the Rhodes during many of his classic fusion record dates in the late sixties. Armed with 20/20 hindsight, a major point to be made about the Rhodes is that it has its own voice and feel ideally suited to certain kinds of electric music. Judging a Rhodes on how closely it reproduces the sound of an acoustic piano is missing the point by a country mile.

If there is such a thing as a "classic modern keyboard," top honors would probably go to the Yamaha CP-80 and CP-70B electric grand pianos. And it is precisely because they come within a whisker of exactly duplicating the sound of an acoustic instrument that they should be accorded this honor. With strings similar to those of the Yamaha Grand (except for shorter bass strings) anchored to their "exclusive Humid-A-Seal Pin Block," 88 independent, permanently mounted piezo electric pickups and an effective range of volume and tone controls, this instrument could easily fool over 80 percent of the general listening public in a blind listening test.

Heading up the third column of classic keyboards (mostly in rock 'n' roll) is the wheezy but colorful sound of the Italian-made Farfisa "portable organ."

These esoteric little wonders feature unusual wrinkles like black keys with white flats, a knee-lever control which engages the patented Farfisa "Multi-Tone Booster" and can produce some truly other-worldly effects, and a wide variety of vibrato and reverb switches to further disorient the listener. All joking aside, if all the rock 'n' roll records with Farfisa (or Vox, for the Anglophiles in the crowd) organ were listed, you'd need a double-page spread in *Billboard*. It also goes without saying that a majority of the new wavers, from Elvis Costello on down to your latest "clone-theory" faves have depended heavily on the Farfisa and/or Vox organs to get that reedy atmospheric sound quality onto vinyl.

As we get further into this category, the distinctions between instruments get more finite. Arguably the first "electronic" piano, the Wurlitzer is well known to rock 'n' roll keyboard players but would you recognize its slightly nasal sound on Rod Stewart's "Stay With Me"? You probably wouldn't, and you probably don't care either. Same for the RMI pianos. Seems like whether or not electronic pianos sound good to your ears, very few of them have the kind of sonic eccentricity which leads to an aural second take.

More generally, the Hohner Clavinet has made a respectable dent in the last decade because of its funky and granular percussive textures that can be found on many recordings by Stevie Wonder, Billy Preston and others. The Fender one-octave bass keyboard rates a quick salute in passing because it helped flesh out a lot of bands too cheap to pay for a bass player.

The price range of classic electric keyboards can vary widely. Most of these should be pretty easy to find either as new or used (reconditioned) instruments. Unlike the rarefied regions of the upper echelon vintage guitar market where a '59 Gibson Les Paul Standard in mint condition can go for close to \$8,000, the classic keyboard market is accessible to one and all. Just a few basic lessons and you could be cranking out "96 Tears" in your very own ersatz punk band. **M**

Lovich from pg.16

to grow because bands won't be able to afford a tour unless P.A. companies and all the paraphernalia to do with touring is more reasonably rated."

The new studio is envisioned as a place where, in addition to Lene and Les' work, friends of the group would be able to record tracks in an unrestricted environment "as long as they don't blow up the equipment." Additionally, the couple is building a darkroom in their home to fulfill Chappell's intention of increasing his photography and film projects. Except for the unmistakable overlay of Lene's street smarts, their plans sound utopian. Yet the self-fulfilling life has always been a natural projection for

Lene. She epitomizes the Stiff Records artist — a person who is distinctive, entertaining, thought-provoking, and perhaps by accident, occasionally commercial. With a peculiar exception in The Plasmatics, Stiff does not sign artists who wish to exploit rather than express their individual sound messages.

"I'm very enthusiastic about Stiff America," says Lene. "I can really see the spirit that got Stiff started in England. Stiff America hasn't had the commercial success that Stiff in England has had, so they don't have the responsibilities and considerations that go with that." And any place that opens its doors to 800 friends, not counting a couple of crashing Bowery bums, that serves mini-marshmallows right next to the crudités, is tolerant enough to encourage the future progress of at least one diminutive nonconformist. **M**

Fripp from pg. 42

abuse, like highly expensive and irrelevant meals. It can feel good to have a meal on a personal level with the record company, and sometimes it's even okay that the company pays for it. Usually, I go Dutch. But mostly the process of expense account spending is degrading.

