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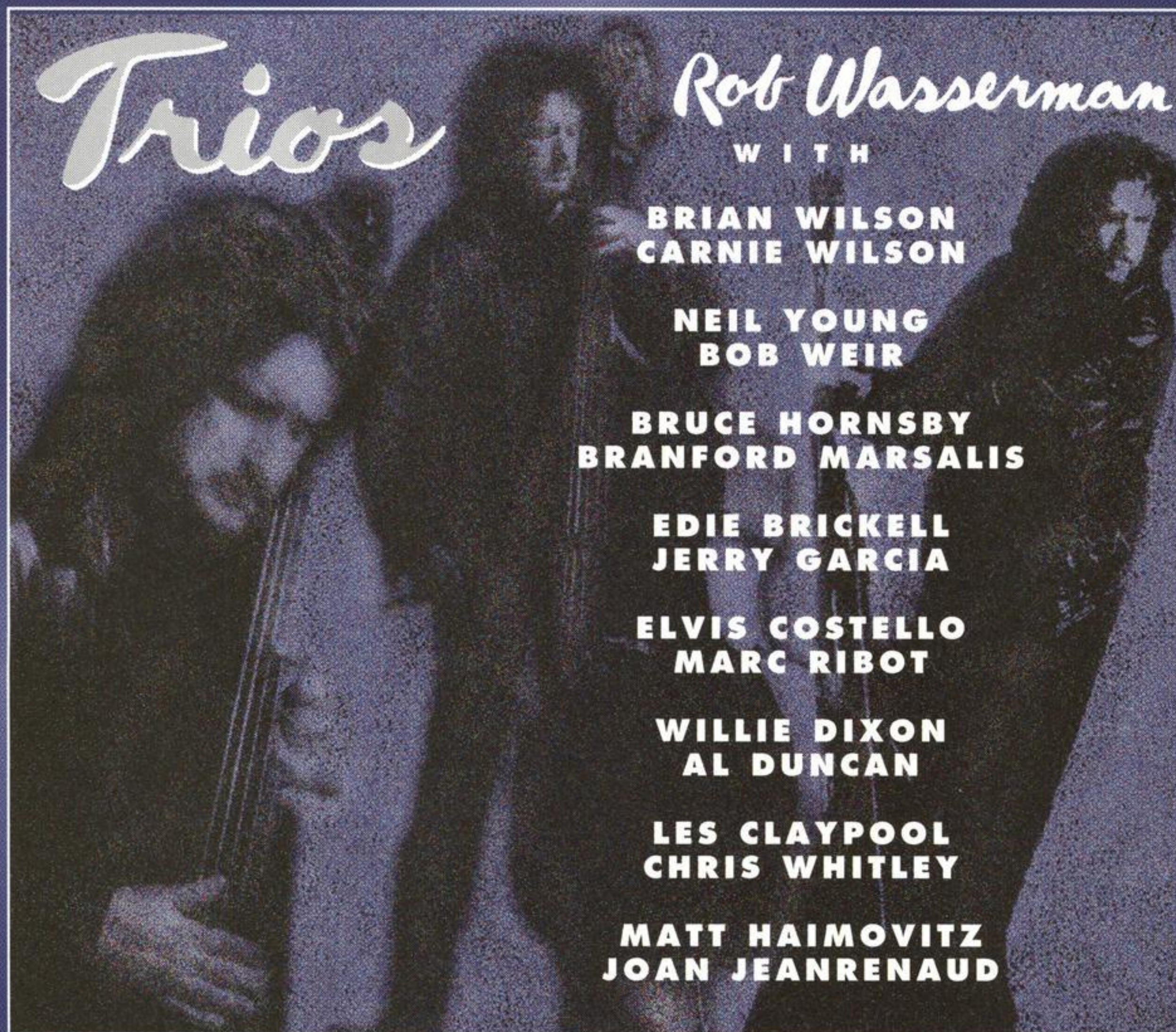
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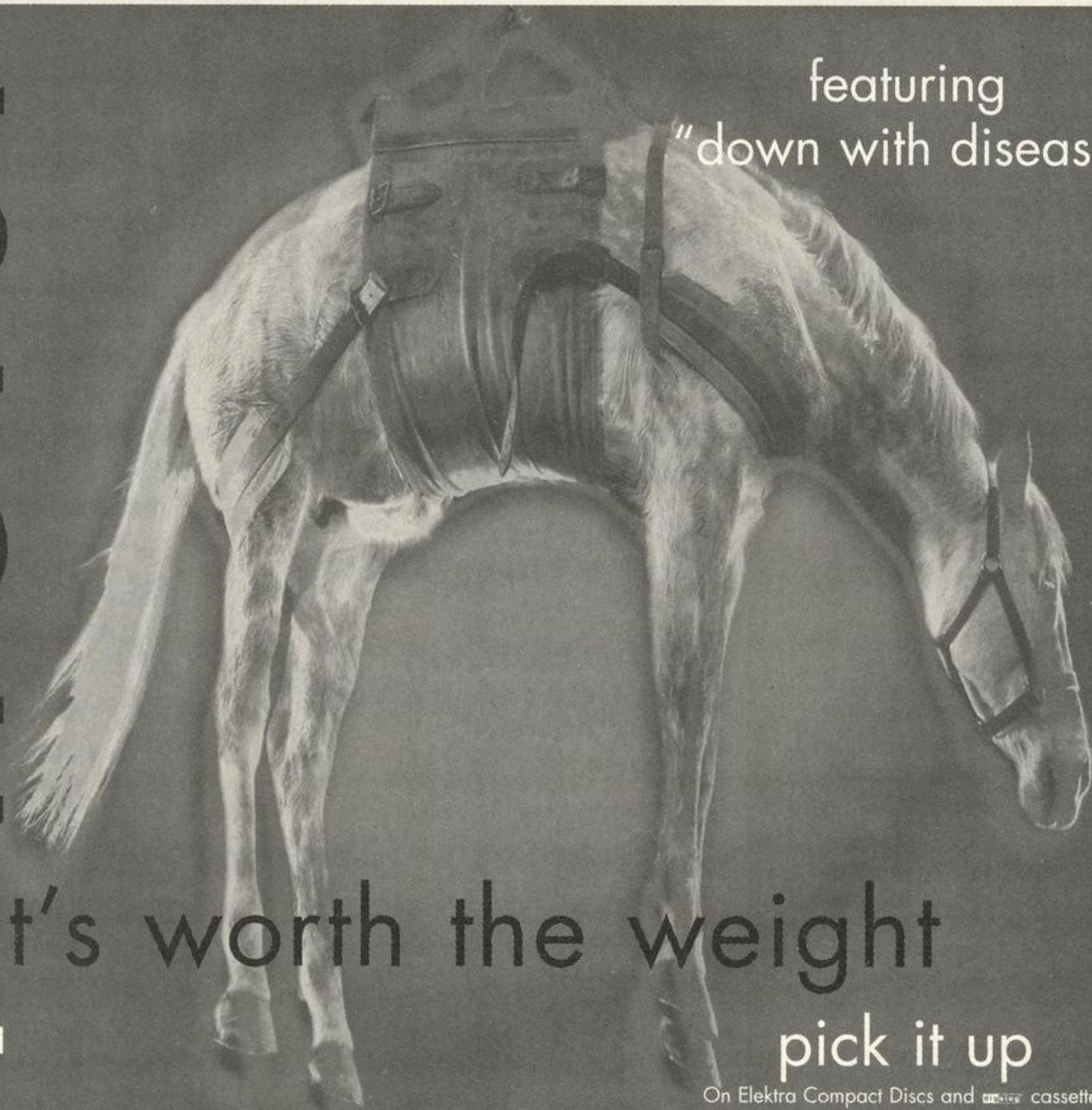
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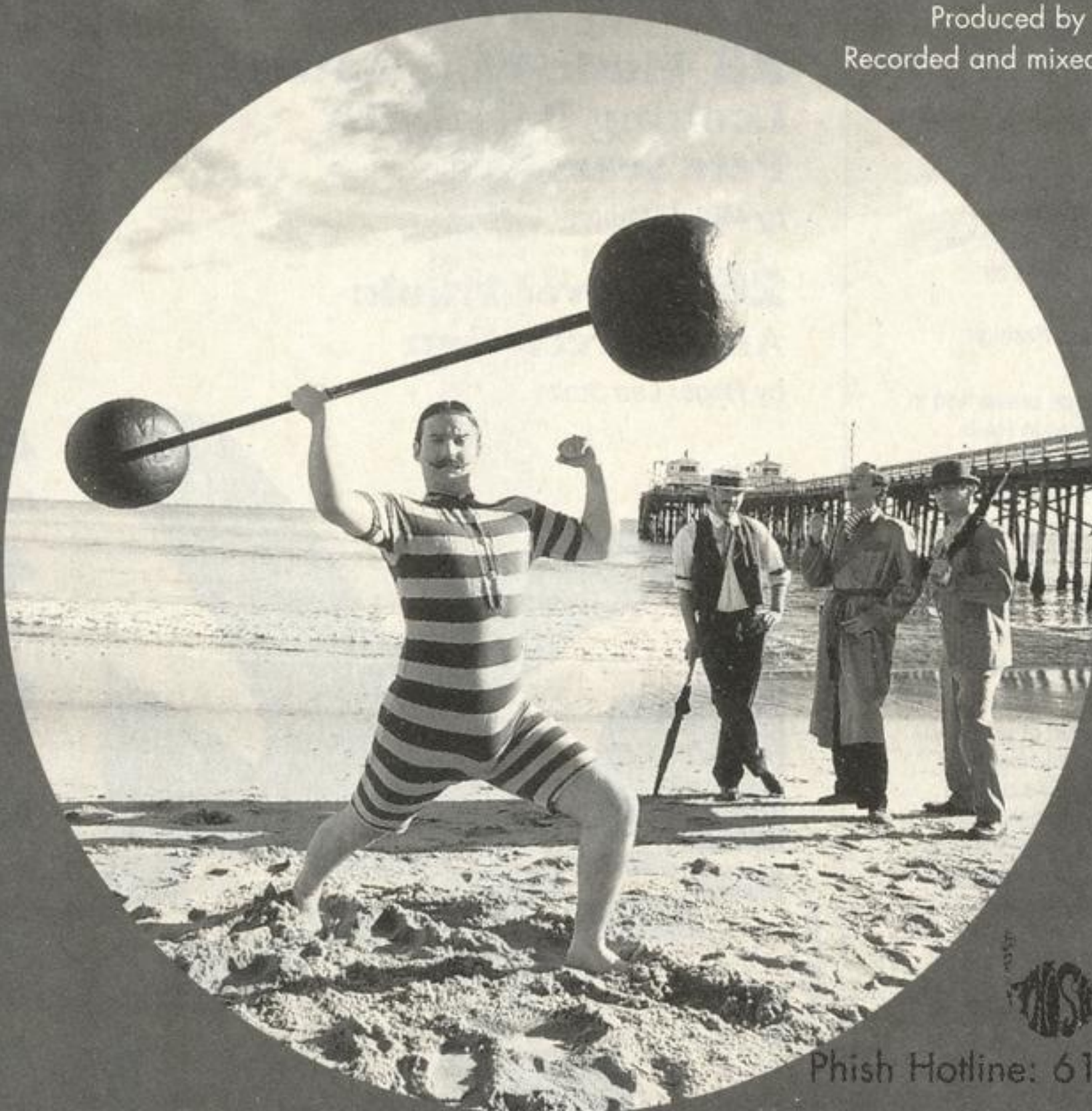
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Editorial

Spring is just a breath away and we can sigh in relief — we made it through the winter of '94! Snow, cold, earthquakes, floods — the gamut of natural disasters. Mother Nature is certainly capable of humbling us all.



Last issue was well-received. Heads behind bars know that the eye of America is on their plight. Let's not let them down. Pick up your pens, write Congress, write the President, and lastly, write incarcerated Deadheads! We continue our inmate correspondence this issue, and next issue will include additional coverage on mandatory minimum injustices. This is not something that will go away without our strength. Let's all do a little something to spread the light. One way to help is to make a donation to FAMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums), 1001 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 200 South, Washington, DC 20004.

This issue proved difficult to pull together. The overwhelming amount of mail I've received, along with last minute changes in direction, made for very organically developed results. Success in its most natural state.

Some staff changes should be noted — Bob Bromberg is no longer part of our in-house staff, but will remain a contributor. We wish him and Adriana luck in their future together. Long-time *Relix* writer John Grady is our newest staff addition, and Tom Constanten has joined us as a contributing writer.

Next issue is our Summer Special. There will be lots of Grateful Dead coverage, in-depth stories on Bob Dylan, Sun Ra, Al Kooper, the Beat poets, part two of the Band interviews and the continuation of our Deadheads Guide To The World, along with our regular features and summer surprises.

Fragments is missing from this issue due to space and time restrictions, so I'll share some gossip with you here.

On a romantic note, Jerry Garcia's Valentine's Day wedding rang media bells nationally. On the musical front, the Grateful Dead's return to Florida was greeted with joy by southern Deadheads. Spring Tour was a tough ticket, but worth every effort to find one.

The Allman Brothers spent a month at Burt Reynolds' sound stage in Jupiter, Florida. The result, their best recorded effort in years, is a new album that will be out in June (with Dickey Betts back in action!). They sold out five shows at the Beacon Theatre in New York City in two hours, and had to add shows. One helluva good time band! More next issue.

Al Kooper celebrated his 50th birthday at the Bottom Line with a three-day Blues Project/Blood, Sweat and Tears reunion. Each night was capped off with a ReKooperation set that delighted each sold-out audience. Welcome back Al, and happy 20th anniversary to the Bottom Line.

New York's favorite Deadhead nightspot Wetlands celebrated its fifth anniversary with The Samples and Rasta Rafiki. It's hard to believe that this institution has only been around for five years. What did we ever do for fun without them? Congratulations, Larry, and keep on keepin' on.

Mardi Gras is now a full blown event in New York City. Despite mountains of snow, Tramps hosted a hot party with Loup Garou providing the backdrop for a non-stop array of guest performers. Buzzy Linhart, Bobby Floyd, Buster Poindexter and a dozen or so other guests weaved their way on and off the stage that night. Fat Tuesday is a welcome addition to "the excuse to party" list.

Relix heads west once again. You'll find me at the Warfield Theatre in San Francisco on April 8th with Hot Tuna and The New Riders of the Purple Sage, both celebrating 25th anniversaries. Special friends will join each band, and Solar Circus will open the show. Guaranteed to be a great night of music. Hope to see you there.

Well, just wanted to share some thoughts. As always, I welcome hearing from you.

Love,

Toni A. Brown, Publisher

(Thanks to Diane Connal, Clare Wasserman, Jay Blakesberg, Claudia Falzarano, Andy Robble, John Grady, Jym Fahey, Roger Len Smith and Rick Spanier for their assistance in getting this issue together.)



WILSON '93

Jim Wilson

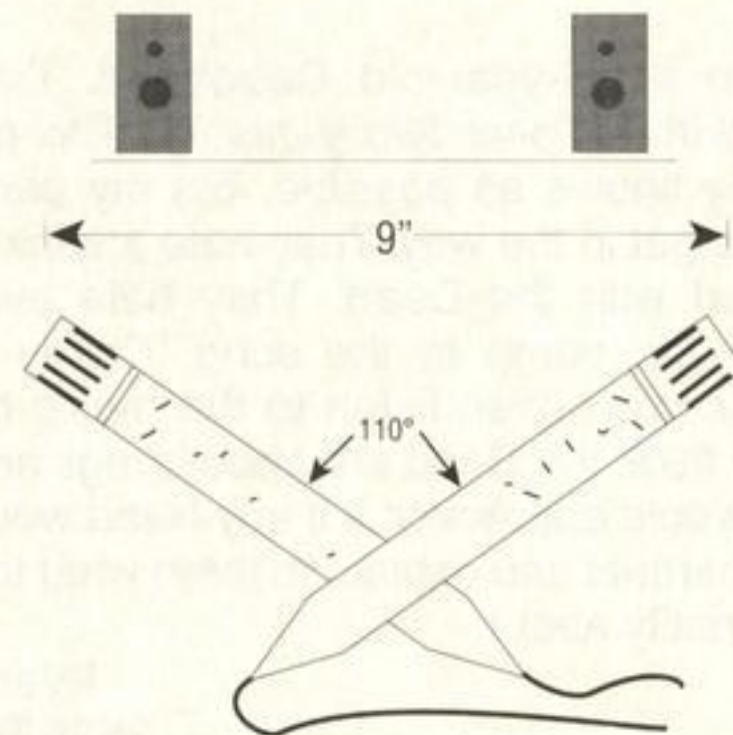
TDK TAPING TIPS

#2

PLACING THE MICROPHONES

The two basic microphone pickup patterns are omnidirectional and cardioid. From the taping area at a Dead show, the omnis (which pick up sound from all directions) should point toward the speaker stacks.

More popular is the cardioid pair, mounted with the capsules about nine inches apart. Because cardioids are directional, people assume they should be pointed directly at the speaker stacks from the taping area. However, this will give a sound that is almost completely monaural. (Head-phone monitoring provides extra separation that can hide this problem.) Angle your cardioids about 110 degrees apart, as shown in the diagram. It won't look right, because they'll be aimed outside the main speaker stacks, but you'll get real stereo.



Aim cardioid microphones this way for real stereo, don't aim directly at speakers.

Just as important as the microphones you use is the tape you choose. If you're using analog cassette equipment, a great choice is TDK high-bias SA-X cassettes. SA-X is extremely quiet (low hiss), has outstanding dynamic range, and is engineered for reliable, stable operation. For DAT recording, TDK DA-R Series cassettes use a specially developed formulation and mechanism that makes them tough enough to withstand the rough and tumble of concert recording.

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Due to the extensive **Heads Behind Bars** letters last issue, we held back our regular letter column. That column appears in this issue. Additionally, due to space limitations, we've been forced to hold back on the **Favorite Tapes** section of Relix. Be assured that it will continue in June.

NEVER TOO YOUNG, NEVER TOO LATE

To make a long story short, I've noticed a lot of people thinking older Heads are superior to newer Heads and in conclusion, I think we should all put our differences aside and enjoy the show.

Travis Hutchison (age 13)
Medford, OR

I'm a 16-year-old Deadhead. I've been Truckin' for over two years. I try to go to as many shows as possible, but my parents always get in the way. They hate anything associated with the Dead. They hate everything from the name to the song "Casey Jones." They won't even listen to the music because they think the Dead are about drugs and that's it. I would appreciate it if any Head would write my parents and explain to them what the Dead are really about.

Ryan Bauda
3596 Terri Trail
Buffalo, NY 14219

STEREOTYPING

To all of you "kind" brothers and sisters out there (including the creator of "The Deadhead Game" in the Year End Special), we are wondering about a few things. Where is it written that all good Deadheads must be hacksack playing, devilstick using, Phish listening, veggie burrito eating, miracle seeking, "kind-bud" smoking, '60s worshipping, no identity drones? We are quite sure that if we were to ask any one of you what you thought about stereotyping, you would be vehemently opposed, yet you insist on perpetuating it. Let us tell you that there is no dress code to be part of the scene (i.e., sandals, dreadlocks, Guatemalan clothes). Why do you feel as though you must use the same words, phrases and expressions (such as "kind," "ragin'," and "kick down") to describe various experiences and situations? Is there some sort of vocabulary instruction booklet floating around out there that we haven't seen

yet? And where did the accent come from? You can't possibly all have grown up in California, Vermont or "Rado." It would be so nice to see people striving for their own unique identity instead of osmosing the closest available one. One last thing — who cares how much you know about the Dead and how many times they played "Women Are Smarter" last tour? Do you like them? We thought so, and that's all we need to know. It's not a contest, it's all about enjoying the music and having a good time. To sum it all up — please cease to be a part of a contrived subculture and find out who you really are. We know that each and every one of you to whom the letter applies will read it and say, "this is who I really am!" But think of how many other people are reading the exact same words and saying the same thing. Does that tell you something? We hope so. We know there are Deadheads out there who don't fit the profile we described above, and if you are one of them, please disregard and God bless you! If you're wondering how to dress and act and other Deadhead facts, just repeat to yourself, "It's just a show, I should really just relax!"

Your concerned friends
Aurora, NY

EYES OF THE WORLD

During Spring Break last year, I had an experience in the Ecuador rainforest, which spurred my interest in the environment, intensely. My family and I stayed at La Selva Jungle Lodge where we slept in an open cabin without the luxuries of modern life. Every day we hiked through the rainforest, led by two native guides and one naturalist guide. I was never aware of how beautiful and huge the rainforest is. We saw (up close) the damage that is being done to the primary forest for short-term profits by the huge logging and meat companies. The problem is that primary forest has grown over hundreds of thousands of years, so after it is destroyed it will never grow back. What people don't realize is that this issue is one that involves everyone on this planet, not just "long-haired hippie freaks." If people do not get involved, however they can, then our future as a planet will need a miracle.

Ben Butler
Pomfret, CT

I've been going to see the Dead since I was 15 years old, and I've had many wonderful experiences at shows. For seven months I traveled through Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, seeing many great places and meeting many kind people, but through all of my travels, I could not wait to get back to seeing the Dead. Finally, I arrived in the States, and within a month, I was in Las Vegas seeing the Dead for the first time in exactly one year. I had a great time, and it was wonderful to see all of my fellow brothers and sisters again. The Dead's music was sweet to my ears.

To get to the point, I camped at Lake Mead for the weekend and was absolutely disgusted by the amount of garbage and waste sprawled all over the campgrounds by Deadheads. Cans, bottles, plastic, paper and even human excrement was strewn everywhere!

If we truly consider ourselves environmentalists and nature lovers, then we need to act appropriately and responsibly. If you bring garbage in, then you must take it out. It makes the world a lot more beautiful when we all take the time out to clean up and recycle our garbage. Let's not be hypocrites, but rather come together and show that we really do care about this Earth. Hopefully, this message will get out and the next time we are at Vegas, or at any campground, we'll all find a beautiful, clean place.

A concerned nature loving Head

I'm responding to Michael Van Riper's letter in Vol. 20 #6. I agree with him and think that people should make more of a conscious effort to clean up after themselves. My husband and I went to a Dead show at Giants Stadium in June, and after the concert, we were appalled at the huge mounds of broken bottles we found all over the parking lot.

When are people going to realize that the precious Mother Earth can no longer be taken for granted? We have to realize that as we pollute the Earth today, we are polluting it for generations to come.

Each year people dispose of more than 365 billion pounds of solid waste. This is an average of four pounds a day for every individual. The landfills are filling up quickly, and we don't have the space to keep disposing of such waste. We need to focus on reducing the amount of trash produced and recycle all that we can because recycling does make a difference.

We all need to be made aware of the environmental crisis, and take action today to prevent further environmental damage from occurring. Please do what you can when you can.

Audra Marquis
Woonsocket, RI



DICK'S PICKS

Imagine my delight as I awaited the Dead's new CD project, *Dick's Picks*. Imagine my delight when I thought I was to hear the Dead's only version of "Sugar Shack." Imagine my delight when I looked at the set lists for the show (12/19/73) and thought I was going to hear it all in its crystal clarity, just as it unfolded that evening in Tampa Bay, some twenty years ago.

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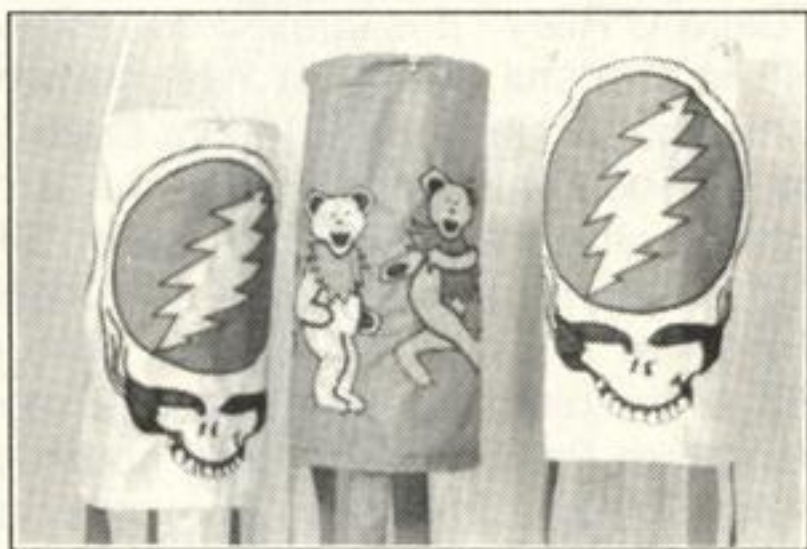
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Imagine my dismay when I received the CD and realized what had happened. Songs omitted, songs out of order, second set songs in the first set and a song ("The Other One") from who knows what show, but it wasn't from 12/19 or even 12/18. Please don't get me wrong, I appreciate the effort. It is the Grateful Dead playing, but it is *not* an evening with the Grateful Dead. A very big difference. It's billed (re: cover of CD) as Tampa, Florida 12/19/73, but it is not the way it went down. It's no secret that part of the magic of a Dead show is the song selection and order. There is a "warning" of sorts on the back cover, basically excusing itself for something. It mentions that its historical value will "more than compensate" for any

technical anomalies (glitches, splices, et al). I'm sorry, but any historical value was devalued when songs were added, rearranged and omitted.