The size of venue is critical. Playing in a 3,000- or a 5000-seater resembles a circus, not a pulling together of people I'd prefer a 1,000- to 1,500-seater for two shows a night two or three nights in a town, to an endless parade of one-nighters, flying every day from one town to another. The problem is the budget. Playing should pay for itself, at least, not be subsidised by records. So where the week's budget is in the red, perhaps play a larger venue to pay the bills and a smaller one in the same town the next night for a different feel. The aim for this tour is to break even. Another problem for me is cameras: photography interrupts the unfolding of the event. One compromise is to let the press take pictures for ten minutes and then leave. But, as a principle, you don't set different standards for the industry and the public. So, everyone has cameras, or no one does.

The strength of this group must be used to find cleaner ways of working, and should be seen to be doing that.

Tuesday April 28th, 1981; Horton Inn; 11:15. All this needs to be discussed with the team. So far my ideas have been taken on trust.

Rehearsals yesterday were hard. The general shape is better but that shows up weaknesses in details. My own musical work at the moment is developing my knowledge of scales. The Bartok string quartets got me going originally. During the 70s different scales were popularised by jazz-rock outfits, primarily the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Weather Report. Persichetti's *20th Century Harmony*, Schillinger, and an article in *Guitar Player* by Joseph Ciprani on "Exotic Scales" are very helpful. The two main ways of finding new scales are by draw-

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ing on tradition, for example, the synthetic scales mostly taken from European folk music, and by constructing them mathematically, as with Schilling. Our culture uses mainly a seven-note scale, some have five, some three, some even a one-note scale. But a one-note scale is only rich if you can listen on the inside of the note. It probably takes about three years before any particular scale is internalised, and the player can "speak" the scale without stopping to think about it.

Chez Parents; 19:50. Rhett Davies, who'll be co-producing the album with us, trained from London to see what he's letting himself in for. He seemed impressed. We closed in on details. All the vocals are now together for the first time: Adrian took the lyrics for "Indiscipline" from a letter his wife sent. "Discipline" might be our most successful failure: it's possibly the most difficult tune I've ever played, and I'm still not sure how to play it, but it's quite seductive. Bill found a way of listening outside the part he has with Tony, and loved it. Bill is working so hard to please he has earned my respect. Tony's photography is excellent and his portfolio has some gems. He's coming down with a cold, or flu. Adrian feels this band is pushing him to the limit of what he can do. Working with the Talking Heads began the process, this band is taking it further. He didn't think he was ready for it because he's "out of his league." But if Adrian did know what he was doing he'd be using solutions to old problems, therefore useless for us. Bill is just at the right point for the band, and I've spent seven years getting ready for it. Tony is always on; he doesn't seem to have our concerns.

Currently I'm exhausted, irritable and

just hanging in there.

Thursday, April 30th, 1981; King's Head Hotel, Wimborne; 10:30. Today we have our first gig, at Moles vegetarian wine bar and restaurant in Bath. I'm just in here for the best morning coffee in town with my mum and her friends, Cynthia Bourne and Edie Steed, and reflecting on the past twenty-four hours. Yesterday before rehearsals I made my debut as an official "teacher" at an officially constituted institution, the audio-visual department of Bournemouth College, at the invitation of the lecturer John Wrigglesworth. It was a small group of six men and one woman, and their training is mainly directed towards commerce. The morning left me unsettled: not much contact happened.

Infinitely more was said in the canteen informally in fifteen minutes than during the entire time in the studio.

Rehearsals were a final tightening up, and discussing the set. A quote from AB: "This group does examine all the small points." A high proportion of this band's music is amazing. And the failures are equally amazing. Paddy and the complete road team arrived. Said Pad: "'Indiscipline' is great! It's SO oppressive!"

The feeling of completion at this stage is remarkable: the feeling of letting go that is part of it. My evening was relaxed. But to get the band further as a unit we need a shock. And there's nothing like exposure to public ridicule to concentrate the attention. So, off to Moles.