So there you have it. Dick's in charge. He has power. He controls the horizontal, he controls the vertical. Do not attempt to adjust your set; he'll do it for us and for the Grateful Dead. It indeed has been a long, strange trip. But when I got on, and the lights went down, last I checked it was Bob's turn to choose the song or Jerry's or Vinnie's or Phil's...

One more thing. I phoned the Dead office to simply get an address for Dick or the producer to express my opinion. I was in no way unpleasant. But I was met with an extremely rude woman who basically said that "they"



Animal Bag's debut album was released in the fall of 1992. Since that time, and through the summer of '93, the band toured America virtually non-stop. During a short break, the group recorded this collection of songs in a friend's living room in Hollywood, CA. The music on this EP "offers" a glimpse of one of the many faces of Animal Bag.

STARDOG
RECORDS



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don't care what we think (to quote: "You probably weren't even born when that show was played. Now, I am off work and I have to go!" No kidding, she said that.). And she would not give me an address to write to. So I write to you, *Relix*. I know, I know, get a life John. This is no big deal. But hey, this group has been a very integral part of my life. I've used this music in my recovery from drug and alcohol addiction (10 years), in my volunteer work and in my travels throughout the world. This music has been a wonderful bridge between myself and the different cultures I have encountered. If they want to put together a montage, great. Then simply bill it as such.

JH
Oak Harbor, WA

HE'S THE PIG!

I am a Deadhead and Pigpen fan from Ottawa, Canada. The series of interviews about Ron McKernan in your magazine has shed a great deal of light on his life and beliefs. In my opinion, and I'm sure many others would agree, Pigpen had one of the best blues voices ever, and perhaps the best recording of him to date would be "Katie Mae" from the *Bear's Choice* album. There is not enough material out there for Pigpen's fans to enjoy, unless you include the endless reworkings of "Lovelight," and it would be a great thing if we could have more with which to feed our ravenous appetites. Therefore, it is hoped that Carol McKernan will indeed release some of her late brother's recordings so that the man who so often seems forgotten now can live on through his music and our love and appreciation of it. I will be keeping a lookout up here in the "Great White North" for any signs and will, of course, refer to future issues of your magazine.

Bill Hostin
Ottawa, Canada

GULF COAST DESIRE

I just wanted to let you know the Gulf Coast sure would appreciate the return of the Dead. It's been over five years since the cities of

New Orleans, Houston, Dallas, Austin or San Antonio have been treated to some shows. I can't think of a run of shows that would be as much fun. It is disappointing to think that the only reason they don't play these cities is because they are not guaranteed of selling out. Hope to see you return in the near future.

Trip Hudson
Houston, TX

LOVE

I was fortunate to catch the article in Vol. 20 #5 of *Relix* on Arthur Lee and Love. I am a huge Love fan, and I really appreciated that someone still gives them the notoriety that I feel they've always deserved.

Unfortunately, I have one problem. I have always wanted to see Arthur Lee and Love play in concert. Well, tonight I had my chance. I waited for three years for a chance to see them play, ever since I first heard their music, but I was denied because Arthur Lee was playing at the Cubbie Bear in Chicago and it was a 21 years or older show on 12/4/93. I am only 20 years old right now.

I bought tickets anyhow, hoping that I might be able to get in and see the show. I was unsuccessful, and I didn't get to see them play.

Knowing that Love doesn't tour that much, I feel like I missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Tim Surprenant

CORRECTIONS

Reading "Grateful Dead Highlights 1993" in your Year End Special (Vol. 20 #6), I noticed a couple of goofs by Mr. Bromberg, which I felt I should clarify. First off, he claimed the Dead introduced two new tunes for Summer Tour — "Easy Answers" by Bob and "That Would Be Something" by Garcia. I'm sure that many know that Paul McCartney wrote "That Would Be Something" in 1970, and this is on his first self-titled solo album. This also isn't the first time Jerry performed this song. He first played this on 9/25/91 at the Boston Garden, and I believe he has teased this during Space a couple of times since before the Palace show this past summer (6/8/93). He also stated a couple of paragraphs later that Edie Brickel was the only performer since Ken Kesey in '91 to talk during Space. What about Ken Nordine at Rosemont 3/11/93? Is



Ralph Hulett / Rock Retrospect

that not counted because it directly followed Drums? Anyway, I just thought I'd clarify this, and thank you for a job generally well-done. We're all human after all.

John Flannery
Kenosha, WI

In reading Vol. 20 #6, I noticed a few errors that I would like to bring to light. On page 24 in your "1993 In Retrospect," the author refers to David Bowie's latest CD. The actual title is *Black Tie White Noise*, not as was listed. Also, on page 28 in "Grateful Dead Highlights 1993," The Who's song "Baba O'Reilly" is actually "Baba O'Riley." It is spelled correctly on page 41 in Grateful Dead set lists, however. Also, on page 57, in "Independents Daze," in a piece on Todd Rundgren's latest, he is not listed on the album as "TR1," but rather "TRI" for Todd Rundgren Interactive in accordance with the latest phase of his career. Also on page 57, in the piece on Tony Trischka, musician Van Dyke Parks is incorrectly named as Van Dyke Parkes. Parks, among other accomplishments, was Brian Wilson's musical collaborator in 1966-1967 on the Beach Boys' never completed *Smile* album.

I enjoy reading *Relix*. It keeps me up to date with many of my '60s favorites.

Nick Ritrovato



NOTE: When submitting letters, please include a line after your signature stating that you "have submitted the letter for possible publication," and then sign your name. Please be aware that in an effort to run as much correspondence as possible each issue, we may edit portions of your letter. Thanks and send all letters to: Letters, c/o Relix, P.O. Box 94, Brooklyn, NY 11229.

HEADS BEHIND BARS

Letters from Incarcerated Deadheads

Waiting For A Decision

My wife and I are to be sentenced in November in Federal Court. We will be among the first to fall under the new federal LSD guidelines and the first I am aware of that involves both liquid and blotter LSD.

Depending on how the new guidelines are applied that went into effect Nov. 1, I will either have a 10- or 20-year mandatory minimum. I am figuring on ten years. I think our judge, like many judges, thinks LSD sentences are out-of-hand and will give us a break. I am hopeful.

When I know more, I'll write and fill you in on the details of this new ".04 mg per dose" law and how it applied in our case. Our case involves over two grams (20,000 hits) plus some liquid, so it should have bearing on how a lot of people's cases go.

Heather and I, along with a great deal of help from people on the street, put together the *U.S. Blues* and the *Midnight Special* prisoner newsletters.

Apparently, there is an international tribunal convening to discuss human rights violations in the U.S. "War on Drugs." Unfortunately, this is all I know about it. I'll be in touch.

Pat Jordan

I found out that our sentencing date has been put off yet again. Now, we get sentenced on December 15th. I was hoping to be able to let you know how this new sentencing guideline worked, but I'm afraid that I still don't know. This bro from California got sentenced in Federal Court down in Mississippi about a week ago — he got 11 years for 40 sheets. This doesn't seem right to me, but I don't know all the details of his case.

I heard through the grapevine that Mushroom Bob, who gained infamy by snitching on TV (*American Detective*), got picked up. He had jumped bond and, therefore, blew any deal he had made. In fact, by snitching, he had linked himself to

a broader conspiracy, and some of those people wound up testifying against him, and so (I have heard) he wound up with 35 years. It serves him right. He would have been much better off keeping his mouth shut. That's the moral of the story.

The movement is alive and bigger than a lot of people think. I'm convinced that this can turn around if we set our minds to it.

Don Edward (a Calif. congressman and former FBI agent) has a bill (HR 3100) that calls for a commission to re-examine the nation's drug policy. I'm no fan of the law enforcement community, but a surprising number of police even agree that this drug war is b.s.

I will stay in touch. The Feds still want to give me 20 years, but I hope the judge will see things differently. I remain hopeful.

Pat Jordan

The latest word is that Pat Jordan was sentenced to ten years. His wife, Heather Silverstein Jordan, received eight years. The Feds are trying to overturn their sentences, opting for longer prison terms. They are currently being moved to federal facilities. These two great people have done a fantastic service in opening the communications between Deadheads serving mandatory minimums. They started the inmate newsletters, Midnight Special and U.S. Blues. Inmates wishing to add their names to Midnight Special for correspondence, send your name and address c/o Heather Schlesinger, P.O. Box 221973, Chantilly, VA 22022-1973. Send poems, artwork, etc. to U.S. Blues, c/o Alvin Knox, P.O. Box 1305, Cookeville, TN 38503-1305. -ed.

I Didn't Bother Anyone

Time was...a person could attend a show and be moved by and for the music, filled with

ecstatic pleasure with their fellow brothers and sisters — to share in the love and joy it created, without a care or worry. But now, it seems our ever watchful Big Brother has his eye upon us.

I am not one to preach and am a firm believer that a person has the right to do whatever he or she wants to do to their body. But in his crusade with the "War on Drugs," Uncle Sam is snatching up innocent victims. Generally, fun loving people like yourselves are being locked away in an environment filled with violence for some ungodly amount of time. All of your morals, mottoes and codes of ethics are basically thrown out the window. It is hard to stand up for your beliefs when someone is shouting in your face 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And eventually, whether you like it or not, this place will have an effect on you, one way or another. The best you can do is grab hold of something positive and hope for the best.

Don't be tricked into thinking that the Feds are the only ones handing out humongous time for mandatory minimums. Most states have their own mandatory minimum statutes. I know, I'm doing 20 years for possession of a dozen hits of LSD. Unreal, ain't it? Though I only have to serve half of that time, I still have to deal with parole for several years afterwards. All for something that didn't bother or hurt anyone.

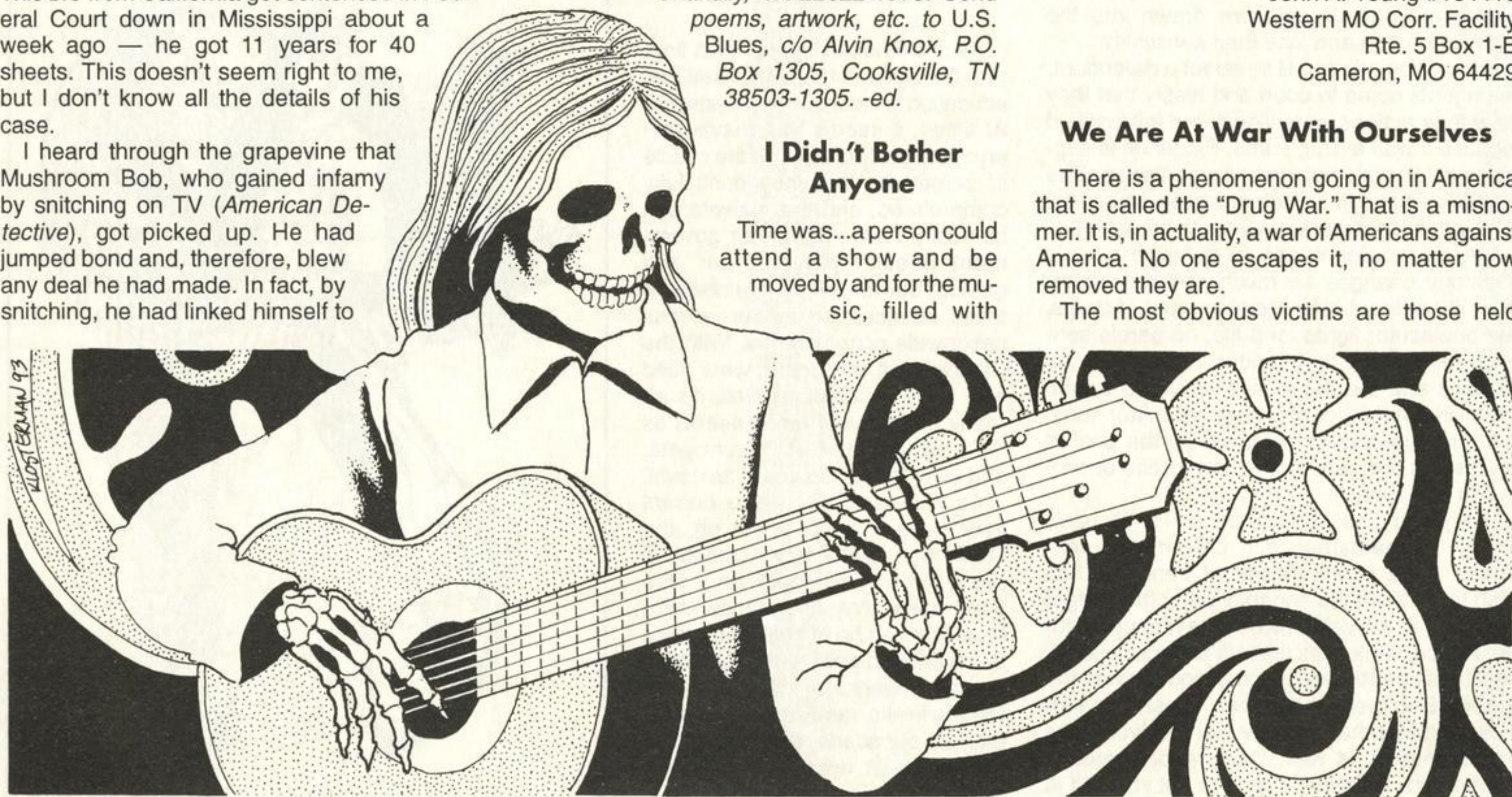
All I can say is: be careful and watch your step. Best bet is to become invisible until the fun starts rocking. Like Jerry says, "watch each card you play and play it slow."

John A. Young #164410
Western MO Corr. Facility
Rte. 5 Box 1-E
Cameron, MO 64429

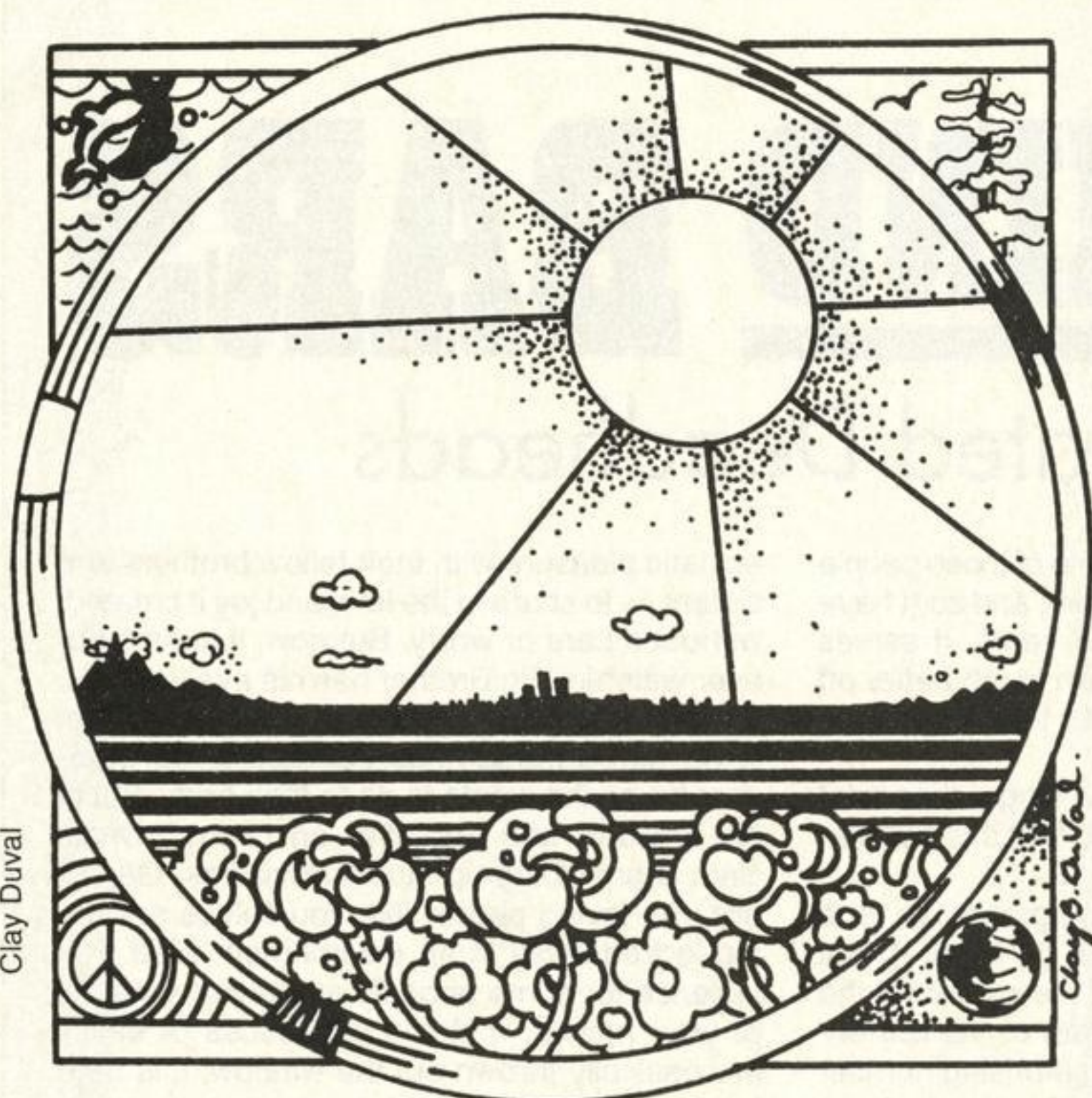
We Are At War With Ourselves

There is a phenomenon going on in America that is called the "Drug War." That is a misnomer. It is, in actuality, a war of Americans against America. No one escapes it, no matter how removed they are.

The most obvious victims are those held



Clay Duval



accountable in the courts. The sentences are extreme with no parole available. The choice is to do great damage to yourself or to lessen that damage by giving part of it to another.

It is not an easy choice. To stand on principle works for a while. But, as the years go by, too many things happen. Your children and family have dramatic problems that you are powerless to assist with. Your friends forget you. You question your stance as you fade away and become the forgotten hero.

To choose to testify against others is also hard. You may be asked to put family members or lovers in jail for many years. You may fear the prison life for yourself, but at the same time, care about the people you implicate.

Either way, you will not walk away from it untouched. Hard, emotional decisions...and by your action, you *must* hurt someone.

What is a little subtler is the damage to the society at large. People are drawn into the movie of hurting and lose their sensibility.

A probation officer will lie about a defendant. The agents come to court and testify that they knew their actions were illegal, but felt justified because it was a drug crime. Evidence is suppressed for trial, but used to sentence. The checks we have to ensure our freedom are set aside because we are at war with ourselves.

The prosecutor brings in a "witness." His testimony changes so much, the prosecutor drops 70 percent of the total amount of drugs. The prosecutor fights for a life, no parole sentence for a first-time offender. Failing that, he requests that the defendant be caged on the other side of the country from her minor sons. The man appears to be driven by the goal of success as a prosecutor — not justice or protection of society.

The judge has little purpose. He is hamstrung by mathematically determined sentences. Most of the power of sentence has been taken from the impartial party (the judge) and given to the devil's advocate (the prosecutor). Hence, sentences that are unconstitutional.

All these people are in direct contact with the system. But, there are others. Those that turn away and feel that they are not involved have lost something as well. Your freedom erodes around you. To ignore that is to put yourself in

the danger zone. So many people are in federal and state prisons, it is a disgrace to the words "the land of the free." We are not free to pursue our happiness. We are not free of oppressive governments. *We are not free.* It is time to rescue our country and nurture it and fight for it so that it is healed. We must begin to take the steps before the majority is in prison and the rest are guarding them.

How do the mandates affect the Deadhead community? As it affects us all. We, the people, lose our freedom and perspective. We, as a group, may be hit hard, but must not forget that everyone suffers.

I am currently sentenced to 24 years as the

result of the testimony of two men. The majority of it was false. They had both served time previously, but walked away with probation and seven years. I do not advocate or condone snitching. People should put their beliefs on the line. Corruptness must be stopped at all levels.

I have two sons, 13 and 16, that are pretty much on their own. I send my prison wages to help them. Good luck in raising a little consciousness. I'm sure you have a friendly audience, but we need more action than sympathy now.

Nancy Martz
85364-011 Unit C
5701 8th St. Camp Parks
Dublin, CA 94568

Prompt Change Through Public Awareness

As one who has spent much time with the Dead community, I feel that education is crucial to our existence. At times, it seems that maybe everyone is guilty of being in the middle of something that they don't fully comprehend, and that naiveté can be costly. As we know, our government doesn't play for fun and games, but for keeps. Numbers of those incarcerated in our prisons nationwide only increase. With the Clinton/Gore era, many were filled with hope for change. Well, it's already been a year and it seems as if Clinton is only Bush's surrogate, and everything's business as usual.

As a person that these current laws have a direct effect on, the knowledge that I have picked up along the way has been on a first-hand basis. Any information that I have that can be of help I'd be more than willing to pass along (guideline ranges, mandatory minimum sentencing levels, newly amended laws, etc.). In our scene, drugs do play a part, however, not mandatorily. The laws concerning LSD are very dis-

proportionate and the length of sentencing greatly outweighs the severity of its offense.

What's become common knowledge to LSD has been the inclusion of the carrier weight to determine sentencing levels. However, the new law to determine LSD sentences came into effect November 1st. In short, what the Sentencing Commission wants to do is treat each dose as 0.4 mg. in weight. This lowers the total weight of both paper and drug somewhat, but the inclusion of some of the paper weight is still used. All of us sentenced to the weight of both are in the interim of how the courts will interpret this. So far, it's looking good, however, we've learned long ago to not count on too much of anything. So we wait, expecting the worst, but hoping for the best. No matter how this law is interpreted, mandatory minimums will still play a part and for the time being there is no morally redeeming way around it. In retrospect, I have no regrets except being caught.

Aaron Bartunek
04120-068 S-126
RR 276 P.O. Box 1000
Loretto, PA 15940

Hates Snitches

To claim that it's the DEA vs. the Deadheads is only half true. Almost everyone on the *Midnight Special* list is there due to a snitch. I'll make no bones about it. I'm a snitch-hater. I don't know if we can make people not snitch anymore than we can make them not deal, but snitching is an immoral act, and perhaps the only way is to lead by example.

In the federal system, we consider one half of everybody a rat, and so we keep quiet. The "Me" generation is alive and well, it seems. I'm convinced that this snitch mania is responsible for the heat more than anything else. I just hope that we can educate a few into thinking twice.

I still believe in LSD. I think most of us do. The psychedelic movement is far from dead. I don't know if freedom will be legalized in my



Jack Murphy

lifetime, but I think one day these times will be looked back on as being very repressive.

Sometimes folks ask me, "Was it worth it?" and I smile, and say "Absolutely." I have no regrets or apologies. I had the time of my life on tour, and I enjoyed selling acid. That's not really a popular point of view, but that's how I feel. I don't plan on telling the judge this. It's a secret.

Anonymous

Nothing Costs More Than Regret

I'm currently serving a 63-month sentence for possession of over one gram of LSD (1,586 doses) which carries a 60-month mandatory sentence. This was my first offense ever, but it was prosecuted in State Court also, where I received a 30-month sentence for the same drugs. Both sentences are running concurrent and coterminous, so the state time really means nothing to me, except for the 10 convictions on my record. There is also a four-year probation period for both sentences.

The LSD sentencing law has changed. Hopefully, I'll get a well deserved break, along with all my brothers and sisters also doing time for LSD.

I sure have learned from this time behind bars. I wish I would have known the penalties for dealing LSD, but hindsight is 20/20. I have been taken away from my family and friends, not to mention the music I love so much. Right now, nothing costs more than regret.

Matt Martin
#13705-018

PMB-1000 H/N Unit
Tallahassee, FL 32301-3400

Time Has Come To Speak Out

Dylan was right when he sang "For the times, they are a-changin'." Being a federal prisoner, I have a prime opportunity to take a look at the political climate of the world from a sort of outsider's perspective. What I see is people getting fed up, and ready for some sort of change.

There are over 60 federal judges who are refusing to hear drug cases. The Surgeon General has not only stated that she supports the medicinal use of marijuana, but thinks that we are a naive nation if we don't at least *consider* the decriminalization of all drugs. We have a draft dodging, (non-inhaling) pot smoking president in office, and a vice president who is a self-proclaimed Deadhead. People, the time is now! This country is coming upon a very unique time when it is susceptible to change, and only we can make the change. David Crosby sang, "Speak out against the madness; You've got to speak your mind, if you dare!" Well people, the time is now. We all know the words to the song; Sing loud, and sing strong.