.... To be continued.

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Faithful from pg. 30
records?

FAITHFULL: Perhaps. It would be nice
if you could use that stuff without being
hurt by it, but unfortunately that's not the
case.

MUSICIAN: Do people tend to approach
you in a ghoulish fashion, hoping to find
you some sort of glamorous wreck?

FAITHFULL: Oh god yes! I don't know
why people hope for the worst — it's
horrible isn't it? It makes me so angry
and it makes my husband Ben even
more upset.

MUSICIAN: How accurate, in fact, is
your image?

FAITHFULL: It's terribly accurate, de-
spite the fact that it was created years
ago for me, almost without my permis-
sion you might say.

MUSICIAN: Exactly what are you refer-
ring to? The flower child gone astray?

FAITHFULL: Oh, the whole thing — the
little virgin, the drug addict, the filthy dirty
Rolling Stone girlfriend — the whole trip.
It was all made up.

MUSICIAN: Do you look back fondly on
the swinging London of the sixties?

FAITHFULL: Sometimes. I certainly
don't feel sorry for myself ever. Gener-
ally though I found that time very confus-
ing. Of course I enjoyed some of it, but I
enjoy life and sex much, much more
now because I know where I stand.

MUSICIAN: Do you see yourself as
having a puritanical moral code?

FAITHFULL: Yes I do, which is proba-
bly one of the reasons the sixties didn't
suit me at all.

MUSICIAN: Do you feel that society is
presently moving toward a more conser-
vative morality?

FAITHFULL: Yeah, we had to. It got to
be too much. Too many people were too
unhappy and too many people were
dropping dead. But that's how it goes,
isn't it? Periods of intense hedonism fol-
lowed by periods of great restraint.

MUSICIAN: How responsible is the
entertainment industry for the moral cli-
mate of the culture? Does it shape
values or merely reflect existing ones?

FAITHFULL: Interesting question — I
don't know. I hope it doesn't shape the
moral climate, although it might. Person-
ally I refuse to be responsible for anyone
else's crimes. I don't wish to sound para-
noid, but being busted four times in four
months as I recently was, I can't help but
feel that that had something to do with
my being considered a bad influence.
British police oppression has gotten
incredibly bad in the past five months.
Thatcher has got to go. I'm not political
and never have been, but for the first
time in my life, I'm going to vote.

MUSICIAN: Would you describe your-
self as an artist or an entertainer, and are
they, in fact, one and the same?

FAITHFULL: I'm an artist, although I
don't really know what the difference is
— probably one's degree of snobbery.

MUSICIAN: I read that you were raised

by a stage mother who more or less
pushed you into show business.

FAITHFULL: You got that from the
piece on me that ran in *Esquire*, right?
That's *exactly* the sort of press that
enrages me. I love and adore my mother,
and it's hard to talk about this without
getting very emotional. My mother was
twenty-four when the Second World War
started. She looked like a dark blond
Bridget Bardot. She worked with Max
Reinhardt in Berlin, had done a screen
test, and was just about to go to Holly-
wood. She was just about to fly when the
war broke out. Her mother was Jewish
so she stayed with her people. She was
a dancer and is very graceful and beau-
tiful, and the kind of calculation we asso-
ciate with the term "stage mother"
would simply never occur to her. She
wanted me to go to university and take
my degree and be happy and normal — I
nearly killed her with my life. She's very
proud of me now, which is another rea-
son I wanted to make these records.
(crying) How could that bitch say those
things about my mother! If ever I see the
girl who wrote that piece again, she will
get it, physically!

MUSICIAN: You once commented to
an interviewer that you've "had a horri-
ble time of it because you lacked self-
confidence." What about yourself did
you doubt? Your intelligence? Your
beauty?

FAITHFULL: I never doubted my intelli-
gence, or even who I was except for one
serious identity crisis that lasted a long,
long time. Nobody likes being rejected.
But my husband Ben has given me con-
fidence and said, "Now fly." And off I
went.

MUSICIAN: Why do you think you man-
aged to survive an experience that
many people fail to emerge from?

FAITHFULL: The valley of the shadow
of death? There are many reasons, and
luck does play a part in it. Being a
Catholic, there are days when I think, my
god, an angel was there. Basically I've
always felt I am good, therefore I will win.

MUSICIAN: You were raised a Catholic
and attended a convent school. How
much did Catholicism have to do with
the guilts and conflicts you've grappled
with in your life?

FAITHFULL: A hell of a lot. It takes
years to lose that conditioning because
Catholicism is very serious brain-
washing. But I think I've pretty much
resolved it for myself.

MUSICIAN: How instrumental has your
marriage been in the peace you appear
to have found?

FAITHFULL: It's been absolutely cru-
cial. Ben's really the one who got me
reinvolved in music. I met him about six
years ago, before he was in the Vibra-
tors, at a time when I was about to go into
hospital with hepatitis. He auditioned to
play bass for me and I liked his voice. He
was very handsome, too — looked like
Lord Byron about to die. We circled

around each other for about six months and we've been together ever since.

MUSICIAN: You had a son by an earlier marriage. Is he with you now?

FAITHFULL: He was taken away from me when he was seven. He's fifteen and I actually have quite a bit of contact with him now. We just went on holiday together and for the first time we were alone and could talk. We became friends, but I'm not a mother. On the other hand, I wish to have another child!


MUSICIAN: What's the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome in your life?

FAITHFULL: My reputation.

MUSICIAN: Do you think it's possible for you to dispell the reputation you gained in the past with the more positive approach you've presently taken towards your life?

FAITHFULL: I think people will always believe what they want and I wouldn't change that even if I could. If I believe in anything it's that people have a right to believe what they choose. It may annoy me but there's really nothing I can do about it. It would be pointless — it's too late now.

MUSICIAN: Are you still intrigued by the darker side of life or do you feel that you've thoroughly explored that realm?

FAITHFULL: If you're referring to black magic, I never really got into it. A little peep was enough for me. I'm on the side of the angels, my dear. I always was, really. 

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THE ULTIMATE SYNTHESIZER STUDIO

A look at the Incredible computer music machine, which uses no keyboard yet can create anything from a piano trio to a symphony.

By Marc Sllag

The computer has been quietly revolutionizing the music industry, starting with simple signal processors and keyboard synthesizers, then graduating to digital mixing and recording, so it was probably only a matter of time before someone created a completely computer-based orchestra. Sure enough, one has appeared and is now in use, a miracle machine that performs the music its master composes, arranges it, conducts it and reproduces it — the quintessential “electronic music” composer’s tool. It is with this super-synthesizer, at the junction of sophisticated technology and intimate human expression, that Peter Baumann lives and works.

Baumann, a native of West Berlin, had neither music training nor a computer background, a perfect preparation for computer music that eliminated all kinds of messy prejudices. At the age of fourteen he was fooling around with various crude devices, composing pure electronic music. While he did acquire some keyboard ability later on, Baumann does not consider himself a keyboard musician; he prefers to work directly with sounds. He spent seven years as a member of the very successful European group, Tangerine Dream, playing modular synthesizer systems comprised of off-the-shelf equipment augmented by outboard gear, but chafed against the constraints of board programming and sequencing in conventional synthesizers. Baumann then decided to join forces with a computer engineer, Andres Bahrtdt, a fellow Berliner, and together they devised a synthesizer that had virtually no limits save those of the composer operating it. Baumann feels he can do just about anything he wants to with their prototype: “It is infinite in its capability. There is no other synthesizer like it.

Baumann invited us up to take a look at his one-of-a-kind custom synthesizer, the penultimate computer-music machine. Entering his New York studio, Cronex Media, we were cautioned to watch our step over a two-inch-diameter cable snaking across the floor; this terminated at a huge mil-spec junction connector plugged into the side of a mammoth road case alongside a patch bay with row after row of quarter-inch phone jacks, XLR receptacles, and 34-pin mil-spec terminal connections. The unit looked like the sort of power distribution box used by lighting companies, but the



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Peter Baumann coolly mans the console of his synthesizer, undismayed by hundreds of blinking LEDs, infinite options and an overly cheerful computer.

logo on the face plate at one end read “Hewlett Packard.” If H.P. is into production equipment, you read it here first.