Evan Rotman
97635-012

P.O. Box 4000
Springfield, MO 65801-4000

Are Non-Violent Offenders Worse Than Violent Offenders?

I feel the use of drugs should be a matter of choice. Just as one has the choice of religion and to buy and sell guns, why not drugs?

I understand that drugs may not be for everyone, but I can't understand a system that would give life to someone for getting high,

while someone can kill and only get 15 years.

I'm doing 12 to 50 years for possession of acid, while folks in here for rape, child molestation and murder are doing less time than me. I must question the morals behind a system like that, one that would put a non-violent drug abuser in worse standing than a violent offender.

Chances are that the violent offender will get out long before us drug abusers and maybe one of them will move in next to you or someone you know.

Mike

Dead Stickers Attract Unwanted Attention

I am not a criminal. I am not dangerous. I am not a threat to anyone. I am simply someone who enjoys himself and all that life has to offer.

I was driving my truck through southern Utah, caravanning with two other friends in their truck, when we approached a "construction zone" on the highway. When we were too close to turn around, we saw a small sign announcing that this was not construction, but a police road block. I had with me a nugget of pot about the size of a quarter and about three grams of mushrooms buried well under the seat. (First mistake. Lesson: Always carry your stash deep in a sweaty, smelly, dirty sock deep in a backpack, deep in the back of your truck, not under your seat.)

The sign said "Have license and registration ready." So when the cop approached, I handed him the info. "Where you headed?" he asked. "Back to California," I responded. "Where have you been?" I told him, "camping at Lake Powell." "Are you carrying any drugs, alcohol or weapons?" he asked. "I have a half a bottle of whiskey in my cooler left over from the campfire last night," I told him. Then he told me to take off my sunglasses. Having not smoked anything all day, I wasn't worried and took them off. "Your eyes look pretty glassy," he said. I told him I had been camping for a week, and driving a lot that day. I got a sarcastic chuckle and was told to pull over to the side.

My friends in the truck ahead of me went right through without a hassle. Why me? The answer: stickers. My truck was adorned with Dead stickers. (Second mistake. Lesson: Not everyone likes the Dead.)

Here's where it gets ugly. Comments like "Oh, we have a Deadhead here, boys," and "Bet he's carrying something, huh?" were made. "We'd like to search your car," I was told. "I'd rather just keep driving. I've got a long way still to go," I responded. All I got was "Step out of the car." (Third mistake. Lesson: Just say NO! Not "well, I'd rather..." just "No," although in this case, I doubt it would have mattered.)

To make a long story short, they found the loot, seized my truck and arrested me. My friends bailed me out, and I got an attorney (the best one in Utah, I might add) and prepared for court.



The police report was the most blatant pack of lies I've ever seen. And I hope this lying stays on the deputy's Mormon conscience, but I doubt it. It said that I was uncooperative, incoherent and that I fully consented to a search. This was not true at all, but my attorney put it frankly: "If I want to take this fully to court, I'll be facing a jury of Utah residents and it comes down to my word against his. Who are

(continued on next page)

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DEADHEADS BEHIND BARS*(continued from preceeding page)*

they gonna believe, a highway patrol deputy or a Deadhead from California?" I opted to plea bargain.

I got all the charges dropped, but they kept my truck. Go figure. They said they were gonna use my truck for undercover work in their national parks. As I left the courtroom, I looked at the deputy and said, "If I had the time and money, I'd fight this because you know that report is not true."

The deputy said, "You calling me a liar?" to which I responded, "Yes. You're a filthy liar, and I hope it comes back to haunt you." Then I left the court, got in my friend's car, and we drove home.

In closing, if you use any drugs, please use discretion. Also, if you're camping in Utah and come across a blue Toyota pick-up truck with friendly Dead stickers on it, do not be mistaken. The men driving it are undercover cops, not Deadheads. And finally, if you're pulled over in Utah and find yourself talking to Deputy Bliss, use extreme caution in what you say or

do. I can't ask you to confront him on my story; in fact, I ask that you don't even bring it up. Just remember my story and know that *he's the one*.

John V.

We welcome correspondence from incarcerated Deadheads, and will continue to list addresses for correspondence. Send all mail to Relix c/o Heads, P.O. Box 94, Brooklyn, New York 11229.

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Michigan City, IN 46360

Joey Casino #BZ-8891
#1 Kellie Drive
Coal Twp., PA 17866

Bryant S. James
c/o David Vaughan
Rt. 1 Box 234-A
Germantown, NC 27019

Michael Reddick #34123-060
Bhm-G F.P.C.
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

Gregory M. Sullivan #10361MA
PO Drawer 220
Burnsville, NC 28714

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Burkeville, VA 23922

Robert L. Steen #02670-084
Petersburg Camp
PO Box 1000
Petersburg, VA 23804

Deron Hrbek #02678-025
PO Box 4000
Springfield, MO 65801-4000

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8 Dorm W.C.C.
PO Box 473
Westfield, IN 46391

Louis Ohmeda #935502-13IV
1500 W. US 40, IN State Farm
Greencastle, IN 46135

Bryon Walker #112918
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LaGrange, KY 40031

Gregory M. Sullivan #10362-MA
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Burnsville, NC 28714

Kelly Weeks
Bill Cyr
1 Right Way Path
Laconia, NH 03246

Ron Fiala #242-128
RCI Box 7010
Chillicothe, OH 45601

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Box 2000
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Aaron Lowden #09540-036 (4A)
FCI Allenwood, Box 2000
White Deer, PA 17887

John Kim #206298
PO Box 1427
Chesapeake, VA 23327

John T. McCusker #49205-080
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Oakdale, LA 71463-5000

Gary Malletz #93A4517
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Malone, NY 12953

Rob Lake #186452 1-A
OCC
RR #2 Box 1-P
Fordland, MO 65652

Rick Cash
2115 South Jason Street
Denver, CO 80223

Thomas Parkes #11637-074
FCI Jesup
2680 Highway 301 South
Jesup, GA 31545

Douglas MacMillen #60072-080
3705 W. Farm Road
Lompoc, CA 93436

David M. Strunk #219860
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3201 Bemis Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Anthony Richards #920146
727 Moon Road F Dorm
Safford, AZ 46168-9400

Michael Cincola #55543-065
RR2 Box 9000
Safford, AZ 85546

Troy Stone #86517
ASP East Unit
PO Box 5000
Florence, AZ 85232

William J. Rousseau #93626
Arizona State Prison - Florence
PO Box 5000 East Unit
Florence, AZ 85232

Paul A. Barkett
#06684-067 (Brady-A)
L.S.C.I. Allenwood
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White Deer, PA 17887-1000



Keri LEIGH

The next Janis Joplin?

Keri Leigh and the Blue Devils' combination of blistering slide guitar and a voice that rivals the late great Janis Joplin produces one of the finest down-home, ass-kicking authentic raw blues bands to come along in years! Touring to promote its latest Amazing Records release, *No Beginner*, the Blue Devils play Delta blues in the style that must have the Delta masters smiling down from up above.

Keri Leigh is an accomplished writer (see book review last issue on her late friend, Stevie Ray Vaughan), former radio disc jockey and founder of the Oklahoma Blues Society. The Blue Devils keep the blues tradition alive with amazing renditions of songs by Muddy Waters, Charlie Patton, Hound Dog Taylor, Little Walter and Ida Cox. The Devils' original songs are also deeply rooted in the blues, but have a fresh progressive feel. It is hard to believe that Leigh is only 24 years old because her command of the blues and blues history is as impressive and sincere as her vocals are filled with passion and love.

Relix: There are three tracks on *No Beginner* where your voice sounds hauntingly similar to Janis Joplin, especially "Tell Mama." I played them for Sam Andrew [Janis Joplin's longtime guitarist], and he agreed.

Keri: I've been a long-time fan of Sam Andrew, and I consider it an honor to be discussed in the same company as Janis. The horn arrangement we used on "Tell Mama" is the exact arrangement used on the original version by Etta James.

Relix: Is there a musical lineage in your family?

Keri: Yes. My father was British and came to United States in the 1950s. He loved rhythm 'n'

blues and had an extensive record collection. My dad was also very much into the vaudeville scene and had both acted and sang. He was born in 1901, so he was old enough to be my grandfather [laughter]. My mother was kind of a hill-billy who wrote country 'n' western songs. She even sold a tune to the late Conway Twitty. My mind was opened to music at five years old from my parents. They got me a little Mickey Mouse record player and let me play with a box of 78 rpm records. I found such treasures in that box as Big Joe Turner's "Shake Rattle & Roll," recordings by Lavern Baker, the Imperials, Fats Domino, many Atlantic Recordings, and I went totally nuts over these records that I naturally gravitated to. My parents are my musical inspiration today.

Relix: When did you discover Delta blues?

Keri: That came later. In school I was into the Beatles and the Stones. It was through the music of the Stones and Cream that I started looking back at Robert Johnson, Skip James and Son House. I was touched so deeply by this music that I became fanatical about collecting Delta blues recordings.

Relix: How would you define Chicago, Texas, Delta or West Coast blues?

Keri: The Delta blues is usually limited to one or two instruments. Most of it was one musician's cry against the whole world and that feeling of being stuck out in the middle of nowhere on a farm. I know and can relate to that feeling having been raised in Alabama. Chicago

blues, of course, has the electricity and that raunchy [turn up the heat] sound. In Texas, the style is cooling. Not so much the gut-bucket sound of Leadbelly in the '20s, but more R&B oriented like T-Bone Walker and some early Gatmouth Brown recordings. Texas is like that uptown sound complete with horns, similar to the West coast sound where they really swing.

Relix: What were your experiences as a disc jockey?

Keri: I started at an album rock station when I was 17. I was a news reporter, but I hated the work because it was so depressing. I would cover murder trials and, man, this really gave me the blues. I finally got to do an air spot as the overnight jock. I built up a following, and I started doing morning radio as well. I would come back in the afternoon to do the news, too. I was also working across town for the local newspaper. I became a media whore [laughter]. What can I say?

Relix: What was the stimulus for founding the Oklahoma Blues Society?

Keri: There was a group of people who liked the blues, but didn't have any other way to get together and talk about the blues. Let's face it, we are obviously a lesser breed, and it is harder for us to find each other. When we do find each other, it is beautiful because we have so much to talk about. Knowing all these people, I felt we needed a forum, so I put it together to help promote the art forms and provide that forum. The Society is doing well today, and I'm proud to be a part of it.

Relix: Your band is referred to as a "traditionalist band" in the type of music you play and the way you play it. Do you view yourself as a traditionalist or are you taking the tradition and progressing within a traditional framework?

Keri: That's a damn good question [laughter]! I have changed a lot from our first album, which was very traditional. The first album was when I considered myself to be a blues "purist" and almost a blues snob. I look back on that now and think how stupid that was. It was kind of like when Eric Clapton thumbed his nose at the Yardbirds for getting away from the blues tradition and left to form Cream [chuckles], yeah right, you know. Then I thought my job was to preserve the blues so much that I tried to sound like Son House. Since that first album, my philosophy has changed. Now I am interested in keeping the art forms fresh because I realized that I really wasn't doing anything for the form by trying to put it into a case or museum. Why listen to a 24-year-old white girl trying to sing like Muddy Waters, when you can buy a Muddy Waters record, know what I mean? We are trying to take older songs like Charlie Patton's "Green River," from *No Beginner*, and give them a modern adaptation. We don't want to get too far out, but we do want to keep the integrity of the songs, complementing the works of the great masters while building on them in a progressive/modern form. We are also trying to write some new blues tunes that will last.

Relix: What is a typical night like for Keri Leigh and the Blue Devils?

Keri: We have a basic plan and then we react to how the audience is reacting. If it is a rockin' Saturday night dance crowd, we might have to forego our Delta blues numbers for some rockin' blues tunes. Usually, at every show about half-way through, the band will leave the stage and Mark Lyon (Keri's husband) and I will do a couple of Delta blues numbers. We try to give the people what they want while still giving them a Muddy Waters or a Little Walter tune. I'm a very animated performer, and when I hear a crowd scream that gives me the energy to keep going. In the small clubs, you can really get close to the crowd and talk with them after the shows. The small clubs are where I find many of the very hardcore blues fanatics, and it is a pleasure to hang out and talk with these people. It becomes almost an educational experience for me, and I appreciate the feedback from the people.

Relix: Did you ever take any formal voice lessons?

Keri: No. As a result, I developed nodes and needed to have them surgically removed when I was 16. Since that time, I have been seeing a vocal therapist to take care of my throat off stage.

Relix: In your opinion, what were your best and worst performances, and why were they the best and worst?

Keri: Think back to January 15, 1991, that is the day we went to war. We had our first gig scheduled at Antone's in Texas, and we were so excited about finally getting to play on their legendary stage. We go to war, and everyone is home watching television to find out what the government is doing. We ended up playing to five alcoholics at the bar and a television set...that was our worst gig. Luckily, it was just Mark and me doing Delta blues.

The best shows...well, recently we were at the Caboose in Minneapolis. I looked out and saw 700 people packed together, and they were there for us. That was a great feeling, and we played well. It's gigs like that that make you want to keep doing what we do and shows us that we are reaching people who like what they hear. That's what makes it all worthwhile. ■

THIS GENERATION'S

DEBBIE DAVIES

 NEWEST BLUES STAR



BY ANDREW M. ROBBLE

Riding high on her debut release for Blind Pig Records, *Picture This*, Debbie Davies' time has finally come to step out into the spotlight and front her band. Davies paid her dues and mastered her craft by sharing and tearing up the stage with such blues luminaries as Buddy Guy, Albert Collins, Robert Cray, Koko Taylor, Duke Robillard and John Mayall. This year she was nominated for the prestigious W.C. Handy Award in the category of Contemporary Blues - Female Artist of the Year.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Davies' earliest musical influences were her father (a successful Hollywood arranger and producer), folk

singers and folk-rock songs of the time. Her father was a contractor for Walt Disney Studios whose contributions included scores for the television show, *The Wonderful World of Color*, numerous Disney movies and many of the soundtrack arrangements and special effects used today in the Disney theme parks.

It is not surprising then that Davies' first professional performances were for Disney Studios. She was a member of the chorus that performed the original version of "It's A Small World," and she appeared as a caroler for the Disney Christmas special, "Silent Night."

Davies was turned onto the blues in her teenage

years, listening to Eric Clapton's guitar work with the band Cream. "I had an acoustic guitar, and I really wanted an electric guitar," Davies said. "My parents were absolutely against the idea, so I started to learn Eric Clapton's guitar solos by singing along with them. I learned all the little subtle nuances and accents until the music was ingrained in my head."

Davies finally got an electric guitar when she went away to college in Sonoma County. She bought a Gibson ES 330 and devoted more time to practicing it than pursuing her academic endeavors (although she did receive a degree in psychology). "I was in one of those devise-your-own-major programs, and I had much time to play my guitar," she recalls. "I studied everything I could about the construction and inner workings of guitar playing. I studied music theory, and I was going out every night and watching and listening to as many guitarists as I could in the area. I remember taking a class within the first six months that I started to play called Jazz Improvisation. I was so unequipped to play what the course was teaching, but I could absorb all this theory, and it really helped me a lot. I tried to sit in with anyone who would let me. I constantly asked questions of other players and practiced until I thought I would drop."

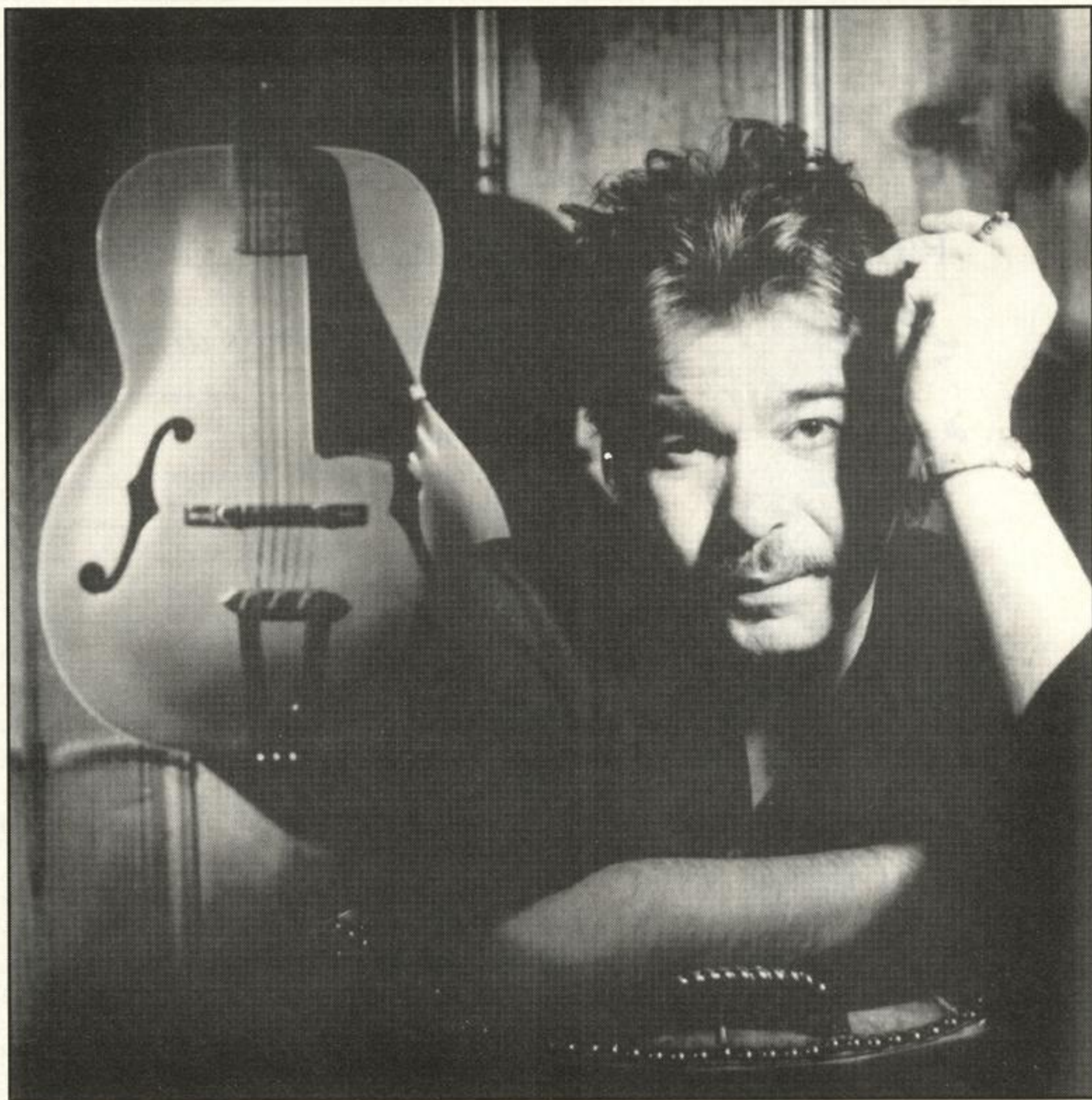
Davies started to play with local bands in a second or rhythm guitar capacity. It didn't take long for her peers to realize that she was not a novelty, but a true guitar player. Slowly, she developed more confidence in her guitar abilities and burned up the stage, trading licks while developing her throaty vocal sound. "I was really getting into the Texas sound of Gatemouth Brown, Albert and Freddie King, and T-Bone Walker while absorbing some of that tough and raucous Chicago sound as well," she explains.

As a female blues guitarist, Davies was forced to constantly prove herself. Her only role model at the time was Bonnie Raitt. "I always loved Bonnie's playing," she recalls. "For male guitarists, there are unlimited role models, but for females, until recently, Bonnie was it. My personal playing style is different from hers, but I can't say enough about her. I wish I could say that I have a strong style that is me. Hopefully that will evolve and people will be able to say 'that is Debbie playing.' Right now I'm just really a product of a lot of the players that I love. Certainly, Eric Clapton was a very big influence on me, and I adore the style of playing that Stevie Ray Vaughan brought forth, but it is certainly not the only style that I play. I have this whole side of me that loves stuff that is now quite so aggressive and a little swingier, like T-Bonesque [Walker]. My music is really somewhat feel-based. If it feels good...I like it."

The mid-'80s brought Davies back to the Los Angeles area where she met John Mayall's Bluesbreaker guitarist, Coco Montoya, whom she still maintains a relationship with. Montoya is responsible for introducing Davies to both Mayall and his wife, Maggie. Davies was invited to join the all-women R&B band, Maggie Mayall and the Cadillacs, but as fate would have it, the band broke up a year later.

Davies' big break, however, came when she learned that Albert Collins was looking for another guitar player for his band. She got the gig and spent the next three years on the road with Albert Collins and the Icebreakers, establishing her reputation as an excellent blues guitarist. Undoubtedly, her guitar work and vocals were instrumental in Albert Collins and the Icebreakers winning the W.C. Handy Award for Blues Band of the Year in 1989.

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JOHN PRINE

A Troubadour's Troubadour

BY ROGER LEN SMITH

John Prine is experiencing a sort of renaissance these days. In the past couple of years, the singer-songwriter has put out a couple of albums, won a Grammy, released a 41-song box set retrospective, co-headlined a whammy of a folk festival and even appeared in *Falling From Grace*, the 1992 debut film from friend and occasional collaborator, John Mellencamp.

Known as somewhat of a recluse, all of this activity comes as something of a surprise, especially considering that Prine recently considered quitting the music business altogether. "I had the thought in the back of my mind," Prine told *Los Angeles Times* music critic Robert Hilburn in 1991, shortly after *The Missing Years* was released. "I worked real hard...so that I could feel I said good-bye [with class]."

Fortunately, no good-byes were necessary, as the album and its subsequent praise seem to have rekindled Prine's love for making music. Or at least recording it.

The Missing Years, Prine's fourth project for his label, Oh Boy Records, is definitely a gem. It was even recognized with a Grammy for the

Best Contemporary Folk Album. And since its release, it has sold over 400,000 copies and earned rave reviews all across the land.

Last year's career-defining, double-disc collection, *Great Days — The John Prine Anthology* (Rhino), also garnered positive reviews, and does for Prine what *Biograph* did for Bob Dylan and *Sound And Vision* did for David Bowie — puts it all in perspective.

While *Great Days* showcases the rich legacy of modern folk songs that Prine has given the world since 1971, *The Missing Years* indicates that his best work may still be yet to come. Simply put, Prine writes better songs than many of today's top hits. Moreover, for every perfect-pitched, Guinness-Book-of-World-Record note sung, Prine fills his big old goofy songs with honest human emotion, something that is often missing from the "hits."

Prine's music began to take shape in the late '60s in his native Chicago, when he traded his career as postman for that of musician. Heavily influenced by Dylan, Prine went on to establish himself as one of the top songwriters of his

generation with a consistent stream of albums that reflect common life experiences in humble, humorous and sometimes horrific terms.

Always endearing to an audience, Prine has maintained a devoted cult following since his first concerts in the early '70s. His songwriting talent was first harnessed in the Chicago folk clubs of the late '60s, working with his good friend, the late Steve Goodman. The two were soon noticed by visiting musicians Kris Kristofferson and Paul Anka. That fateful showcase eventually brought Prine and Goodman to New York to cut demos for Anka.

Signed to Atlantic by Jerry Wexler in 1971, Prine began his fragile relationship with the music industry at large. *John Prine*, released that year, immediately garnered the songwriter acclaim and fans, through the introspection and compassion of such songs as the harrowing Vietnam vet number "Sam Stone," the ballad "Angel From Montgomery" (made famous by Bonnie Raitt, who has often performed the tune with Prine over the years), the subversive, psychedelic classic "Illegal Smile," the poignant tale of old age "Hello In There" and Prine's homage to his childhood pilgrimage "Paradise."

Prine's earnest, story-song voice has its moments of extreme folk-richness. Although he's more raw and ragged than radio-friendly peers such as James Taylor or Jackson Browne, Prine is almost alone in his ability to write a catchy, yet simple chorus. The grace of "The Speed Of The Sound Of Loneliness" from 1986 is accentuated by its understated refrain:

*What in the world has come over you
what in heaven's name have you done
you've broken the speed of the sound of
loneliness
you're out there running just to be on the run*

Although he's on a definite roll now, it hasn't always been easy for the Midwesterner. Prine experienced the usual doldrums that come with being a folk musician on a major recording label: no shiny, star-like image and no Top 40 hits (although Bette Midler recorded a version of "Hello In There" on her mid-'70s smash debut).

Four albums for Atlantic yielded many Prine classics: "Dear Abby," "Grandpa Was A Carpenter" and "Saddle In The Rain," among them, but again, few "hits." In 1978, Prine made the jump to Asylum Records for three solid albums, but remained in the shadows. So, rather than be pushed around by record executives who didn't seem to have the slightest clue of the real value of his music anyway, Prine started Oh Boy Records in 1980.

In the ensuing decade, Prine continued writing from his unique and rare perspective that combines the laughable and the heartbreaking. He released two studio albums and a live one for Oh Boy, and although his cult following remained strong, Prine felt his muse waning a bit as the decade came to an end.

Hooking up with Howie Epstein, Tom Petty's bassist, however, helped revive the old engines. Their product, *The Missing Years*, was recorded at a cost of \$100,000, a big budget for Prine, yet average for a major artist. Moreover, it confirms Prine's musical mission in life, for his fans as well as the artist himself.

Like most great albums, *The Missing Years* contains subtle songs of hope and despair, heartbreak and salvation. The final track of this 14-song disc, "Jesus, The Missing Years," is a sort of modern "Alice's Restaurant," a story



song about Jesus "discovering the Beatles and partying with the Stones."

Recorded in Los Angeles and Nashville, *The Missing Years* is definitely long on star turns, for the cast includes Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen, Bonnie Raitt, Phil Everly, Divinyls' singer Christine Amphlett, guitarists Albert Lee and John Jorgensen, and, naturally, most of Petty's Heartbreakers.

The flow of *The Missing Years* is smooth as

jelly, probably because each song bounces around each other. Prine opens up with the straight ahead rock of the slightly sardonic "Picture Show," while "All The Best" finds Prine alone with his acoustic guitar in a simple chord progression with a bittersweet anecdote on love and relationships. "Great Rains" features the whole band, funk up a country blues progression. On "Everybody Wants To Feel Like You," Prine injects such simple passion into it

that you can't help being struck by its emotional starkness. Such variety could be divisive, but Prine's honest approach and storybook songwriting keep it all together. In fact, there isn't a bad song in the bunch.

Two years after the release of *The Missing Years*, Prine found himself at the "mother" of all folk festivals, the Troubadours of Folk Festival held at UCLA in June 1993. He performed a passionate, hour-long set that included Bonnie Raitt joining him for both "Angel From Montgomery" and a new song. The two-day folk marathon also featured acoustic luminaries Joni Mitchell, Arlo Guthrie, Roger McGuinn (who was joined by Tom Petty for a handful of tunes), Richie Havens, Taj Mahal, Richard Thompson, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and many others. Just for spirited good measure, Spinal Tap appeared as "the Folksmen," a mostly humorous take on the real Kingston Trio who, strangely enough, played a set only an hour before the acoustic Tap played!

Other recent collaborations of note include a duet with Margo Timmins and the Cowboy Junkies on "If You Were The Woman And I Was The Man," which is included on Prine's current release, *A John Prine Christmas*. Prine is also reported to be participating in an unlikely pairing with ex-Pink Floyd leader, Roger Waters.

With the release of *Great Days*, Prine's career is brought up-to-date with a collection of songs that couldn't be more personal. For the virgin listener or the avid Prine-ophile, *Great Days* is one box set worth its weight in disc. And with a deservedly higher profile and a renewed vigor for his occupation, John Prine is back from his hiatus to regale the willing listener with tales of love and longing. What great days for all of us. ■



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ALLGOOD REDEFINES SOUTHERN ROCK



BY THOMAS L. DELLECAVE JR.

Guitarist Clay Fuller doesn't want anybody to think that he and the rest of Allgood are not committed to the band. This past summer, for instance, Fuller's wedding plans and Allgood's gig with the H.O.R.D.E. tour coincided, but Fuller found a way to do both.

After playing a show in New Jersey on a Thursday, he flew to Statesboro, Georgia on Friday, got married on Saturday and flew to New York City with his new wife on Sunday for a show that night. Darting through the city streets in the back of a '73 Mustang on their way to the gig, Fuller realized that his bride understood his commitment, too. He says it was actually pretty romantic, although neither had planned to honeymoon on tour.

Allgood is among a wave of bands firmly rooted in '60s and '70s rock influences that has built up a strong following through nonstop touring. Based in Athens, Georgia, these roadhogs never really became part of the Athens scene. "Athens had a sound that we weren't really a part of," explains lead singer Corky Jones. "We were kind of like the unwanted child."

Six years of hard work and staying true to its sound began to pay off for Allgood in 1992 when they landed a record deal with A&M. After only three weeks in the studio, they released *Uncommon Goal*. Speaking from experience, Fuller readily dispels the myth that a signed band has made it. "There are some nights that we still play in front of 20 people," adds drummer Charlie Pruet.

Allgood plays over 200 shows a year traveling around the country in a van. For Fuller, going into new areas is in a lot of ways like going back to square one. "You go into a town and you may be playing the smallest club there, and nobody knows who you are." Band mem-

bers, who slept six people in a hotel room on the road, had to set up and break down their own equipment. "It either breaks you up or keeps you together," Fuller adds. In Allgood's case, it has made them a tighter unit. While they now have a crew, Allgood still maintains a workaholic attitude and says "yes" to as many different venues or opportunities as they can.

Allgood formed in late 1987, and its first gig was a fund raiser for presidential candidate Michael Dukakis in February of 1988. But don't mistake them for a politically-minded band, they just knew there would be a crowd and a stage and couldn't pass it up.

Bassist Mike Sain admits that the band knew very little about the business side of playing live. So in 1989 when Jimmy McLean, a friend of the band who had a background in business, asked if they wanted a manager, they jumped at the chance.

In June of 1990, Allgood again showed that they were willing to go anywhere that there was an audience and opened up for UB40, a band more in sync with the R.E.M. side of Athens. They won a contest and were one of three bands to open for UB40 at the Lakewood Amphitheater in Atlanta. "We stuck out like a sore thumb," Jones says.

Being behind the scenes for a big show, however, crystallized the band's goals. "All they [headliners] have to worry about is playing. They don't have to worry about fixing the van if it breaks down or anything like that," Fuller says.

Guitarist John Carter has similar feelings about the H.O.R.D.E. tour. "It definitely gave us a lot of exposure." Band members compare the whole experience to a summer camp, while Pruet adds that the free drum lessons given by the other bands were the best part.

Allgood agrees that its biggest step came in

August 1990 when the members quit their day jobs. With nothing but free time, they played 20 or more shows a month. By fall, Allgood went into the studio to work on its first album, an independent label release called *Ride The Bee*. After the album, Allgood found it easier to break into new areas. Things snowballed when they toured to support *Ride The Bee*, signed with A&M and recorded *Uncommon Goal* in December 1992.

With *Uncommon Goal*, Allgood felt the need to go really basic, according to Jones. "A lot of what Allgood's about is honesty. We just wanted it to be a personal look at what the five of us are capable of doing. With the first major label release, we wanted to have a foundation of where we're coming from."

That honest sound comes through loud and clear both live and on *Uncommon Goal*. Don't be fooled by the Stevie Ray Vaughan dedication on the album. There is much more to this band than Southern rock in the same vein as Vaughan, Lynyrd Skynyrd or the Allman Brothers. Although these forerunners have certainly influenced Allgood (Jones sounds hauntingly similar to Vaughan on *Goal*'s first track, "It's Alright"), Hendrix, Clapton and just about every other classic rock act has similarly played some role in the Allgood sound. Sain says that he listens to Van Halen, AC/DC and all hell-raising classic rock. While Fuller used to listen to Carlos Santana and Jeff Beck, he now admits that playing 20 nights a month prevents him from listening to any other guitarists other than Carter and himself.

Jones describes the Allgood sound as "aggressive Southern rhythm and blues" and says that R&B really moves him. Perhaps aggressive is the key word though. After a Carter guitar solo, you feel as if a diesel engine has just barreled through. For himself, Carter sees comparisons to Vaughan more as a "Hendrixism" and says that there aren't a lot of creative wah wah players out there. "If you want to play wah, Hendrix is who you listen to," he says. A Carter solo is a real high wire act. Exchanging riffs with Fuller, he plucks the strings with his teeth and throws the guitar over his head, continuing to play with the instrument resting on the back of his neck. This isn't a stunt: it's just "aggressive Southern rhythm and blues."

Sain and Pruet give Allgood a funky backbone. "Music is so much like sex," claims Sain. He says that he and Pruet are the part of the band that make the girls move their hips. If that's happening, then he feels that they are doing their job. "There's a texture that you go for live," adds Pruet. "If you get it, you know it and it feels really good. Sometimes you don't even know what you're playing."

Allgood hopes to be back in the studio by the end of '94 to make another record. For now, they're very content where they are and plan to make sure that they're playing for a long time. Allgood did a live video for its first release, "It's Alright," which they claim didn't capture what the band was about. Before they invest the money in a video for their second release, "Open It Up," they want to wait and see how it does on the charts.

When asked what the future holds for Allgood, Carter summed it up by saying, "We'll be doing the same thing we're doing now for a while. If the record goes gold, well, maybe then things will change."

Perhaps it will because all good things come to those who wait. ■



Ken Golojuch, Tom Donovan, Charles Mitchell, Mark Diomedede and Jason Crosby

Solar Circus

BY TONI A. BROWN

Solar Circus is part of the burgeoning psychedelic improvisational music scene that has spawned the likes of Phish, Spin Doctors and Widespread Panic. Without the backing of a major record label, they have been able to maintain a steady touring schedule and have also put out four releases on the Relix label. Solar Circus solidified its brand of cosmic dance music when they formed in 1986. Their individual musical paths, however, go back a bit farther.

"My mother said I sang myself to sleep as a baby," says Mark Diomedede, the dark-haired lead guitarist of Solar Circus, about his earliest musical impulses. "I wanted my first guitar when I was ten years old. I started taking lessons, but then got into sports. When I was 13, I got into the guitar seriously. It was just the neighborhood guys — we called ourselves the Hexagonal Brainstorm. Then I was with a band, Alligator, that lasted for a couple of years. We performed lots of Grateful Dead, Jimmy Cliff, Airplane, Allmans." Diomedede then went on to play with the Last Wave where he found himself in a steadier musical situation. And he liked it.

When he was with Scarab, Diomedede met Ken Golojuch, a multi-instrumentalist who plays keyboards, guitar and bass. "[Keyboards were] my first instrument. I was self taught," says

Golojuch. "While I was in Scarab, and then the Last Wave, I felt that the bass was expressive, a very cool instrument. Due to cutbacks, I was laid off from my career in a drug research lab and with the severance pay I went out and bought a Fender bass. The early music I listened to was the Beatles, Stones, Motown, then the Dead. I'm very influenced by jazz. I like listening to Bela Fleck, Paul Simon, reggae and island music. The Rippingtons with Kim Stone on bass — they lock into the groove, and I love their tone."

Golojuch and Diomedede became friends and formed Solar Circus in 1986. After several years of personnel changes, the group has stabilized its line-up. Rhythm guitarist Tom Donovan and drummer Charles Mitchell joined the band in 1982 and 1983, respectively, and keyboardist Jason Crosby is the latest addition.

Donovan was recruited from Rumrunners and a band he'd formed, Freudian Slick. He got a call one night from his friend Dan Tepper, who happens to be Solar's engineer, asking if he was available to sit in with the band. "I had about two or three days on my own to learn from some live tapes Dan had given me. We had a rehearsal and then drove to Alabama and did a bunch of shows." He became an instant member.

Drummer Charles Mitchell's story is similar

to Donovan's. "I started playing rock 'n' roll fresh out of high school. Actually, it was a top forties group. I proceeded to go into a bunch of different styles of music — big band, straight ahead jazz. I went out to California in '88 and played with dozens of bands out there, freelancing up and down the West Coast. Family circumstances brought me back to the East Coast (Washington, DC). I had a rare Friday night off (from playing with a Latin jazz group), and I was practicing at my rehearsal studio and Mookie Siegel (an occasional keyboardist with Solar Circus) called me during my break, and said 'Can you be at the Grog & Tankard in 15 minutes? We have a gig for you.' I packed my gear up, went down to the club and found out the name of the group when I got there. It was Solar Circus.

"We finished that gig at the Grog & Tankard, and they asked me what I was doing the next afternoon. It was 3 a.m., so I said I was gonna sleep as late as I could. But they had other plans. We played for 3,500 people in Baltimore the next afternoon, and that night, we played in front of 700 people in Wildwood, NJ. So in less than 36 hours, I played in front of about 5,000 people. I did a tour with them right after that."

Solar Circus, however, doesn't always create a whirlwind to bring in new members. Crosby joined the band last October through mutual

acquaintances. Diomedes describes the turn of events. "He did a show with us last summer. A friend of ours told us about him and had suggested that we give him a try since he was such a phenomenon. We were doing six gigs a week during the summer, so it was really kind of hard to get together with him. We finally hooked up and we liked the way he sounded, so we figured, 'Well, let's see if he can deal with the road with us.' We did a tour of North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama. It sounded good, and we all got along, so we offered him the gig."

Elaborating on Crosby's capabilities, Diomedes adds, "He's got quite an extensive background of classical training. He's a classical violinist and can play almost any instrument in the string section. He plays horns as well, and has perfect pitch. He also sings. He's toured extensively. His classical ability on the keyboards is absolutely phenomenal. He's been playing since the age of four. Prodigy is probably a good word. It's nice for my situation because we have another soloist in the band, and that takes some of the pressure off of me, and it gives me something to work off of also."

Donovan agrees and feels that "Jason's influences will probably start to show themselves as soon as we can huddle up and get some rehearsal time. We don't have the luxury of rehearsing often because of how much we play."

And, for the uninitiated, what exactly is cosmic dance music? "I think we're defining that more as we go along," says Golojuch. "I think it refers to the fact that we're just trying to bring people together in this cosmic stew of life and spirituality. And anything that we can do that makes people happy, to me, is cosmic dance music. It just brings people together to communicate."

Solar Circus's rigorous road schedule has helped them develop a national appeal. They do very well in the south and have discovered a strong market in Colorado and California where it is not unusual for them to meet fans from the east. "We played in Boulder Creek, just outside of Santa Cruz. About 100 people in the bar were from the East Coast, saying 'I used to see you guys at this place, or that place,'" Donovan says. "Colorado was like that also."

When asked what they think of the success that bands with similar influences have found, such as Spin Doctors, Blues Traveler, Phish and Widespread Panic, Solar Circus is generous with its praise. "I think it's great for the music," remarks Diomedes. "I think the more that this music becomes popular, the better it is for all bands like us. Phish is certainly a great band."

"It's real music. At least from where I sit it's real music," agrees drummer Mitchell, enthusiastic about this musical development. "That's a positive thing. Like Mark said, it just creates a bigger market, and it helps us."

Diomedes maintains that even though similarities are inevitable, individuality is paramount. "I think [those bands have] got their own niche, like the Spin Doctors are different from Phish, and I think all bands have their own identity. I think the goal of a band would be to be associated within that group, and something that we'd love to have happen is to be on the H.O.R.D.E. tour this summer. We feel that our music fits right into that, but we're still trying to be ourselves. And I think what the other bands are doing, they're trying to be themselves, too."

With respect to the video market, Diomedes adds, "I realize that MTV is a huge commercial

market, and I really enjoy video. I used to work for my dad, who has a huge video production company, so I would love to do some visual stuff, along with some of our music. Conceptualize it a bit. I think it's a whole other area of creativity that the band can get into."

Early on, Solar Circus was a Grateful Dead cover band. When asked if that association has helped or hindered its success, the band was quick to respond. "I think that it was good in a lot of ways, probably more positive than negative," replies Diomedes. "It had some negative response in that some people still consider us a Grateful Dead cover band, and I think Solar Circus is a lot more than that. In that way, it may have hurt us a little bit. The positives, which I feel outweigh the negatives, is that it gave us some popularity in the Grateful Dead music scene and connected us to people who appreciate this kind of music that we play. We really haven't been doing cover tunes since Tom's been in the band because he brought in a lot of great songs."

Donovan is quick to point out that being influenced by the Grateful Dead does not mean continually covering the same tunes. "It was a good jumping off point. I think that the only negative is that occasionally an individual will come out to the show expecting a Grateful Dead cover band, and when we don't do any Grateful Dead tunes that night, they might say, 'We thought you guys were gonna do "Box Of Rain,"' and we really don't do the cover thing. Unless we're feeling kinda strange that night or something."

Jamming and improvising in the classic Dead style does, however, mean listening to your partners. "For me, the thing about the Grateful Dead is it is what it is. I think musicians grow as they get older," remarks Golojuch. "Like Tom said, that was a great starting off point for us. That taught our band to listen to each other. And even when you look at other styles of music, that's the thing that keeps coming up...people can say 'sure, you can have great chops, and you can do all this,' but the concept and the art of listening to people, and being able to play with people like that, that's an art. And I think that's something we developed. To be able to listen. So you can play music that changes in its own way from night to night. And that makes it interesting because you're always listening, and you're always reacting. And that's a lot of fun."

Donovan continues, "I think that probably the reason why Ken, Mark and I got into improvisation through the Dead was because we didn't have the chops at that early time. We weren't able to pull out the Coltrane type stuff or the Miles Davis stuff, or anything like that."

While Diomedes is an extraordinary guitarist in his own right, you can't help but hear Jerry Garcia's influence when he lets the music fly. When asked if he hears that in his sound, Mark responded by saying, "I think that we're growing out of it, and those comparisons aren't made as much, but I think that maybe one of the reasons that comes out in our playing is that having experienced *them* at such a young age has left an imprint. At times of inspiration on-stage, it probably comes out."

The Dead has also inspired many, Solar Circus included, to do away with pre-packaged programs and predictable sets. "They paved

the path as far as I'm concerned," Mitchell says. "They're the pinnacle if you're looking for improvisational rock 'n' roll in your lifetime. If you're looking for something different as a seeker out here on the planet, you have a tendency to gravitate to different types of things. And the Grateful Dead are definitely a different type of music. I like improvising, and that's what Solar Circus is all about. You can find improvisation in two forms of music, mainstream jazz or improvisational rock 'n' roll. That's what Solar Circus does best. They have an uncanny ability to work off each other spontaneously. Webster's dictionary defines improvising as composing and arranging spontaneously. And

Solar Circus

Solar does that better than any band I've been with in the rock 'n' roll genre. It's real important for me to have that in my music, and that's why I'm with the band."

New directions keep coming up all the time. "I think the Grateful Dead is a good starting point that we all have in common. But I also see us learning other styles, and learning from different styles, also," surmises Golojuch. "I think we saw the Grateful Dead and we started there, and we looked at what they were doing, and we took almost all we can take from it. And now we're looking at other styles of music and learning. I think having Charles and Jason in the band has really catapulted us to another level because they have a lot of the (formal) training that we lacked as a band. That training is a form of communication that I, as a musician, am trying to explore. So the Grateful Dead was a good starting point, but there's just so much other stuff to be learned out there. That's the direction we're taking so we can find ourselves, and continue to grow as musicians."

The Grateful Dead blends together a potpourri of musical forms, and Mitchell believes that "Having those guys as a starting point and a big influence in the beginning was like having six or seven different genres of music, because they were like a melting pot of so many different styles. Having that influence, you have bluegrass, country, jazz, blues, rock 'n' roll, all stuff that were the Grateful Dead's influences. So when you have the Grateful Dead as an influence, all that other stuff comes with it."

Solar Circus maintains a high intensity, which is clearly visible in its more than 250 shows a year. "I think [the inspiration] comes from a real love of what we're playing, and what we're doing, and wanting to continue to do it. That's the energy that you go on," Golojuch concludes. "The fun that we have together as a group, and the friends that we make, and the places that we see because of it, and the music itself. We do a lot of work in terms of booking ourselves, and we take care of our own finances. We put all of this work into it, and then the reward is getting on stage and finally getting to play the music, and just loving that so much. That's what keeps us going."

The Solar Circus concert hotline is 908-721-4956.

music that matters

LOOKING BACK WITH PETE SEARS

BY MICK SKIDMORE

Bob Minkin



Pete Sears may best be known to *Relix* readers as a former band member of Jefferson Starship and, more recently, in his dual role as keyboard player for Hot Tuna and Zero. But there's much more to Sears than that, both in terms of his music and persona. He has long been a committed social and political activist and is widely considered a musician's musician, having played on over 60 major albums.

Although Sears has been an important figure within the Bay Area musical community for the past two decades (he's played at and helped organize many worthy benefit concerts), his career, which began in his native England, has crossed some interesting paths.

He first played in the Biggin Hill area of southern England in the same halls as other "amateur" musicians such as David Bowie nee David Jones, and Peter Frampton. Sears's first serious band was an R&B and blues-influenced outfit named Sons of Fred, which started in 1965. Also in the band was guitarist Mick Hutchinson. "A really brilliant guitarist. He still has something of an underground following even today," recalled Sears in a recent interview. The band toured the U.K. and some parts of Europe and released a couple of singles.

Those days were his early training, as he explained. "It was a good experience. I really didn't have much time to practice at home. We played six or seven nights a week, so it was like practicing in front of an audience. The singles we put out were a little poppy though."

After that he played in a band called Fleur de Lys. Joining him were Phil Sawyer, who replaced Stevie Winwood in the Spencer Davis Band, Gordon Haskell (King Crimson bassist) and guitarist Bryn Haworth who later had minor solo star success in England.

Of the earliest groups, however, Sam Gopal's Dream, which surfaced around the time of the burgeoning psychedelic era, elicits the warmest response from Sears. It was a rather eclectic, psychedelic trio that centered around Indian tabla player Sam Gopal. Guitarist Hutchinson was also in the band. He played Indian ragas on guitar while Sears played a droning tambura-style organ and bass.

The musical inspiration for the trio came when Sears was in the latter days of Fleur de Lys. He

recalled, "There was this club, the UFO, where lots of strange people were hanging out, wearing blankets and bells long before it became a trend. We also went down to see Pink Floyd at the Marquee Club (a famous London club). At the time, we didn't know who they were. We had just heard something about them, and it was completely different. We had been playing Motown and Stax, Booker T type stuff, and suddenly there's this very weird band (fronted by Syd Barrett). It was great. It was intense. We sort of did our snobby musician's thing. 'It'll never catch on.' But it actually had a profound effect on me. I really saw something there that attracted me."

This attraction and freedom manifested itself in Sam Gopal's Dream. "We used to live in this club in Covent Garden called the Middle Earth. We had nowhere to stay so they'd lock us in the club at night, and we'd play and jam. Graham Bond was there a lot, and he influenced me considerably on the organ. He was a great B-3 player," said Sears.

The late Graham Bond was, for the uninitiated, along with Alexis Koerner and John Mayall, an important influence on the British blues and R&B scene. Musicians such as Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce, Coliseum's Jon Hiseman and John McLaughlin came up through the ranks of his bands. Both Sears and Hutchinson sat in on occasion with Bond, and were, in fact, asked to join his band. Although it never happened, Hutchinson did record with Bond on his 1972 album, *Two Heads Are Better Than One*.

One of Sears's most treasured memories of Sam Gopal's Dream was when Jimi Hendrix sat in with them at the Speakeasy Club in London. "I don't know what he thought of the rest of us, but he liked Sam Gopal." He remembers someone taping the show on a reel-to-reel machine. Ironically, that show is one of the band's only performances that was recorded, although the BBC also has something in its archives from when the band appeared as part of a *Christmas On Earth* show, which also featured Hendrix, Traffic and Pink Floyd.

Reflecting further on Sam Gopal's Dream, Sears said, "We used to play for hours and hours. Some of the most profound musical experiences I have had were in that band. In retrospect, I wish we had recorded with Sam. It would have been something to look back on. I gauge a lot of my musical experiences using that as a point of reference. It was a really good

band." (Note: Sam Gopal did record with an entirely different band of the same name.) The Indian influence resurfaced for Sears when he played his show-stopping bass solos on "Have You Seen The Saucers" with the Starship.

After the demise of Sam Gopal's Dream, Sears immersed himself in session work. He played on albums by such artists as the blues rock band, Steamhammer. Guitarist Martin Quittenton, who also later played with Rod Stewart, was a member of that group.

After that, Sears played with various people. "At one point I put together a band with Jackie McAuley, the original guitarist with Them, and Judy Dyble, the original singer from Fairport Convention. I used to hang out a lot with Pete Brown, the lyricist (Graham Bond, Cream), but then I came over to America. I'd met Leigh Stephens (guitarist for Blue Cheer), and he said if I was ever in the United States to look him up."

Sears took Stephens at his word, and with virtually no cash he made his way to Los Angeles. Shortly thereafter, they formed a band called Silvermetre. That band, which included drummer Mickey Waller and vocalist Jack Reynolds, cut one album for National General in 1969.

Sears then returned to England and ironically ended up joining the San Francisco band Stoneground, the revolving hippie band that was part of the Hog Farm, Medicine Ball Caravan troupe, who at the time were touring Europe. "That was the first time I met Wavy Gravy



Jefferson Starship — Grace Slick, Paul Kantner, Marty Balin, Craig Chaquico, David Freiberg, Pete Sears and John Barbata

who is now a good friend. He's a really good person and a very entertaining fellow. He does a lot of work for various causes, including Camp Winnarainbow. (Sears's son Dylan is a counselor there.) They have kids from all over the country, even the world, coming there. A real mix, some scholarships for inner city kids, along with kids that pay to go. They live in teepees. It's really a great thing."