Heading into the high-tech living area of his working residence, Baumann explained that the Hewlett Packard is the heart of his synthesizer. It included the voice boards from which the computer draws the limitless combinations of sound, the memory systems that store all the music Baumann has written, and the console functions that manage all this information. The other major part of the synthesizer is the console, the command module, if you will. The giant cable is the system’s umbilical cord. Except for use in live performances, there is no keyboard on the command console; Baumann controls pitch, rhythm, attack, note length, etc. — all aspects of a musical statement — entirely by manipulating switches and knobs.

This super-synthesizer has sixteen separate parts that can be laid down, sixteen “voice-programs,” each with its own Plasma peak and average output indicator. Baumann stressed the importance of sixteen voice-programs in terms of the rhythmic structures he can achieve that are simply not possible with off-the-shelf synthesizers. The rhythm sense of each voice-program is independent from the other fifteen, offering Baumann polyrhythmic possibilities that no existing instrument can produce.

The young and somewhat reserved German went on to explain the working functions of the computer: “The compu-

ter reads the program like a notebook, one page at a time. Each page represents the sequence I’m programming in. With the octave and half-step switches, I control both the notes and the harmonies. Another series of switches triggers the gates while rotary controls allow me to adjust the length of the note and its envelope. I can repeat a sequence from one page to another or select a new sequence. This allows me to go from sixteenth to quarters within the sequence and, if I want to, I can go back to sixteenths. In effect, all pages of the sixteen voices are turned in unison with the rhythm changes intact. The computer can store up to 10,000 pages, so I can store literally hundreds of tunes!”

The storage system is a hard-disc digital system which can be removed and added on to another computer, or replaced if it ever fills up. Baumann’s been using the instrument for nearly a year and has yet to fill that first disc. This includes work with the unit nearly every day and the recent release of an LP essentially arranged, conducted and played by the synthesizer. A second non-removable hard disc stores all the programs for the functions of the instrument. There is no floppy disc in the system; it’s strictly heavy duty.

In addition to independent rhythm capability, each voice-program features two oscillators, high and low pass filters, pulse-width modulation and low-frequency control for vibrato. A frequency modulator provides a ring

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The OB-Xa also features a bend assembly with its own LFO with sine, square and sawtooth waveforms. Additionally, it has both two-pole and four-pole filters per voice, an updated auto tune circuit and a hold footswitch jack for holding notes indefinitely or building one-key chords in conjunction with the chord button.

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A small synthesizer with big performance, the **Gleeman Pentaphonic Synthesizer** is a 37-note, 5-voice polyphonic unit featuring a built-in sequencer, a unique triple oscillator bank, and a self-contained audio amp and speaker. The sequencer can store up to 300 notes in either mono glide or polyphonic modes while preserving the original timing. Using the sequence as a background melody, the performer may play along on the fully active keyboard to achieve a live synthesizer duet effect. The Pentaphonic measures only 6" x 13" x 25" and is light enough to carry easily under one arm. Gleeman Inst. Co., 97 Eldora Drive, Mountain View, CA 94041.

Unicord has introduced the new Korg Micro Six guitar and bass tuner. Since Korg, the world's leading manufacturer of tuners, designs and produces their own Integrated Circuits, they have been able to advance the state-of-the-art to its maximum in the Micro Six. Superb quartz accuracy, used in the world's finest watches, provides precision tuning to within 1/4 of a cent. And Micro Six features extended tuning range for open bass string tuning, instead of having to use twelfth fret harmonics. Unicord, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590.



Oberheim Electronics introduces the DSX Digital Polyphonic Sequencer. Boasting a standard three-thousand note memory, the DSX is expandable to six-thousand note capacity. With features such as editing, overdubbing, sixteen-voice capability, and the ability to merge sequences in any order, the DSX allows control of composition previously unavailable in an inexpensive sequencer. Other features include eight independently controlled control voltage outputs and eight gate outputs, each with user selectable positive- or negative-going outputs. Real time programming, as well as a "single step" mode, and synchronization to tape for multi-tracking are additional important capabilities. Oberheim Electronics, 2250 S. Barrington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90064.