Stoneground also included musicians Sal

Valentino (ex-Beau Brummels); drummer Sammy Piazza (Hot Tuna); guitarist John Blakely (Country Joe Band); vocalists Annie Simpson, Lydia Philips and Lynn Hughes; and a host of others. They went on to record a number of albums, although Sears only played on the band's first self-titled album (released in 1971). He insists that it wasn't a good representation of Stoneground's sound.

After leaving Stoneground, Sears again returned to England, this time to record with Rod Stewart on *Gasoline Alley*. Over the next four or five years, Sears did a fair amount of transatlantic commuting to play on other notable Stewart albums such as *Every Picture Tells A Story*, *Never A Dull Moment* and *Smiler*, as well as playing for a while in a jazz-oriented band with Quittenton.

A U.S. tour as bassist for Long John Baldry followed before Sears hooked up with John Cipollina in one of his first post-Quicksilver ventures, Copperhead. Sears left, however, before the band recorded its debut album.

He did manage, though, to co-produce and arrange the music for Kathi MacDonald's (formerly of Ike & the Ikettes and post-Janis Joplin Big Brother) album, *Insane Asylum* (Capitol). Also participating on this album, among others, were the Tower of Power Horns, Greg Douglass, Papa John Creach, John Cipollina, Nils Lofgren, Neal Schon, the Pointer Sisters, Ronnie Montrose, Sly Stone and Aynsley Dunbar. Somewhere in-between, Sears produced one side of the unreleased Terry Dolan album that he did for Warner Brothers.

It was during the recording of MacDonald's album that Sears met Paul Kantner and Grace Slick. He later played on Slick's *Manhole* album and eventually wound up in Jefferson Starship. "It was a bit of a departure from what I had been doing with Rod and Martin. Playing with David Freiberg was a pleasure. We'd switch back and forth on keyboards and bass. I think that Jefferson Starship in the '70s wasn't a great band, but it was an honest band. It had some good songs and was a good live band. Then it started getting produced to death. The record company hired L.A. producers. In the '80s it gradually began to go down hill, but the band let it happen. It was the band's fault, mine included. There was pressure from the record companies to get that commercial pop sound," recalls Sears. "The producers brought in wads of cassettes of songs by outside writers — good songs, but they weren't the Starship. It became something else entirely. The record producer came along with a Synclavier and programmed everything. It became sterile. It lost its rough edge. What's wrong with a rough edge? It adds guts. I'm not knocking people that want to do that. There is room for everything. It just wasn't what I wanted to do."

Although the Starship eventually lost its identity, it had been a great live band that released some very memorable music. Consequently, I asked Sears why they never recorded live. "It's a good question really. There was a video out, but it wasn't a very good show."

Sears was a member of Starship for 13 years,

but his interest waned when its sound and focus. He elaborated, "The last years were a nightmare. They tried to make everyone dress like Duran Duran. I can't relate to that style thing. We didn't really get the opportunity to play and jam."

As a reaction to the adverse latter years of the Starship, Sears recorded his first solo album. *Watchfire* is a wonderfully personal musi-

footage of the band playing live in the studio is footage of the poverty and hardship these people lived with, as well as some of the atrocities of the military dictatorship at the time.

Watchfire was originally released on Redwood Records, an environmentally slanted label, but has recently been reissued on Grateful Dead Records. (If you don't already own this album, it is highly recommended. Call the GDM hotline at 1-800-225-3323 or order by mail from Grateful Dead Merchandising, P.O. Box X, Novato, CA 94948.)

"Redwood, which is now called the Redwood Community Center, did a really good job given the limited distribution. They were really into helping the community and human rights issues," said Sears. He now hopes the album will get a little more exposure. "I just wanted to have it available again."

Some of Sears's many friends lent their musical services to the project. Players include the late great John Cipollina, Jerry Garcia, Mickey Hart, Babatunde Olatunji, David Grisman and vocalists Holly Near, Kitty Beethoven (a great soul singer) and Mimi Farina. Not only did Sears do his best to bring these important issues to light, but he also donated a portion of his royalties to a variety of non-profit

organizations, which he continues to do with the reissue.

Reflecting on the *Watchfire* album, Sears said, "It was very refreshing. The last years of the Starship were very emotional in a way. Most of *Watchfire* was recorded live in the studio. I surrounded myself with a lot of my really good friends. They were all players and musicians I respected a lot. They were all in it for the music. Garcia was really good through the whole thing. (Trivia note: Sears originally

met Garcia at the first live broadcast of KSAN in 1971 during a jam session that included Weir, John & Mario Cipollina and Hart.) Mickey Hart was also very supportive. Even the studio, Bayview in Richmond, California, where it was recorded, was great. Steve Suda, the owner, liked the material and the subject matter and was very supportive. He is one of those rare people you come across in the music industry, and he has a very good studio."

Although Sears didn't tour to promote the *Watchfire* album, he did play a few shows here and there with Peter Rowan and longtime friend and great bluesman Nick Gravenites, as well as a couple of folk things with Mimi Farina and Banana.

He then started playing with Zero and appears on *Zero And Beyond - Live At The Great American Music Hall 4/2/93*. "I had been playing with them for about a year, and I bumped into Jorma [Kaukonen]," said Sears. "I hadn't see him for years and years."



Hot Tuna

cal statement that touches on a wide variety of musical styles — Celtic harps, Latin rhythms, mandolins, blues guitar, Scottish bagpipes and Andean flutes — all nestled comfortably together. More importantly, the songs (mostly with lyrics by his wife and longtime collaborator Jeanette) deal poignantly and passionately with important world issues ranging from the plight of Guatemalan Indians, the depletion of the rainforests and just plain peace and harmony.

The Searses became deeply involved in the Guatemalan cause and even visited the country. Sears still speaks passionately on the subject. "Two thirds of arable land was in the hands of two percent of the population...whole villages were being wiped out by death squads."

One of Sears's finest musical and most powerful political statements is a ten-minute video tape of the song "Guatemala" from the album. He and Jeanette got together with the Emmy-winning film and documentary makers Ray Telles and Mark Adler to form Watchfire Productions, a non-profit organization. They managed to raise money for various foundations including the Rex Foundation. The video, which was sponsored by the Earth Island Institute, was used by many worldwide human rights organizations to help bring wider attention to the cause. Interspersed between



Pete Sears & Nick Gravenites

I was playing at a Wavy Gravy 'Blues Against Blindness' benefit. I volunteered to play blues piano in the cafeteria where all the musicians were. I was playing away, rambling dinner music, blues and things. Jorma comes up and says they are recording an album at the Sweetwater the next night and did I want to come and sit in."

Sears never got a chance to rehearse with Tuna, but did sit in. The results of that night can be heard on *Live At Sweetwater Volumes One and Two*, which feature some memorable, if spontaneous, contributions from him. Before too long, he was enlisted as a full-time member of Hot Tuna. His keyboard playing has really given the band another dimension.

"We had a really good time doing it (the Sweetwater shows)," Sears explained, adding, "It was very evident that Jorma, Jack and Michael were so obviously in it for the music. There's no pretensions. You just play. They have a real depth and honesty to what they do, which is refreshing to me, and they are playing the kind of music I started out playing. There is a real chemistry on-stage with Hot Tuna. It happens with Zero also. Steve Kimock is a great guitarist, and Martin Fierro is a wonderful musician and human being. Things are starting to happen for Zero. We recently played at the Great American Music Hall, and they were turning people away."

Sears is currently deep into the recording of his next album, which he says will be a little more upbeat and rocking than its predecessor, although he hopes to include a mix of folk and



Pete Sears

blues, and some blues piano instrumentals. It will be released on Grateful Dead Records. Jorma Kaukonen and David Grisman have already laid down tracks with him. Garcia will also play on it. The album will be engineered and co-produced by Paul Stubblebine who did the first one with him. Jeanette Sears is writing the bulk of the lyrics, although Sears has started collaborating with Robert Hunter on several songs (he played on Hunter's *Tiger Rose*).

In addition to playing with Hot Tuna and Zero, he plays on occasion with the Nick Gravenites Blues Band. "He's an old friend. We have a lot of fun playing together," says Sears. He also played on the first album by Zakir Hooker, John Lee Hooker's daughter, and is working with Hooker's guitarist, Rich Kirch, on an album that'll also include Charlie Musselwhite

and Hooker. There has also been some talk of doing sessions with Blues Traveler. Ultimately, Sears would like to have an ongoing solo career in addition to playing with Hot Tuna and Zero. In the meantime, he's playing music that matters while managing to pay the bills.

Some of the other benefit events that Sears has been involved with include the Inter-tribal Bison Cooperative, which he helped organize the music for along with Chris Bowman, Coran Chapshaw and Mike O'Brien of Virginia. It included musical contributions from Bob Weir, Rob Wasserman, Jorma Kaukonen and Michael Falzarano, and Chris Whitley, along with a number of important Native American figures such as

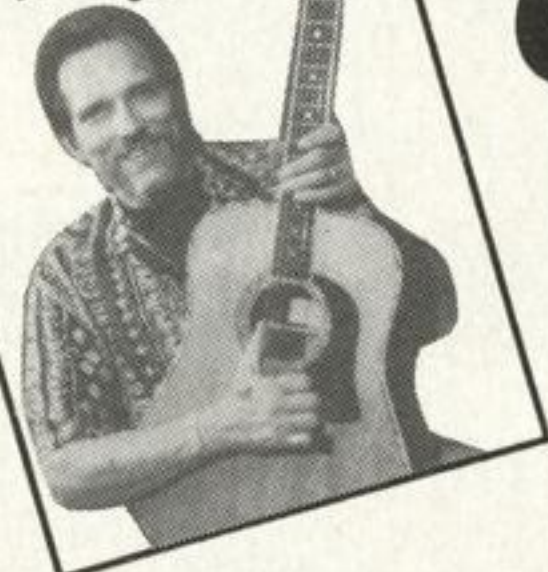
Rick Williams, who speaks on raising buffalo on Indian land, and singer Chante. Sears also organized the 15 musicians for the 1988 Soviet-American Peace Walk (which drew 20,000 people) as well as a benefit for Brian Wilson, the guy who lost his legs when a train ran over him at the Concord Weapons Station. Sears also serves on the Board of Directors of the Endangered Peoples Project and the Native American Sustainable Agricultural Fund of Northern Arizona.

Unquestionably, Sears is one of the most amiable musicians around. From his roadie/equipment manager Rick Childs, to his musical peers, he pays attention to everything that's going on around him and has the deepest respect for all the people he works with. ■

JORMA KAUKONEN

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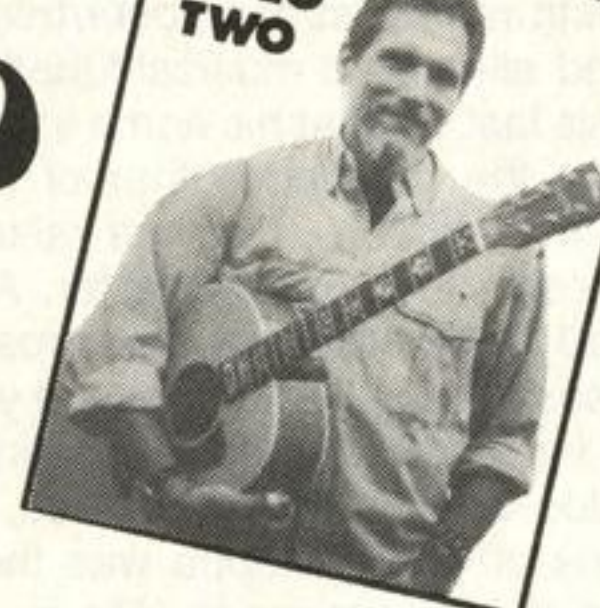
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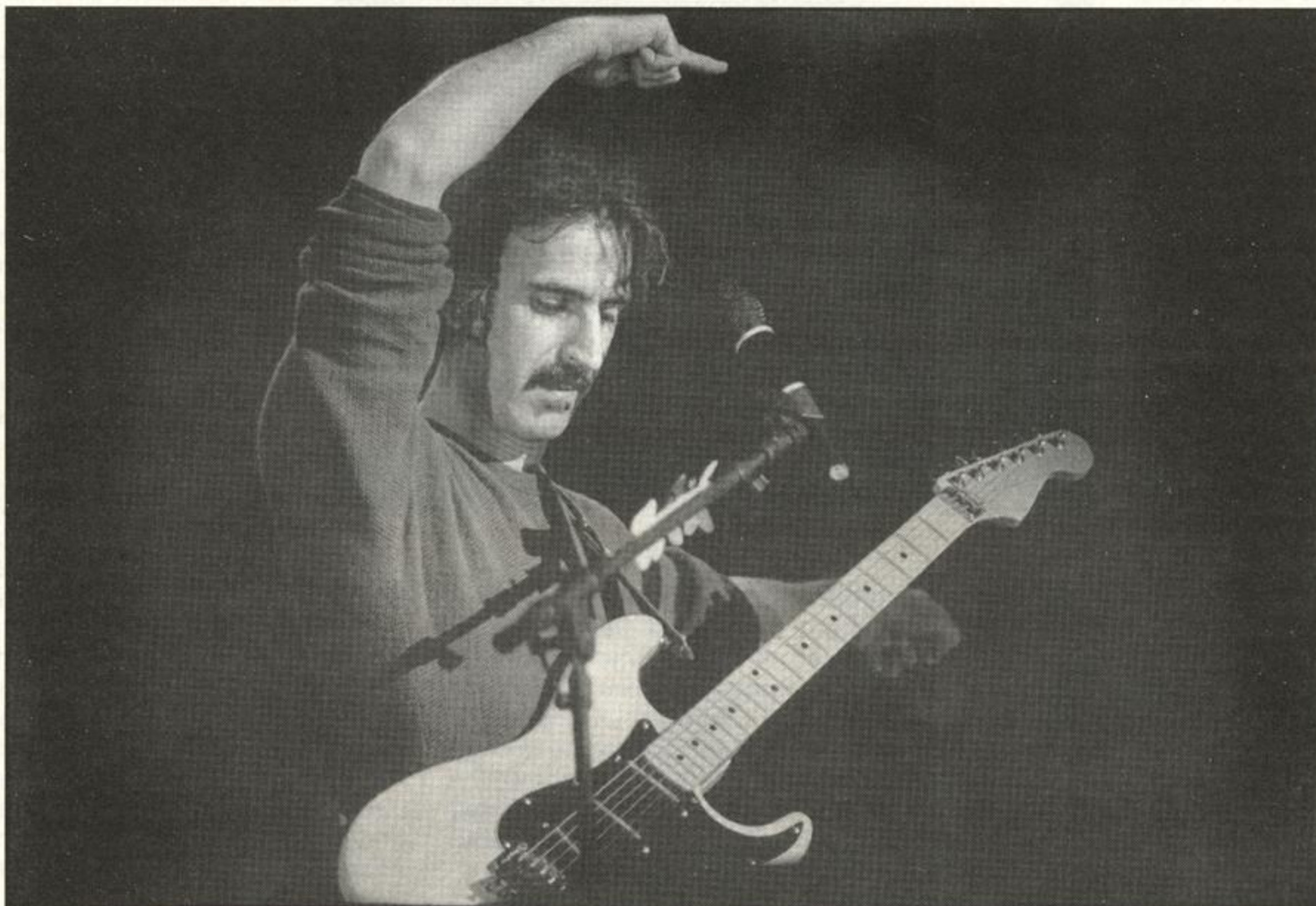
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Ron Delany



AN APPRECIATION

FOREVER FRANK

Frank Zappa Master of Weirdness & Fine Culture

BY ROGER LEN SMITH

The rock world, and the world at large, lost one of its most original and fiercely independent musicians this past December: Frank Vincent Zappa.

Multi-instrumentalist/composer/free-speech activist and all-around musical lunatic, Zappa lived out his last days at his home in Los Angeles. Zappa, the original Mother of Invention, was born in Baltimore, but was raised in the Mojave Desert town of Lancaster. At 52, he succumbed to complications from prostate cancer, a disease he battled for several years.

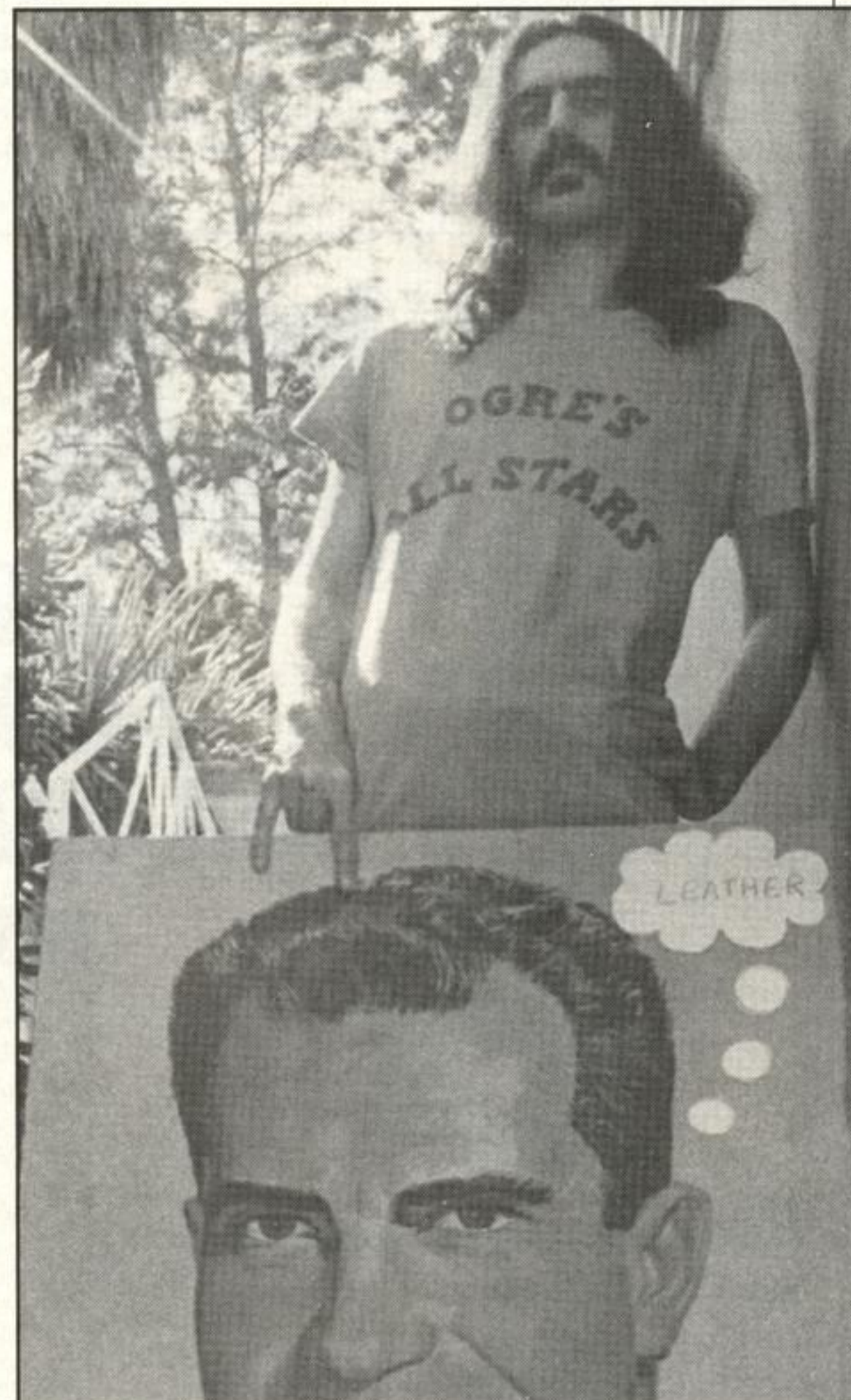
Known for his humorous and satirical slant on rock, doo-wop, rhythm and blues, jazz and other forms of music, Zappa was the human equivalent of *Mad* magazine. His best-known albums include romps through popular culture with such provocative titles as *Freak Out*, *We're Only In It For The Money*, *Chunga's Revenge*, *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*, *You Are What You Is*, *Sheik Yerbouti* and countless others.

Rarely did Zappa put out a project that wasn't noteworthy or scathing to one idiom or another. His insightfully silly lyrics made fun of almost every tradition in pop music, and culture at large, with songs like "Cosmik Debris," "Stinkfoot," "Crew Slut," "Jewish Princess" and "He's So Gay." He cast a warped eye on evangelists and politicians such as Pat Robertson

("Jesus Thinks You're A Jerk"), Jesse Jackson ("Rhymin' Man") and Richard Nixon ("Dickie's Such an Asshole"). Clearly, few were off limits.

The long-haired, lanky Zappa was the wittiest, most free-thinking black humorist this side of Lenny Bruce. "A perfectionist, a mad genius, you know, it all goes together," says Bunk Gardner, an original member of Zappa's first incarnation of Mothers of Invention, which lasted from 1966 through 1969 and started Zappa's recorded career with *Freak Out*. "Always critiquing. It was difficult, but musically the challenge was really that kind [that] inspired everybody."

Zappa put a new Mothers band together in 1971 that was responsible for such wacky cult favorites as *Just Another Band From L.A.* and the surreal yet parodic rock film, *200 Motels*. (Incidentally, three of the original Mothers — Don Preston on keyboards, Jimmy Carl Black on drums and Bunk Gardner on woodwinds and keyboards — have since reformed, added Rene Moritz on bass and Sandro Oliva on guitar, and now call themselves the Grandmothers of Invention.)



In 1985, Zappa cropped his hair and put on a business suit to go eye-to-eye with the pretentious, politically-correct, right-wing Washington Wives, better known as the PMRC or the Parents Music Resource Center. Zappa testified at



Frank Zappa and Friends

a senate subcommittee against the labeling of rock albums (aka censorship) that the PMRC claimed were turning America's youth to the Devil.

"If you're going to count murders and connect it with music," Zappa told *Relix* in 1986, "then many more people died because of (composer) Wagner than Motley Crue...because of Hitler. They've banned Wagner in Israel because of that.

"Look at the communist countries where you don't have this kind of music, do you think that they have violence, erratic behavior, unwed mothers and everything else? Sure they do. Why pin it on rock 'n' roll? The answer is simple; it's politics."

While Zappa may have been fighting censorship to protect the freedom of rock 'n' roll lyrics and free speech in music, he was also very honest about his motives. "I've got a personal stake in all this," Zappa told journalist Josef Woodard in 1986. "I'm a record company owner, I'm a composer, I'm a publisher, I'm an artist, and these people are fucking with my business...I went there speaking as a private individual on my own behalf, not on behalf of the industry, not on behalf of any other artists, just me as a businessman. In a true conservative attitude, I want the federal government off my back."

Typically witty, Zappa put his battle in the halls of Congress on record with *Frank Zappa Meets The Mothers Of Prevention*, a bizarre blend of legislator's words and other excerpts bound together by segments of electronic music.

Zappa's aptly named record companies throughout the years, Bizarre, Straight and Barking Pumpkin, were the composer's recording home for most of his career. It would be hard to imagine Zappa's satirical and often sexually explicit material on a traditional record label. With over 60 albums in his catalog, Zappa put out nearly an album a year, successfully steering his way into radically different musical mediums: rhythm and blues, avant-garde classical, jazz and about every style of rock invented.

Rhino Records, the independent label that distributes everything from folk to punk rock, has joined the Zappa empire and will distribute all of the Barking

people to act like that. I think Valley Girls are disgusting."

Zappa, whose lone Grammy was for 1986's *Jazz From Hell*, never tired of challenging mainstream musical boundaries with his eclectic material. He always operated outside of the norm, yet maintained a strong and ever-growing cult following that kept track of everything he did.

Live, Zappa was irreverent and precise. His guitar playing generally meant ten-to-fifteen minute solos through various scales that transcended the word groove. And, simply put, he was one hell of a guitar player. His bands were always tight, propelled by top-level musicians. To name but a few, the list includes guitarists Adrian Belew and Steve Vai, crazed singers Flo and Eddie, keyboardist George Duke, violinist Jean-Luc Ponty and drummers Terry Bozzio and Chad Wackerman. Countless quality pickers, strummers, singers and such have gradu-

Pumpkin catalog by the beginning of 1995.

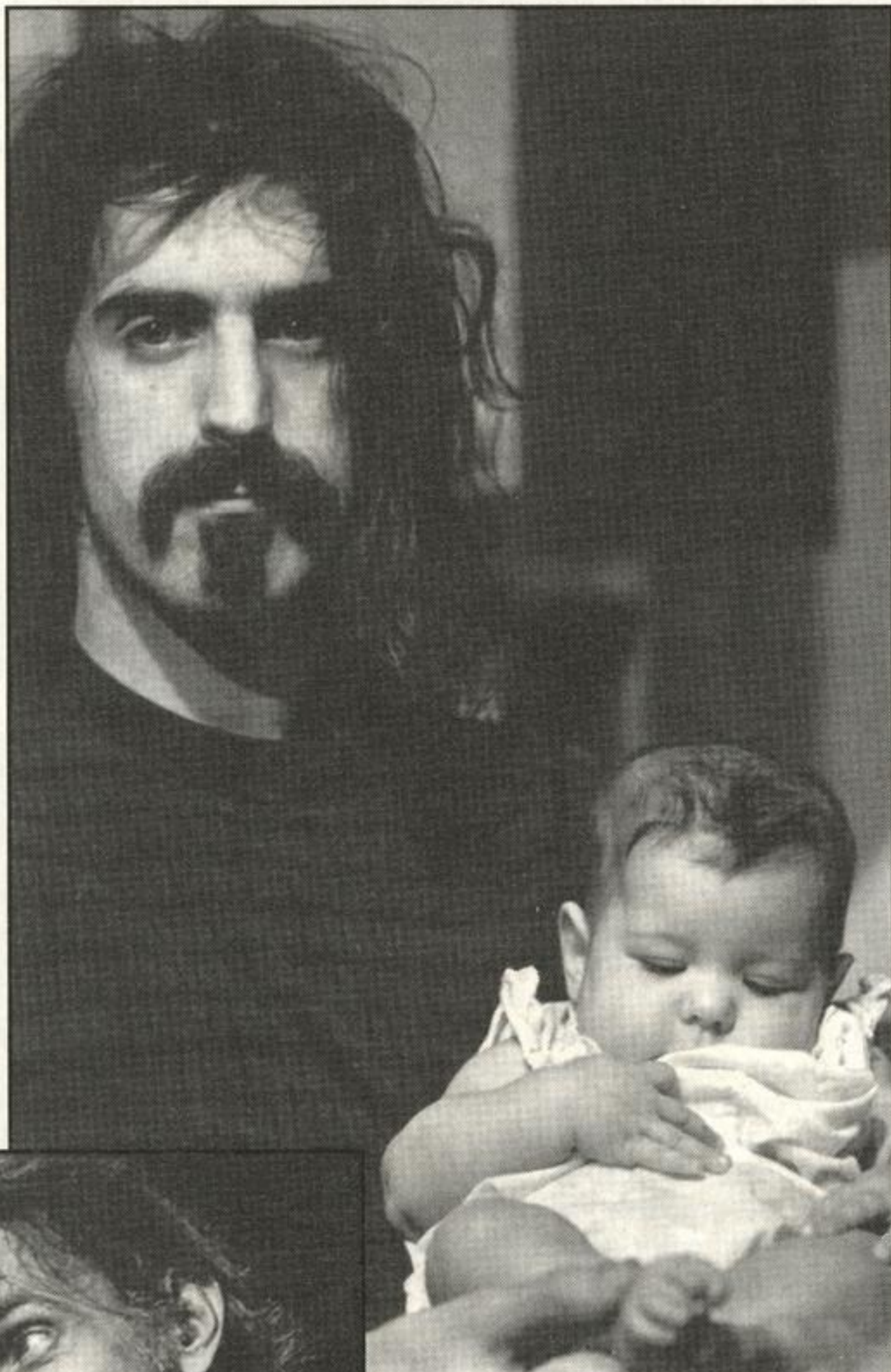
Zappa's career was never in sync with the music industry at large, nor was he particularly concerned about it. Scoring minor AOR hits with 1974's "Don't Eat The Yellow Snow" (actually an AM radio "hit") and 1979's "Dancin' Fool," Zappa's airwave presence was more an accident than anything.

"It was a joke," he told the *Washington Post* about 1982's "Valley Girl," a duet with daughter Moon Unit that became Zappa's biggest FM hit. "It just goes to show that the American public loves to celebrate the infantile. I mean, I don't want

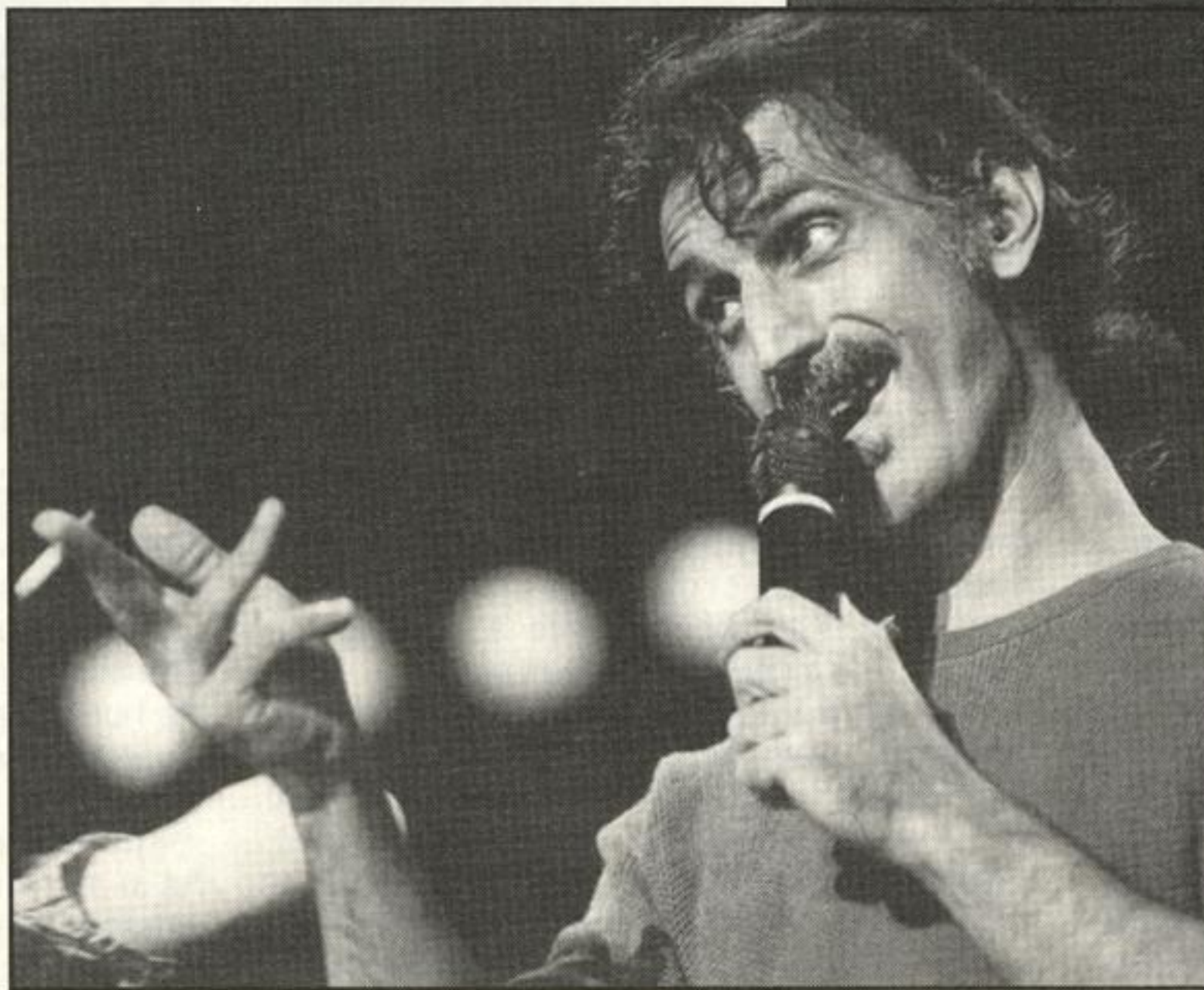
ated from Zappa's Hall of Craziess.

Always businesslike, Zappa provided his fans with dictionary-like descriptions of the songs on his albums, which usually featured his own material, sometimes in collaboration with fellow musicians. In the case of his many live albums, Zappa would frequently hop over classic cover songs, be they hard rock ("Stairway To Heaven," "Whipping Post"), standards or classical pieces ("Bolero," "I Left My Heart In San Francisco") or even country gems ("Ring Of Fire").

In his later years, Zappa focused on the Synclavier, a computer driven synthesizer that samples real instruments, and "serious" classical music, a form he had studied throughout his career. Inspired by such avant-garde twentieth century composers as Edgar Varese and John Cage, Zappa longed to hear his classical compositions performed. Released two months before his death, *The Yellow Shark* was Zappa's swan song, a pastiche of sounds he created for



Frank Zappa with daughter Moon Unit



the German classical group Ensemble Modern.

Though he recently told NBC's *Today Show* that he didn't want to be "remembered," Zappa will not be forgotten, nor will his seemingly endless reserve of creative genius or his unique approach to music and popular culture. No one has ever pushed the boundaries of rock so far, while maintaining such a high standard of music. In the end, Zappa's weird genius will remain forever Frank.

How I survived Rock 'n' Roll and discovered fame without guilt

BY TOM CONSTANTEN

It was like a glimpse of Rock 'n' Roll Heaven. A galaxy of stars in one room, a name dropper's paradise, schmoozarama. The 1994 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony was a mammoth event, the kind that brings out the P. T. Barnum in you when you try to describe it.

It was below zero in New York that January evening, but inside the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel a blaze of music, memories and souls was about to ignite. The Waldorf-Astoria, fabled in song and salad, synonymous with class and prestige, even insists on the double hyphen.

The magnitude of the event got to everyone, invitees and inductees alike. Where else would Paul McCartney read a rambling, touchingly personal love letter to John Lennon before presenting an award to Yoko Ono, or Jeff Beck clarify his love-hate relationship with Rod Stewart whose award he was accepting? Levon Helm even looked good by not showing up.

As in the oft-imagined afterlife, there were the reunions with old friends and the making of new ones. If I could do it, I'd have picked up the needle at the end of the evening and played it over. At least once. It went by so fast, and there was so much to catch up on. I hadn't spent so much time with my friends in the band in years. To see Phil, mellowing like an imperial cognac, or Mickey, in his glory back in his old stomping grounds, was worth the trip already. Vince I'd seen a couple of times backstage at recent shows, but that just made it all the better to see him again. But then to catch up with Bill's underwater explorations and Bob's ventures in Central America was like awakening in the most pleasant sense.

The festivities started, for me at least, in Dennis McNally's (the Dead's publicist) hotel suite. He did his exalted dance by shuttling and juggling interviewers and interviewees between the two rooms and the several radio and television crews that were there. Bob extolled the value of fruit bats as pets to Mickey as the cameras set up, then went on to explain his aversion to tie-dye to the interviewer. Phil was his usual articulate self, renewing his answers every time a new microphone was clipped on him. Mickey raved on about the many reasons for the importance of it happening in New York.

There was even tape left over for a question or two for me. It felt nice to be included.

A brief moment to freshen up, and it was time for cocktails and **The Main Event**. The hotel staff, evidently used to biddable corporate types or docile conventioners, took more than half

You can read elsewhere who presented the awards to whom and what was said in acceptance. I was too buzzed to keep it all straight, although I was quite alert for the moment when Dennis beckoned me to the side for our walk backstage. The time had come! We were led



Hornsby, Hart, Lesh, Kreutzmann, Weir, Constanten and Welnick

an hour of "please sit down so we can start the dinner service" announcements before the aisles were clear enough to serve the food. Among the people seated at the table with Beth and me were the Bruce Hornsbys and the former Mrs. Brent Mydland. I'd never had the pleasure of meeting her before, although I'd encountered Brent briefly. We hobb-nobbed with Paul Shaffer, a couple of members of the Spin Doctors, and Willie Dixon's wife and daughter. Somehow it all seemed so easy.

And we weren't the only ones socializing. There's no way to calculate how much wheeling, dealing, cajoling and hand-shaking went on. It was a super-party with industry execs, artists and every manner of middlemen pressing the flesh and their points. It could've gone on for hours, but for one obstacle: the show.

through the big doors at stage-right, past the kitchen ("It really is like *Spinal Tap*!" quipped Phil) and around to the hall behind the steps to the stage. And there was Bruce Hornsby, brilliantly expostulating on the band's history and significance, trying to keep a straight face while Bob and Phil gesticulated. Then up the steps to the presentation, and around to the press room for the questions and flash bulbs. Meanwhile, on-stage Bono waxed poetic on Bob Marley. The things you miss when you're in the eye of the hurricane. And then, not even stopping for a cigarette, back to our seats for the rest of the show.

The encores were (your superlative here)! As in an all-star game, the players made it an extraordinary event. Bob Weir was joined by Bruce Hornsby and Bill Kreutzmann (as well as

Chuck Berry, Paul Shaffer and the CBS Orchestra, and a few others) in a comfortably moving "Wang Dang Doodle." I listened hard to pick out Bruce's solo. It really didn't make me feel any better to see somebody else's underamplification problems. (Doesn't anyone know how to mix keyboards?) In any case, what I could hear of his playing was stunning.

The stage changes were quick and efficient, scarcely five minutes between tunes. It was like the way they shuttle players in and out of old-timers games, inning by inning. Except, of course, these "old-timers" hadn't lost anything off their fastball. Chuck Berry rolled over Beethoven one more time, Ziggy Marley got us all together and feeling all right, Axl Rose and Bruce Springsteen "Came Together," and Eric Clapton finally got his wish and joined the Band for the grand finale, "The Weight."

Four quick hours were suddenly over.

But not the evening. Up in Bob Weir's suite, Our Band was roasting and toasting. Phil's smile looked permanent. John Popper reached into his bandolero and presented harmonicas to his admirers (Beth and I both got one), and SNL comedian Tom Davis contributed his soul-loosening bon-mots. As if I needed another honor, I finally got to meet John Barlow.

After a while, a few of us went up to the 37th floor to Phil Spector's suite, where another party was in progress. As we walked in, Chuck Berry was at the grand piano. Now, take it from me, Chuck Berry is not a pianist. But he is a musician, and he practically has a patent on the I-IV-V chord progression and its permutations. So his playing made sense and had a lot of charm and sophistication for all its rambling and occasional fits and starts. He was about to

leave when Phil Spector stopped him, wanting to play a duet. Now, Phil Spector is neither a pianist nor a musician, judging from the abortive attempts to get his boogie off the ground. "You take the high part," Chuck Berry suggested, and it worked — for about two bars. At that point, Berry made the most delicate, courteous, quickest exit I've ever seen. With Beth's prodding, I filled the void at the piano and got through "Dejavalse" and "Boris The Spider" pretty well, according to people's responses. Then Spector wanted the piano back. It was time for an Elvis tribute.

I'd love to have gone on playing, but hey, the man definitely earned his way there, and it was his party, too. There was plenty of euphoria to go around.

With visions of sugarplums, the evening really ended. It was a dizzying honor, one that was hard to comprehend. The real honor, though, was in my friends inviting me. I wondered why they had. They'd never heard me in playing shape, well prepared, playing an instrument I felt comfortable with. And they've given me much more, in many senses, than I could ever repay.

All I can do is chalk it up to their great good nature. For all their wisecracks and sarcasm, that's what I'll always remember them for. ■



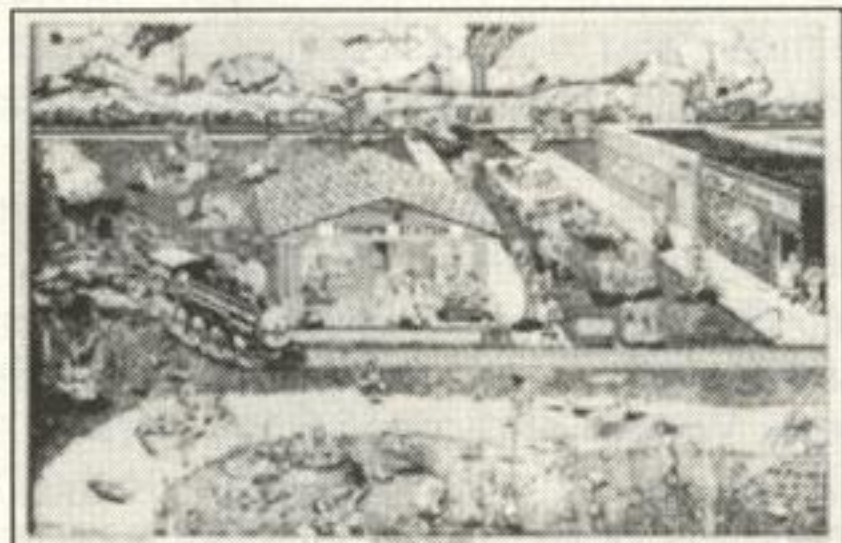
Phil Spector and Chuck Berry

Bob Gruen/Star File

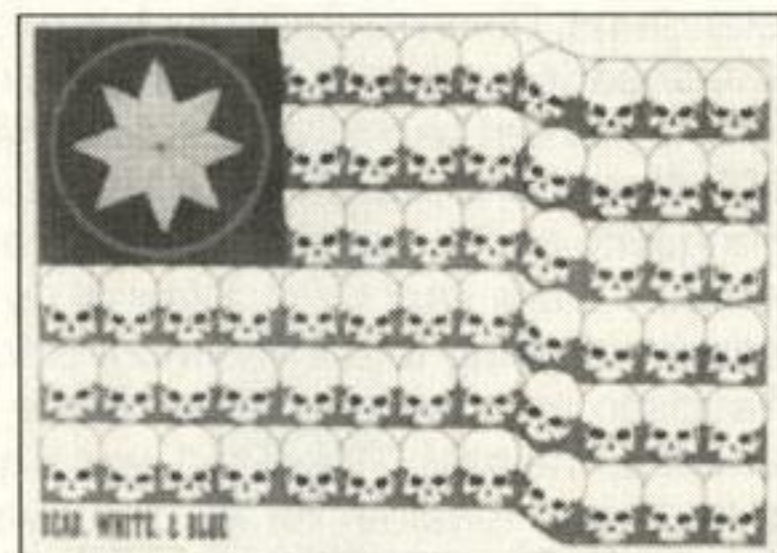
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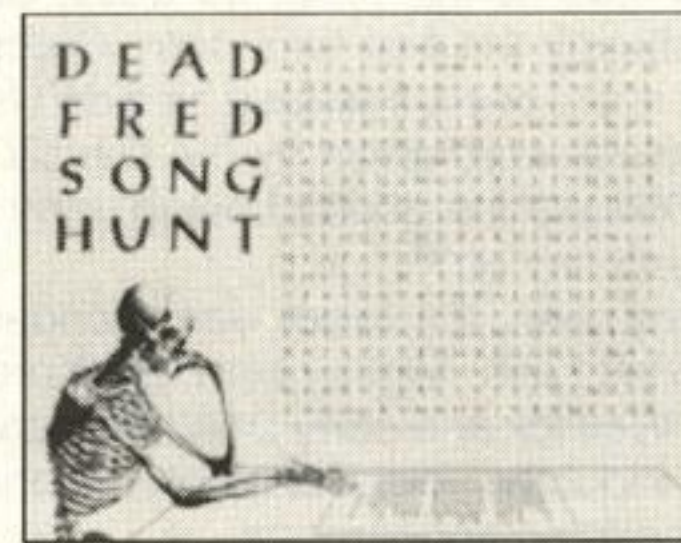
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THE DEAD BECOME HALL OF FAMERS

We're officially old guys now

BY JEFF TAMARKIN

The Grateful Dead was nominated for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame once before, but were turned down on that initial ballot. This year, however, they made it, joining the ranks of a hundred or more previous inductees honored by the Hall of Fame since 1986. (The Hall of Fame site in Cleveland expects to open in 1996.) Inducted along with the Dead this year were the Animals, the Band, Willie Dixon, Duane Eddy, Elton John, John Lennon, Bob Marley, Johnny Otis and Rod Stewart. The \$1,500-a-plate, invitation-only event held January 19th at the posh Waldorf=Astoria Hotel in New York was attended by music industry executives and assorted celebrities from John F. Kennedy Jr. to Martin Scorsese to Whoopi Goldberg.

The Hall of Fame stipulates that an artist must have recorded at least 25 years prior to a nomination. A committee of nearly 30 industry and media types meets each year to nominate 15 artists and then sends its ballot to 400-plus industry names. Of that list, up to eight artists are inducted along with one so-called non-performer and an early influence. This year's "non-performer" was rhythm and blues songwriter-producer (and, yes, performer) Johnny Otis while songwriter-bassist Willie Dixon was awarded the early influence distinction.

The Dead edged out the likes of Buffalo Springfield and the Jackson Five this year, and they join Creedence Clearwater Revival and Sly and the Family Stone as the only Bay Area bands inducted thus far.

Not only was the Waldorf gig unique in Dead history due to the black tie duds, but it was undoubtedly the first time Jerry Garcia simply chose not to show because he didn't feel like it. The official word given by the Dead's publicist was: "What's the good of being Jerry Garcia if you can't say no?"

In any case, the event was attended by Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Mickey Hart, Bill Kreutzmann, Vince Welnick and early Dead keyboardist and fellow inductee Tom Constanten. John Barlow also made an appearance.

The Dead comprises the largest single group membership in the Hall thus far as Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, Keith Godchaux and Brent Mydland, the three late keyboardists; Donna Godchaux, who sang with the group during the '70s; and lyricist Robert Hunter were also inducted. Donna Godchaux, like Garcia, was a no-show, and Hunter couldn't attend at the last minute due to a family commitment.

The induction ceremony follows a simple pattern. First, a member of the Hall of Fame's Board of Directors gives a brief speech explaining the inductee's significance. Then, an artist who is deemed to have something in common

with the inductee gives a presentation speech. That is followed, finally, by a speech by the inductee(s). In the Dead's case, Jann Wenner, the founding editor/publisher of *Rolling Stone* magazine, preceded Bruce Hornsby, the keyboardist who sat in with the Dead in the late '80s and early '90s, who presented the award.

Wenner recalled first seeing the Dead in 1965 "in the living room of a small house near the San Jose campus, and you could feel the vibe and spirit of adventure that would make the Dead a great rock 'n' roll band." He continued, "I saw them over the next couple of years again and again and again, and I am proud to be a Deadhead."

Hornsby's speech followed a brief video clip of the Dead performing "Dark Star" on the 1969 television program *Playboy After Dark*. Hornsby commented on the Dead's thriving existence outside of the record business and agreed that it's "a very nice place to be." Recalling his own time as a temporary Dead keyboardist, Hornsby said, "A Dead show to me is about the best party you can go to. It's a three-ring circus."

The arrival on-stage of the Dead was greeted with robust applause from the audience. Kreutzmann spoke first, elaborating on the party angle. "I just want to tell you that it's an amazing trip to play in the same band for 28 years," said the drummer. "That's pretty unusual in the music business. We've gone through a lot of strange things, things like hair color changes. So I'm just happy to be here; it's an honor to be here."

Kreutzmann then outlined what's kept him and the band going all these years. His reasoning was probably alien to some of the industry big shots in the audience, but the Deadheads certainly understood. "I'm really doing this because I like to play music," he said. "That's where I come from. I usually play for people that don't have quite this outfit on; they're a lot more colorful, but you guys all look good. This is fun."

"Anyway," he continued, "I want to say one thing that's very important to me: I miss Pigpen, Keith and Brent. They were our three keyboard players. They're real important to me. Ron 'Pigpen' McKernan was our first lead player; before Garcia had all the spotlights on him, Ron was our boy who did it all."

Kreutzmann then gave the floor to Lesh, who turned to a political matter that apparently went over the heads of many of the tuxedoed dinner



Hart, Hornsby, Lesh, Kreutzmann, Weir, Constanten & Garcia

guests. "I'd like to thank everybody who voted for us this year," Lesh said. "And I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Deadheads because without them we wouldn't be anywhere, much less right here right now. I'd also like to say for the Heads who are currently serving maximum sentences that there's still hope for a miracle in America." Then to paraphrase the old movie *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, he continued with the Hunter penned speech, "So keep the faith. Keep the change and keep watching the skies."

A sizable segment of the audience seemed to take Lesh's plea for justice as a joke, bursting with laughter as he finished his acceptance speech. Weir later elaborated on these concerns in a press conference, but for the moment, Lesh let it go and gave the microphone to Mickey Hart who spoke about roots.

"I guess it's time to talk about the 17th-century balladeers, the African drummers and singers whose songs and rhythms all came together on these shores to make that soup that became the music we love," said Hart. "There won't be time tonight to thank all the great blues, country and jazz players who honed this music and then passed it on to us, but one of them, Mr. Willie Dixon, is being honored here tonight."

Hart's words rang true. Dixon, who wrote, recorded and produced for Chicago's Chess Records label in the 1950s, and played bass on countless rock 'n' roll classics by Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and others, has served as a major source of musical inspiration to the Dead through the years. As the writer of such songs as "The Same Thing," "Spoonful," "Little Red Rooster," "Wang Dang Doodle" and many other blues standards, Dixon's music has been familiar to Deadheads for over a quarter century.

Bob Weir, the last band member to speak to the 1,000-plus attendees at the Waldorf, talked about longevity and the desire to keep playing till he drops. "A few years ago a few of us had the pleasure of going to the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco and catching Count Basie and his Orchestra," he said. "The band was a quartet that had been together for 45 or 50 years, and they swung like angels. Some of the soloists had been around for a long time as well."