A new, full-range sound reinforcement system small enough to be transported in the back seat of a compact car is available from **Eastern Acoustic Works**. Designed primarily for club or lounge sound reinforcement in near-field applications, Model FR-100 uses a 52mm phenolic dome high/mid driver that delivers essentially solid angle response. The woofer uses a rugged cast aluminum frame and vented-pole-piece magnetic design with a 70mm voice coil driving a 300mm cone to provide flat frequency response to below 50 Hz. The FR-100 is conservatively rated at 100 watts power handling on sine wave signals and 200 watts on music program. Its high efficiency of 95 dB per watt at one meter allows a practical maximum output of 118 dB SPL without over-stressing the drivers. Eastern Acoustic Works, Inc., 59 Fountain Street, Framingham, MA 01701.



Audio Envelope Systems has unveiled its innovative new direct box, the TC-101 tubecube Active Direct Box. Featuring the exclusive M³ Module vacuum tube synthesis circuit, the TC-101 tubecube is designed to give the music maker "the warm, fat tube amplifier sound" on the road or in the studio.

The tubecube is powered by either two nine-volt batteries or by the phantom power supply found in the mixing console. Other features include variable harmonic density control, pickup equalization optimizer, a ground fault indicator lamp, and a ground lift switch. Suggested list price for the TC-101 tubecube is \$200. Audio Envelope Systems, Inc., 2109 West Campbell Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85015.

AKG announces the introduction of the definitive condenser vocalist microphone for the field, the C-535EB. The sound of the C-535EB is crystal clear and open, with a slightly rising high-frequency response to bring out the character of voices and instruments. Its cardioid polar pattern is quite uniform at all frequencies to avoid feedback and coloration of off-axis sound.

Applications for the C-535EB range from a first-class live performance vocal and instrumental mic to studio applications, as an excellent announcer /deejay mic, as a podium mic or a choir pick-up. Maximum sound pressure level capability of the C-535EB is as good as many expensive studio condenser microphones. The transducer system is a permanently-charged condenser and is field replaceable by competent maintenance technicians. AKG Acoustics, 77 Selleck St., Stamford, CT 06902.



The **Crumar Stratus** is the first polyphonic synthesizer that satisfies the needs of both the creative synthesist and the multi-key board player. It offers a powerful array of sound, from the explosive to the expressive, and yet the majority of control comes from the keys you play, not the dials you turn. The heart of this outstanding versatility is found in the six actively engaged filters and envelopes that span the keyboard. These generate true polyphonic capability, letting you depress as many keys as you want. The Stratus also features unique trigger modes which allow you to turn on the Oscillator Glide, reset the LFO delay, and alternate between the sawtooth and square waves all directly from the keyboard. Other noteworthy qualities are: two independent oscillators, continuously variable and invertable envelopes and polyphonic resonances. Music Technology, Inc., 105 Fifth Ave., Garden City Park, NY 11040.





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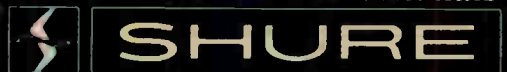
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An instrument and transducer preamplifier, the Preamp's unique equalization circuit provides variable one-knob control of bass and treble boost or cut. A variable gain control offers from 0 to 20 dB of gain.



The Commande Series. Another Original.



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ADAMAS II: Imagination Becomes Reality.

It started with a clean sheet of paper. We imagined a thinner, more responsive top . . . a more dynamic, even sound . . . a radically new sound hole design and bracing pattern. The result was Adamas. Now, several years later, we proudly introduce the next step: Adamas II.

A carbon graphite top—stronger, lighter, thinner than ordinary spruce—gives the Adamas II a virtually flat response throughout its entire range. Twenty-two soundholes, scientifically positioned and matched to our famous Lyrachord® Roundback bowl, reflect every note clearly and precisely. A unique neck reinforcing system called the Kaman Bar™ allows the Adamas II neck to achieve the maximum rigidity possible at the lowest

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