The Band's Rick Danko, Garth Hudson, Robbie Robertson and Eric Clapton

And it was such a treat to watch those hoary heads rocking up and down and back and forth.

"And then a couple of weeks later," Weir continued, "we learned that the Count had gone home to Florida, put his feet up and quietly checked out. And, to a man, we all thought to ourselves, yes, that's what I wanna be, that's what I wanna do. And now here we are, and it's really great to be here. How can we not love it? Just like him, we're doing what comes naturally, what we would have done anyway, no matter where life had led us."

Ending on a quote from "Johnny B. Goode," the Chuck Berry classic that the Dead has performed since the early '70s, Weir said, "And the people they come from miles around to hear you play your music when the sun goes down.' And you can hear the tune, and you can feel the feel all right. Thank you."

Before leaving the stage, the Dead surprised the crowd by bringing out Jerry Garcia after all — a cardboard cut-out of Jerry Garcia, that is. It was a humorous note at an event that probably could have used a few more laughs.

After they left the main stage, the Dead, along with Hornsby and cardboard Jerry, were escorted to a press room backstage where they were assembled for photographs and a brief Q&A session. With the earlier pressures now relieved, they joked with one another and mugged for the cameras. Following is a rough edited transcript of that session.

Q: Where is Jerry?

Lesh: We don't know.

Hart: Phil, did you tell Jerry about this? Oh, we forgot to tell him!

Lesh: Was I supposed to tell him?

Hart (to Weir): I thought you were.

Weir: I was out of town.

Hart: Uh oh, we've got a problem here.

Q: Is it fun being the band that's grossed the highest amount in the concert area?

Weir: That's infinitely gratifying.

Lesh: But incidental.

Q: Did you ever think that 30 years later you'd be sitting here in monkey suits known as

Hall of Famers?

Kreutzmann: Thanks, I thought I looked nice.

Hart: There was no Hall of Fame back then, and we weren't playing for that anyway.

Weir: We weren't even thinking, believe me.

Q: Are you surprised to be standing here?

Hart: Every day above ground is a good day.

Q: After 28 years, are there any songs you guys are sick of playing?

Weir: You know, on a bad night, all of them.

Q: How about on a good night?

Weir: On a good night, none of them.

Q: Any strong feelings about any of the other inductees tonight?

Weir: Willie Dixon. I don't know how it was that he wasn't inducted the first year. Willie was more important to rock 'n' roll than I think anybody realizes.

Q: Does it make you guys feel young to look at your audience and have them look the same as they did 25 years ago?

Weir: It makes me feel old to be getting an award that you have to have been around for at least 25 years to get. I think we're officially old guys now.

Q: Phil, during your speech you talked about the Deadheads serving maximum time. Do you want to say anything more about that?

Lesh: I think it's obvious what's going on, so everybody can make their own mind up about that.

Weir: Well, I can say a little bit more. There are some two or three thousand kids rotting in jail without a prayer of parole for minor drug offenses and these amazing stiff mandatory sentencing laws that were invented by our last couple of administrations.

These are Draconian. This is not justice. This is a new inquisition.

Q: What can be done about it?

Weir: Well, all we can really do is put the word out and try to arouse popular outcry so that justice will be met here.

Q: What will people remember about the Grateful Dead?

Kreutzmann: What a fun trip it's been. A good party.

With that, the Grateful Dead left the media room, although the night was not over yet. The Hall of Fame dinners traditionally close with a jam session that involves most of the inductees performing their most popular songs.

There was no spectacular jam as had been anticipated, but there were some highlights, which included Paul Shaffer and NBC Orchestra as the musical support for all of the performers. Weir and Hornsby opened the post-dinner set by joining Chuck Berry (who had presented the late Willie Dixon's award to his family) for a funky version of "Wang Dang Doodle," followed by a loose take on Berry's "Roll Over Beethoven." Jeff Beck delivered a fiery version of "People Get Ready." Bob Marley's "One Love" was performed by Ziggy and Rita Marley, Marcia Griffiths, Judy Mowatt, the I-Threes, U2's Bono (who presented Marley's award) and Whoopi Goldberg. The Band (sans Levon Helm) was joined by founding member Robbie Robertson and Eric Clapton for a rousing rendition of "The Weight."

Other appearances included Paul McCartney who made an emotional speech when he presented Lennon's award to Yoko and Sean Lennon. The Animals were all present except Eric Burdon who couldn't get out of his European tour schedule. Lastly, Axl Rose presented Elton John with his award.

Each year, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame will continue to induct performers. Some will make it and some won't. Disappointed fans felt Frank Zappa deserved to be inducted this year, but he failed to make it past the initial ballot. Although he probably would not have cared, it would have been better than awarding him a posthumous honor. Oh well, the Dead didn't make the first cut either. After all, it's an honor whenever it happens. ■



Sean Lennon and Yoko Ono with Paul McCartney

Jackson Browne

Fights For The Village Of The Dammed

By Ken Levy

Battles rage in the world's equatorial rainforests half a world away, and closer to home, a lesser known but equally harsh war is being waged on northern lands. It too is a fight for water, trees, lifestyle and landscape. The outcome of this struggle will also directly affect the politics of energy for the entire Northeastern United States.

Due north of Toronto, bordering Ontario and Quebec, lies an area of pristine northern wilderness called the James Bay. Long the home of the native Cree, there has been a bid to develop, dam and flood 200,000 miles of watershed land to provide surplus electricity for New York and its surrounding areas. Critics claim the need for surplus power is questionable at best and that the environmental cost would be far too high. With billions of dollars already invested in the area and billions more at stake, corporate Hydro-Quebec sees things differently. After years of embattlement between the sides, the fate of the James Bay continues to hang in the balance.

Following a benefit concert to raise awareness, Jackson Browne and actor/activist John

Trudell explained why James Bay is of far reaching importance, why corporations need to change the way they do business and why we should "Ban the Dam."

Browne: Corporate ethos dictates: try to sell as much of whatever you've got to sell as possible. Where there isn't a need, create a need. It's an agenda that has little to do with the true environmental impact of what will happen. As the public began to wake up to the dangers of this project, the corporate entity employed hundreds of people at huge salaries to deny it. So much is being spent on public relations and lawyers trying to impose the will of this corporation.

Relix: Besides environmental concerns, isn't there also an issue here with the separatist movement in Quebec and the rights of the indigenous Cree and Inuit peoples?

Trudell: The separatist movement seems to violate the sovereignty of the Cree people. The indigenous people never really had much in the way of protection — it's not really any different up there than it is down here. Whatever statutes were put on the books between

governments and the indigenous nations were always bent, broken, violated and mutilated at the will of the democratic governments anyway. Once Canada became independent of Britain, they rewrote their constitution in such a way as to negate their obligation to indigenous nations, which had been negotiated during colonial rule.

Relix: Besides the land claim issue, given the lessons we've learned from other large-scale intrusions on the environment this seems like a particularly untimely project...

Browne: At a time when over-population and over development is an issue, when global warming and the thinning of the ozone layer are deadly serious threats, this idea is just rolling forward as if none of these problems existed! Past environmental impact studies were not done by an independent agency and current impact studies can only advise, not mandate.

Relix: Do you feel one of the reasons the James Bay issue hasn't been well publicized, is that it's a bit too close to home?

Browne: That's always the case! It's easier to talk about apartheid than it is to talk about the genocide of our own Indian people, which is exactly what's happening. Where do they plan to put the 18,000 Cree people who live there, whose land will be flooded and under water? This has not been thought out. Another reason is that a lot of the media is owned by the same people who are fouling the environment. If you trust them to tell you whether there's a movement or whether there's a chance or when it's too late, you're allowing them to control your own effectiveness in this world.

Relix: How far into development is this project?

Trudell: Some aspect of this has already happened. Hydro-Quebec built Phase One without impact studies or informing the Cree who live there. Flooding the land has released organic mercury into the food chain and interrupted the annual flow cycle of the rivers. What we're fighting is the continual attempt to further degrade the land and building another, more sweeping Phase Two.

Relix: What do opponents feel will make a difference?

Trudell: A lot of this really depends on the consciousness and the political will of the people of New York and the Northeast, the people whose names are being used to justify doing this. There are sounder energy alternatives to having this or other destructive projects.

Browne: For one thing, we have to start treating conservation as an actual energy source. If you begin to conserve energy, you can create as much electricity as you could by damming and flooding which, in this case, would wipe out a land area the size of France.

Relix: Can a big utility company realistically advocate conservation as a source of energy?

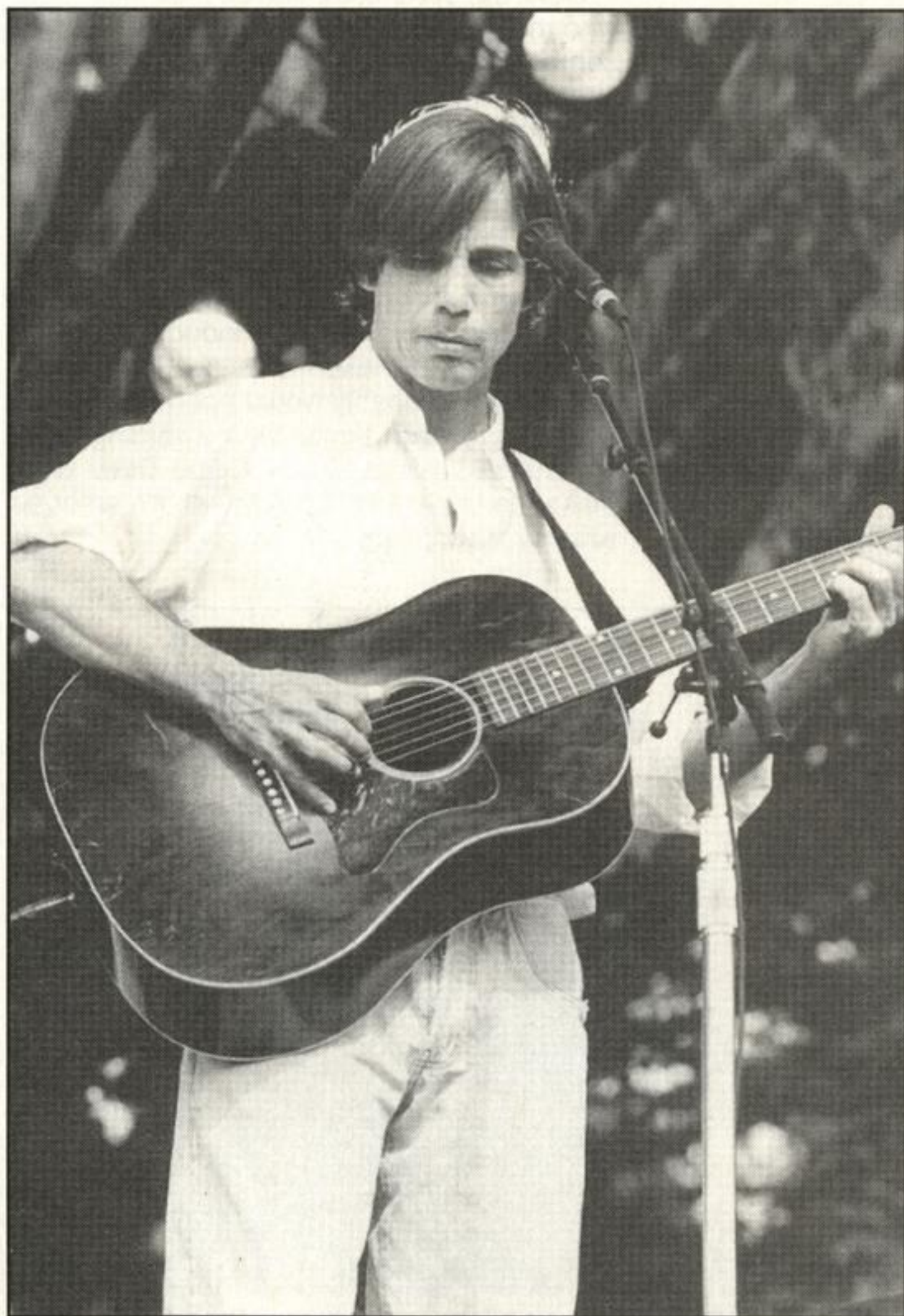
Browne: It's mostly PR. To them, it's a loss of revenue if we conserve energy. We have to be willing to realize there's less room for greed in the world today; there's less room for the explosive type of corporate growth we've seen before.

Relix: With the increase of socially conscious companies such as Aveda and Ben & Jerry's, do you feel there's a new, emerging sense of corporate responsibility and accountability?

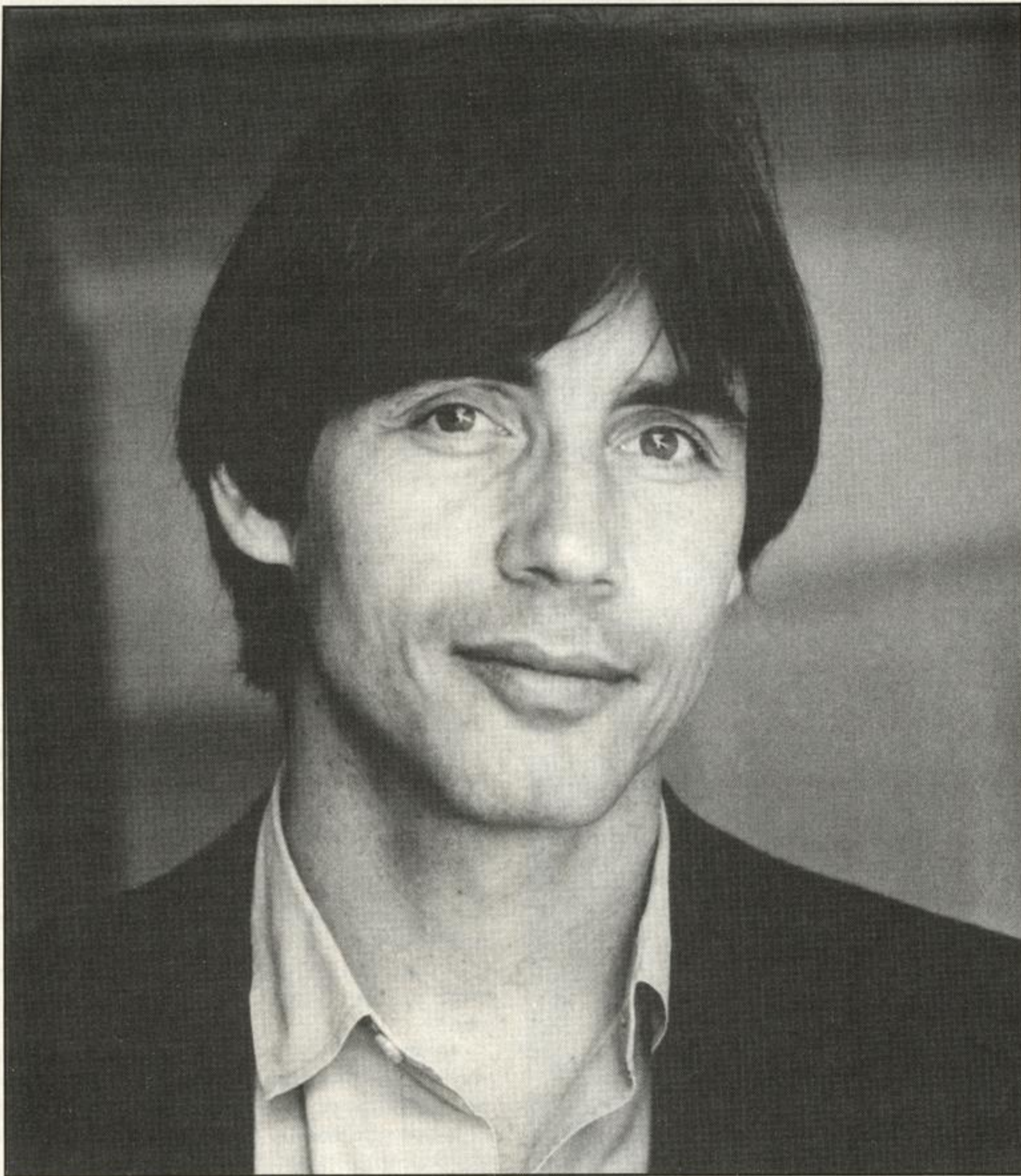
Browne: I think companies like that are really valuable. People should understand that one person can make a difference. This society and the normal channels of communication are set up to infer differently. It's so important for somebody to make the commitment and set an example to show how you can incorporate social and business ethics in a changing world. Corporations should want a healthy world; shampoos, ice cream, running shoes — these things are only useful to healthy people. ■

For more information on the James Bay, write the James Bay Defense Coalition, 310 West 52nd Street, New York, NY 10019.

(Ken Levy is host and executive producer of Environmental Minute, a daily syndicated radio feature heard on stations throughout the U.S. and Canada.)



Bob Minkin



Jackson Browne is Still Alive and Well

by Jym Fahey

Jackson Browne has long been recognized as one of rock's most influential writers. Beginning with his 1972 debut, his records have displayed finely crafted songs resulting from the long hours of hard work he has dedicated to his art.

Browne's latest release, *I'm Alive*, proves that his songwriting abilities are stronger than ever. Most of the reviews of the new album laud his return to the "personal" songs, a shift away from some previous politically-minded songs. Browne is quick to point out, however, that "...they're all personal, especially the things that are considered political. In fact, my friend Steven [Van Zandt] made the point a couple of weeks ago in a conversation that, 'What's more personal than your political views?' In a way, songs about love are more universally felt because everyone has experienced these different things in love." He continues, laughing, "Well, almost everybody. There are reviewers

I've talked to who I wonder if they've ever been in love."

Without a doubt, Browne has come up with a collection of songs on *I'm Alive* that will touch any listener (or reviewer) who has experienced the madness and joy of love. He does so by connecting the listener's heart and soul with an invisible life line to his own, an art that has been Browne's forte since the beginning.

Browne recalls how he honed his craft. "I spent a couple of years just going to the Troubadour every Monday night and singing in that open mike situation. I mean they called it 'the Hoot,' but it was really a showcase. You could get up for four songs. It was a way of showing your friends and other people what you'd been writing. Anyone who has ever used that method of exposing new material knows that it can be a very risky, and sometimes painful experience. It can also help a writer cut through the dust that comes from sitting at home and rely-

ing only on one's own ears."

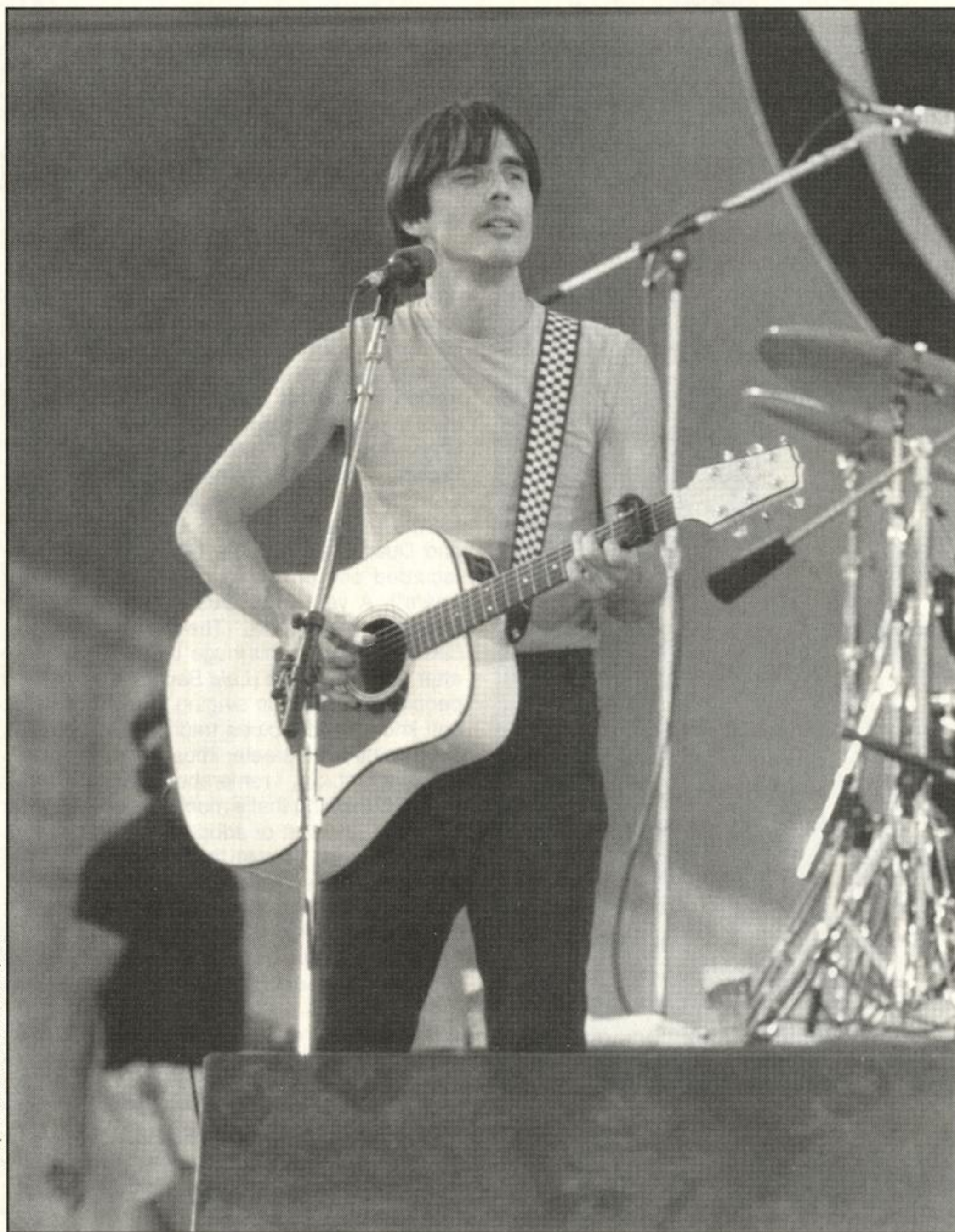
A short time before those Troubadour hoots in Los Angeles, Browne spent time in New York on the Greenwich Village coffeehouse scene (after a brief stint in an early version of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band). That post-Dylan era (1967-68) was a hotbed for singer/songwriters, and Browne learned from and taught the likes of Tim Buckley and Nico, among others.

He returned to Los Angeles with the strong voice of both writer and singer. Browne's reputation as a songwriter continued to grow when artists such as Tom Rush, the Byrds, Bonnie Raitt and Linda Ronstadt performed his songs. Always eager to learn, Browne paid close attention to how his songs were interpreted. A case in point is Gregg Allman's cover of "These Days" on his first solo album, *Laid Back*. Browne admits, "He remembered that song a lot better than I had written it, is what it amounts to. We met each other in L.A. when [Gregg and Duane] were in the Hourglass and they recorded one of my songs ("Cast Off All My Fears"). A year after Duane died, I ran into Gregg in the airport. [The Allman Brothers] had just become this huge band. It was right after that that he did [*Laid Back*]. I always liked people who grew up singing blues to a song, you know, in that blues tradition. Somehow a song gains even greater impact sung by someone like that. So, I remember hearing his version and thinking that's much cooler than what I wrote. I just sort of adopted that tempo and changed keys. I wrote that song when I was 16 and [Gregg's version] was more informed."

Browne had a similar revelation with "Take It Easy," which he wrote with the Eagles' Glenn Frey. Frey says he and J.D. Souther met Browne at a benefit for the free clinic in Long Beach. "He was singing 'Jamaica Say You Will' and J.D. and I started singing harmonies on the chorus, and we just struck up a friendship that night. [J.D. and I] were looking for a place to live and Jackson said, 'I'm living in Echo Park. You oughta come down there. The rent's cheap.' So J.D. and I went down there. Jackson lived underneath us. I used to sit there and listen to Jackson, and he blew my mind. He was very pragmatic. He wrote every day. Every night he would be working on the stuff for his first album, and I would hear him through the floorboards. I think it sort of inspired me to work a little harder 'cause we were very impressed with how prolific a songwriter he was for his age. For this guy, 22, 23 years old to be coming out with this beautiful poetry, it was a real inspiration."

Browne picks up the "Take It Easy" tale: "That was just Glenn's industriousness. He came by my session one day, and I played him something that I'd been messing around with. I had like a verse or so and a chorus. He said, 'Cool. Are you gonna do that on your record?' And I said, 'Well no. I'm almost done with my record, so I guess...' So he said 'Well, we'd do it, you know.' I was finishing my record just as [the Eagles] were starting theirs. He offered to finish the song. I said, 'No, that's okay. I'll do it. I'll finish it.' A week or two passed and I hadn't, and I finally just said, 'Yeah, go ahead.' He made the song what it is. He gave it definition."

Though Jackson Browne's album was not quite as successful as those freshman efforts by Gregg Allman and the Eagles, his personal blend of country, folk and rock eventually caught on. Each successive album found increased commercial success, and he received



Ralph Hulett / Rock Retrospect

Jackson Browne at US Festival, 9/5/82

critical acclaim on all fronts. His concerts found him surrounded by excellent musicians such as guitarist Waddy Wachtel (X-Pensive Winos) and string playing wizard David Lindley (whose abilities on guitar, fiddle, mandolin, banjo and a number of more exotic instruments continue to dazzle).

Browne's third album, *Late For The Sky*, cracked the Top 20, and his pained and somehow fragile voice touched sensitive souls wherever it was heard. The songs on *Late For The Sky* provided a refreshing change from the other hits that dominated the charts in 1974: Ringo Starr's "You're Sixteen," John Denver's "Sunshine On My Shoulder," Grand Funk's "The Loco-Motion" and Olivia Newton-John "I Honestly Love You," which was number one when *Late For The Sky* first hit.

Browne says of his songs, "I think I've been willing to approach really sort of somber subjects. And I think there's something kind of healing and uplifting about doing that. I think that maybe some people don't really welcome the discussion of some of this stuff." Others obviously do.

In 1976, *The Pretender* landed the #5 spot in *Billboard* and became Browne's second plati-

num album. *Running On Empty*, the follow-up, hit #3, especially remarkable for a live album of new material. Browne broke the rules again, stating, "I just thought it would be more interesting. Everybody always does their greatest hits disguised as a live album. It's a way of selling another record of the same songs, in a way. I remember sitting and listening to some of this stuff with [drummer] Russ Kunkel saying, 'This cool shit is what's going on. Let's just do a whole album of new stuff. Let's just do this stuff, never mind the older stuff.'" The album, recorded on-stage and in rehearsal rooms and hotels, provided an innovative soundtrack for an imaginary movie about a tour in progress.

Then, in 1980, *Hold Out* slammed into the top spot on the charts as soon as it was released. Browne says of that position, "I was too dumb to be excited about that. I wasn't oriented to being number one on anything. It wasn't a goal and it wasn't part of my — I was too arrogant to be [laughter] excited by that. I don't think I was jaded, I just didn't really know from that. But it was pretty short-lived, too. It sort of popped in there for a week and checked right out again. The stuff I really like is seldom

number one. Lots of stuff that becomes number one is really great, but there's more stuff that doesn't even get near the charts that is great."

The Top 20 song "Boulevard" helped propel *Hold Out* to #1. The line, "Nobody rides for free" struck a true chord for many, and once again, Browne dealt with an unconventional subject matter. "It's about runaways. It was partly written from the point of view of a young person on Hollywood Boulevard. It's empathizing to some degree. And also trying to say, 'It's only time. It's time on the Boulevard. This doesn't mean this is who you are, where you'll always be.'"

The Top 10 was a place Browne frequented and his 1983 opus, *Lawyers In Love*, found him there again. Cuts from his fourth album such as "For A Rocker," "Tender Is The Night" and the title track gave the album a solid base. It was something of a transitional album for Browne. "I was experimenting with collaborating with the band. We spent six months laying around in a loft working on these songs. In retrospect, I think I could have probably gotten a lot more out of this period of time by drawing on them, but not limiting the band to a fixed membership. Also, this is the moment in time when I could have used a producer. I really could have. Because everybody in this band had produced records, every one of them [laughter]. And everybody had their opinion. I'm not sure I'm really that crazy about the results, you know? It's an attempt at really collaborating with a band. In the end, no one looks at it like, 'Oh, this is a band.' It's just my next record. I think the results are pretty spotty."

Although critical of his work, Browne has much to be proud of. He says of the first time he heard one of his own songs on the radio, "I was being picked up at the airport. I had been playing out of town and my record had been released while I was away. My girlfriend picked me up and we were driving along. I think it was 'Jamaica Say You Will' that came on the radio. And I just looked at it. I was shocked by it. 'That's me!' She said, 'Yeah, they're playing the shit out of your record.'"

Even with those sort of memories, Browne does not get hung up in the moment in which a song is born. "They don't fit me in time. In other words, I'm not thinking about the place that inspired a song when I sing that song. I'm actually just hearing the song. A song for me is written over a long period of time and in a number of places. In 'The Pretender,' I can be thinking about a particular room in my house, and I can also be thinking about being in Hawaii. For the most part, it's no particular place because the songs don't take me back to a time. They stay with me. They're all so contemporary for me." Browne continues, "Records are always the beginning of a song in a way. It's when the song is finally written and sort of defined as an arrangement. Unfortunately, live is almost the only way to get to experience songs in their purest (or at least current) state. The architecture is already there, but it's informed by everything that's happened since."

Throughout his career, Browne has kept a fairly high political profile. He has been outspoken on environmental issues and a friend of endangered species. His opposition to nuclear power resulted in *No Nukes*, which documented several concerts at Madison Square Garden. Other performers included Crosby, Stills and Nash, Gil Scott-Heron,

Bonnie Raitt and Chaka Khan.

Browne reflects on that part of him that is willing to approach world problems, "I think in my case, [I was] born of a certain kind of stability. For many years, everything was sort of all set. I was happy and stable and secure, and I could look out at the world and it looked to me like a lot needed doing."

Naturally, as Browne's political awareness became more acute, more of his songwriting focused on those themes, much to his commercial detriment. "I think that political albums have a smaller audience in this culture because of the nature of what we regard as our entertainments and our diversions. And I think that more people know about love than know about politics. That makes me think I could probably do at least as well with an album about baseball statistics as I did with an album on foreign policy," he said.

Jackson Browne's last two albums, *Lives In The Balance* and *World In Motion*, were not nearly as commercial successful as his previous five. While it is unfortunate that the music industry often judges artist achievement on the hard scale of sales, Browne understood those risks before undertaking those projects. Even so, on *Lives* he included one of his most beautiful love songs "In The Shape Of A Heart."

While some people applauded Browne's concern with politics and the way he dealt with it thematically on his records, others dismissed him as "political, hollow and didactic," as he lampooned himself. On *I'm Alive*, Browne turned his vision inward and examined himself and the love that has given him so much pain and happiness in recent years. Browne's says of this body of work, "If there's anything I'm proud of in this whole collection of songs, it's the willingness to portray a situation the way it is without worrying about how I look. There are plenty of places where I go that are full of folly. I really hate the amount of rock 'n' roll songs that just express a sort of shallow anger. The funnier ones, the better ones are more like 'If you leave me, can I come, too?' I'm more interested in how these things happen and the underlying truth. In these songs, besides the emotion and the anguish, there's also the seeds of how it got to be that way."

The best of Jackson Browne's songs have always contained emotion, insight, truth and a little piece of himself, and there is certainly no shortage on *I'm Alive*. The fact that Browne is alive and is still sharing his visions with the world somehow makes life a little better for us all.



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T · H · E BAND

PART I

From Yonge Street to Big Pink

by Jym Fahey



THE BAND (l - r): Garth Hudson, Levon Helm, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson and Rick Danko

When Eric Clapton inducted the Band into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this past January, he told the assembled multitudes that in the late '60s he went to Woodstock with hopes of joining that musical mecca's premier rock outfit. (What might have come of such a marriage can only be conjectured, although Clapton's appearance a decade later at "The Last Waltz" is indicative of the beautiful music they might have made together.) Clapton, however, wasn't just blowing smoke in honor of the occasion. He was with Cream when *Music From Big Pink* burst out of upstate New York in 1968, and his praise of that album and its players has continued unabated for 25 years.

The history of the Band is a great story: four

Canadians, along with an Arkansas farm boy transplanted in Canada, immigrate to the United States to find fame and fortune. If it weren't true, it would seem too planned, too trite, too unbelievable. The Band rose quickly — straight to top of rock's ruling class. Moreover, this quintet achieved its position by breaking the established rules of rock's aristocracy.

It all started with Ronnie Hawkins, a gruff, charismatic singer and band leader from Huntsville, Arkansas. When, in 1958, rockabilly peaked in the States, Hawkins returned to Canada where he had previously wowed audiences with his no-holds-barred performances. Toronto's Yonge Street was agog with his antics. Coincidentally, Hawkins' quartet was anchored by a drummer, singer and multi-instrumentalist from Turkey Scratch, Arkansas by the name of Levon Helm.

One of the locals, a kid no more than fifteen years old, frequently hung around the band. He wasn't a nuisance, though, as he gladly lent a hand hauling and setting up amps or running for coffee. He also toted a guitar of his own. Eventually, Hawkins discovered that this kid named Robbie Robertson could play very well (saying at the time, "He's got so much talent it makes me sick!") and write songs just as well. He permitted Robertson to hang around, but told him he was too young to join the band just yet. Robertson was in heaven. He said, "Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks! It was so violent, the music, and exciting. I was just hoping that somebody in his group would get sick. When the guitar player got homesick actually and [Ronnie] was stuck, he gave me a shot."

Hawkins and the Hawks, with the addition of Robertson's stinging guitar work, continued to enthrall the crowds up north. But the long nights and relentless schedule prompted many personnel changes and soon there was a vacancy in the bass department. Hawkins solved the problem when he approached the leader of a local group (perhaps working under the name of Rickie and

the Rhythm Notes on that particular night) and made him an offer he didn't want to refuse. Rick Danko joined the Hawks without thinking twice.

The keyboardist, however, didn't come as easily. Garth Hudson from London, Ontario, was invited to join the band in 1959, but declined. He declined again the following year because he felt that his playing was beneath the Hawks' standard. Primarily, Hudson feared that his left hand was too weak to supply the pounding that was needed. His time would come, but not for a little while yet.

When Willard "Pop" Jones left the Hawks to return to Arkansas in late 1961, Hawkins quickly shanghaied a young Canadian from a local band called the Rockin' Revols to fill the slot. Not only did Richard Manuel play the piano, but he had a terrific voice reminiscent of the great Ray Charles. That talent meshed well with the established vocals of Hawkins and Helm to give the group another powerful weapon.

"Finally I just drove up from Detroit. I had a group there for a couple of years, but it was tough. We played bars that you read about in the paperback novels. It was great for a while. I guess it was 1961." That was how Garth Hudson ended his holdout and joined Hawkins' band. With Manuel handling the rhythmic portion of the keyboard work, Hudson explored the tunes melodically and harmonically in keeping with his classical training. His final problem, however, was getting his conservative family to support his musical choice. Rick Danko remembers it this way: "I don't think Garth wanted his parents to know he was playing in bars. Garth is the only child, you know."

Hawkins told Hudson's parents that their son would tutor the "talented but musically unschooled young men" in the band and would command a higher wage and weekly bonus for his instructional duties. Hawkins could charm the rattles off of a sidewinder when he wanted to, and Hudson's parents finally consented. Hudson said it took about a month and a half for them to catch on, but by then he was an integral part of one of the hottest bands around and was on his way to making rock history. Danko continues, "At some point I think



Rick Danko, Robbie Robertson, Richard Manuel and Levon Helm of the Band

Bob Teese / Star File



Levon Helm

Garth's parents were really proud of him for playing with us. I'm sure they thought he had done a wonderful job in teaching us to go beyond a three-chord structure."

Hawkins worked the band hard. They played long hours whenever they gigged, which was as often as possible. He also called for long rehearsals that quickly produced a band that was razor sharp. At the same time, though, nerves frayed as Hawkins' tyranny escalated.

Also, Hawkins took home the lion's share of the cash. On weeknights when he let the Hawks gig alone while he spent time with his family, the band discovered that it did all right without him. Creative differences (Hawkins wanted to stick to rockabilly while the Hawks wanted to explore rhythm and blues) added to the inevitable split.

Soon Helm and the Hawks (aka the Levon Helm Sextet or the Canadian Squires) worked its own gigs in Canada and in the Southern and Eastern U.S. In August of '65 in the midst of a very well-received stint at the Jersey shore, Helm got a phone call. The voice on the other end said, "This is Bob Dylan calling" and for Helm and the Hawks life began to get very interesting.

"A friend of Robbie's told Dylan about us. He came up to Toronto to see us. That was at the Friar's Tavern," remembers Hudson. Though the Hawks had heard him on the radio, they didn't know Dylan or just how bright his star shone. When they placed calls to see if he was really big enough to sell out places like the Hollywood Bowl, everyone assured them that he could.

They were also told the kind of reception they could expect. Dylan had "gone electric" in July at the Newport Folk Festival with Al Kooper and portions of Paul Butterfield's band. A near lynching ensued. So in late August, when he took the stage at Forest Hills' tennis stadium in Queens, New York, the tension was thick. After an acoustic set, Dylan took a break and returned with his backup band to rip into "Tombstone Blues." By the end of the song, it had become "Tombstone Boos." The heckling continued through the night, although "Like A Rolling Stone," a big hit at the time, inspired the youngsters in the crowd to sing along. The

Bob Teese / Star File



Rick Danko

group that night included Robertson and Helm along with Al Kooper and bassist Harvey Brooks. The rest of the Hawks signed on to complete the tour.

Danko says the booing "went on for a couple of years. I didn't take it too personal. I kind of felt like a sideman for Bob. I figured Bob knew what he was doing. People would react. They would boo. They would cheer. But they didn't throw anything, nor did they leave early. He always had a way of making people react. He still does."

During that tour, which covered Europe and Australia, the electric warriors were consistently booed. "It lasted for that entire world tour. But France was an exception," Hudson recalls. "They booed for some reason in France in the acoustic half and cheered when we came on." The exposure, however negative, was great for the band. So was spending time with Dylan. Helm says, "Bob is one of the best music makers of our time. He kicked the record company door open for us. He pulled us through a lot of hard times. One of the main things he did for us was show us every day how to write songs and put music together."

Helm, who left the Dylan tour, rejoined his mates at their new home, the legendary "Big Pink," in Woodstock, New York. It was like he had never left. Working hard in near isolation, the group aspired for a recording contract of its own. But the group needed a name. Manuel's suggestions of "the Chocolate Subway" or "the Marshmallow Overcoat" were passed on. So was Helm's proposal "the Honkies," as well as its toned down modification, "the Crackers" (although Capitol actually signed them under that name on February 1, 1968).

Robertson explains that the final name came from their time with Dylan. "Everybody just called us 'the band.' They said, 'Maybe you and the band need to do some rehearsing' or 'What room is the band in?' We kept hearing this over and over again until finally it stuck. It seemed real natural. At that time, names were really going over the top. They were really getting goofy. So to go the opposite way, 'the Band' seemed to be the simplest and most unpretentious name that we could think of. It

was like a non-name. That's actually what we tried in the beginning. We said, 'Well, we don't want a name.' Our records will come out, and there'll be no name on them. The record company went crazy. They said, 'No, no no! This isn't gonna work.' So we said, 'Okay then, we're just gonna call ourselves 'the Band.' We had them over the barrel."

Six months later, *Music From Big Pink* debuted. The hard work in Woodstock had obviously paid off. *Big Pink* was unlike anything else at the time. While most groups explored the full range of expression that psychedelia had opened up, *Big Pink* toned it all down. Sonically, in its artwork (the front cover featured a "primitive" painting by Bob Dylan), compositions, even down to the instruments themselves, *Big Pink* returned to the roots of American music, combining elements of country, R&B, jazz and rock 'n' roll (not to mention Hudson's impression of Bach in "Chest Fever") in a way no one had heard or even imagined. In complete opposition of the flag-burning mentality of the time, *Big Pink* was an American celebration of hard-working immigrants who found a better life. Even its photos stood out. Robertson recalls, "We looked more like rabbis than rock 'n' roll people. I would look at those pictures and say, 'This is gonna be fine.' And I'd look at these other bands and think, 'This guy's gonna be really embarrassed about this. This looks stupid to me now, and I think it's gonna look really stupid later on.' I still feel that way."

The world was snatched by surprise, to say the least. These guys could really play, and they seemed to know what they wanted to say and how to say it. Above all else were the voices. Danko says, "That's what's unique about the Band — how the three voices would entwine our harmonies. It's a very special blend and a very special thing. It's something that will always be with me." Hudson credits "the space that the two keyboards allowed. Also the excellent production work that John Simon did for us. Playing less. Not getting in the way of the words."

For these and so many more reasons, the Band had arrived. ■

The Band continues with Part II next issue.



Garth Hudson

J. P. Niehuser

NEIL YOUNG

The Godfather Of Grunge Pushes On

By Roger Len Smith

Neil Young — the name says it all. No forty- or fifty-something rocker has managed to stay quite as young — or as vital — as he.

Escaping the doldrums and pitfalls of many of his contemporaries, Young has proven his staying power by endlessly shifting directions and constantly playing. Pumping out nearly an album a year, sometimes two, for his entire career, Young has ventured into nearly every musical outpost: country, rock, blues, rockabilly, folk, computer-enhanced techno-pop and, of course, all-out rock 'n' roll.

Whether he's cranking out cataclysmic electric rock with Crazy Horse on *Ragged Glory* or *Rust Never Sleeps*, or crooning bitter-sweet ballads on *Harvest Moon* or *Freedom*, the somewhat eccentric Young always seems to stay a step ahead of that schmooze-filled, fad-laden industry known as the music business.

Continuously staying ahead of his critics by refusing to stay in one secular mode, Young may not even care what they say. In fact, his entire musical existence transcends nearly everyone he comes in contact with. Examine any period of Young's career and uncover not only reams of pure songwriting talent, but also his innate ability to inspire and motivate fellow musicians, young and old alike.

For example, in 1993 Young headlined a tour of Europe and the States that featured R&B saints Booker T & the MG's as his backup band with the current hard-rock-band-of-the-moment, Pearl Jam, as one of the show's openers. (Other openers included Stone Temple Pilots, Social Distortion, Blind Melon and Dinosaur, Jr.) In addition, he released one of the better MTV Unplugged albums, a format essentially made for Young.

"He'll hold your hand one minute and burst into flames the next," Greil Marcus conveys in the January issue of *Spin*, which cited Young as "Artist of the Year" for 1993.

Young is also active in his well-known Bridge Benefit concerts, held each year in the Bay Area, which incorporate excellent acoustic sets by a wide variety of artists to raise funds for the Bridge School, an organization devoted to helping children with learning disabilities or physical handicaps. Since 1986, the benefits have featured a virtual smorgasboard of rockers, blues and folk artists, and even some of the new blood on the block. An edited listing of

Bridge performers over the past few years includes Bob Dylan; Bruce Springsteen; Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir; Tom Petty; Nils Lofgren; Crosby, Stills & Nash; Billy Idol; Tracy Chapman; Sonic Youth; Willie Nelson; John Lee Hooker;

when he left Ontario, Canada for the Los Angeles area. He soon hooked up with a group that was gigging around Hollywood, the Buffalo Springfield. Perhaps a group too talented for its own good, it's almost fitting that the Springfield — an explosive band that nowadays would be considered an "all-star" group — would ignite Neil Young's career.

Along with Stephen Stills, Jim Messina, Richie Furay, Dewey Martin and Bruce Palmer, Young had a group that lasted only a couple of years, but recorded just enough timely hits to be remembered. From 1966 until 1968, the band released such radio staples as Stills' political anthem "For What It's Worth" and Young's "Mr. Soul," as well as Stills' "Bluebird" and Young's "I Am A Child."

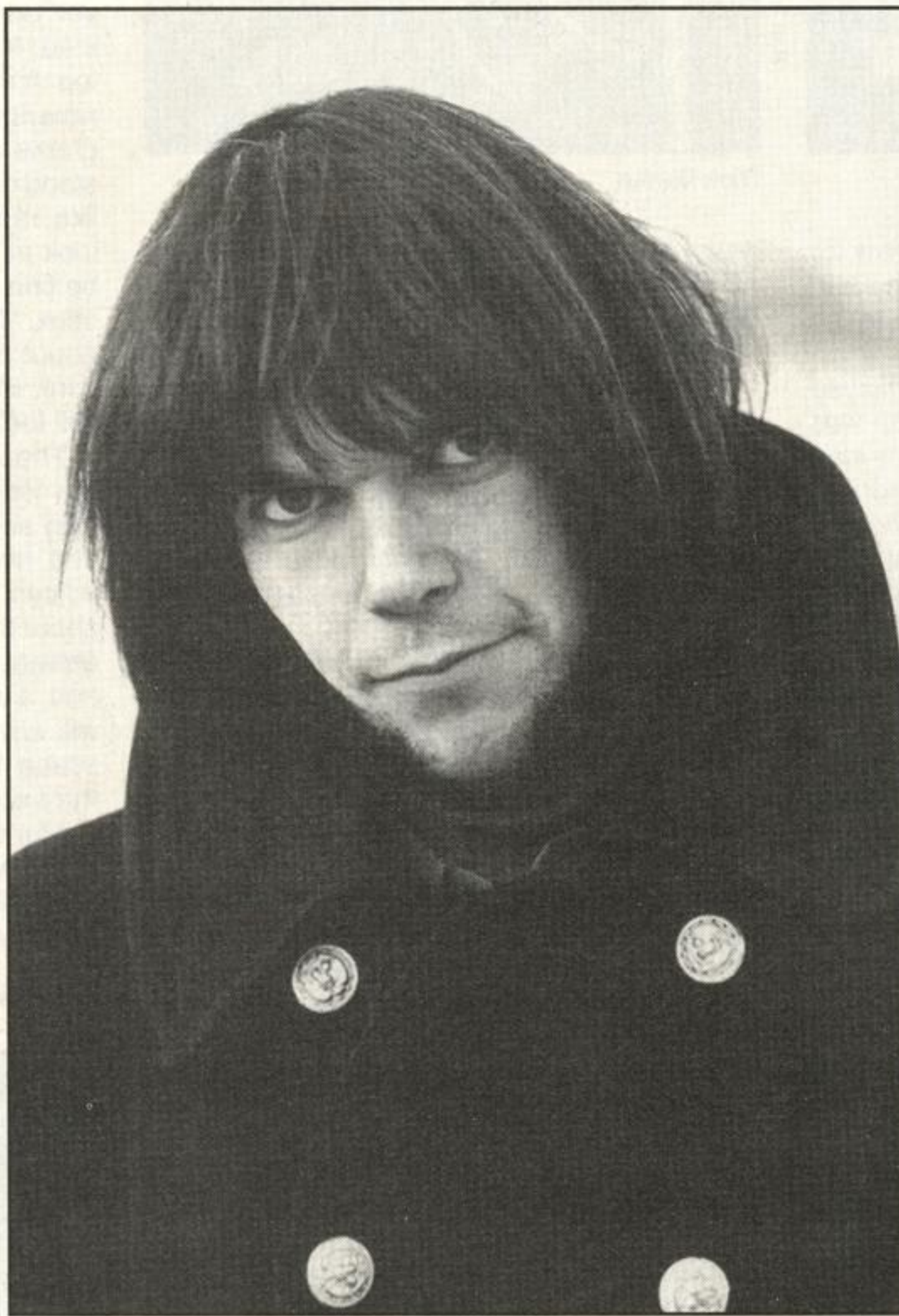
The next logical step then, for Young, was to go solo, which he did times three. *Neil Young, Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* and the near-masterpiece *After The Gold Rush* came out between 1968 and 1970 and firmly established Young's place as a rock and folk songwriter.

The first major-selling album of his career came when he joined the successful Crosby, Stills & Nash combination. Called *Deja Vu*, it was the first Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young effort, and it sold over five million albums at the time. In a nutshell, each member of this quartet quickly went from sort-of-big to huge.

Always restless, however, Young wasn't about to stay in a cozy spot too long. Though his collaborations with CSN have continued over the years, his recorded output far exceeds his occasional partners in quantity and variety.

Harvest, from 1972, became Young's personal *Deja Vu*. It was his biggest selling solo record, featuring the radio staples "Old Man" and "Heart Of Gold." Yet Young has always recognized his media image in context with his musical integrity, so when "Heart Of Gold" became a big hit, he quickly changed direction from the acoustic balladry of *Harvest* to the rambunctious electric country-rock of the live album, *Time Fades Away*, and the mostly hard rock of the mid-'70s albums, *Zuma* and *On the Beach*.

When punk-rock came screaming out of New York and London in the strange period of 1976-78, Young was right there pumping out one of his best electric rock efforts, *Rust Never Sleeps*. Moreover, in the same year, Young released *Comes A Time*, a beautiful acoustic piece that



Linda McCartney/Star File

Don Henley; James Taylor; Elton John; Pearl Jam; Bonnie Raitt; and Simon & Garfunkel. And that's not even everyone!

Not many, perhaps with the exception of the late Bill Graham, could pull together that strong and diverse a pool of talent for a benefit concert. Coincidentally, after Graham's tragic helicopter death in October of 1991, Young announced that he was dedicating all future Bridge Benefit concerts to the late promoter. And a few years back, a bunch of alternative-minded groups (Sonic Youth, Soul Asylum, Victoria Williams, the Pixies and Flaming Lips) pulled off a dedication to Young himself, releasing an album of his tunes entitled, appropriately enough, *The Bridge*.

It all started for Young back in the mid-'60s



Neil Young with Buffalo Springfield

ventured as far into country-rock as he had ever gone. It seemed to be a balancing act for Young's heavier, electric side.

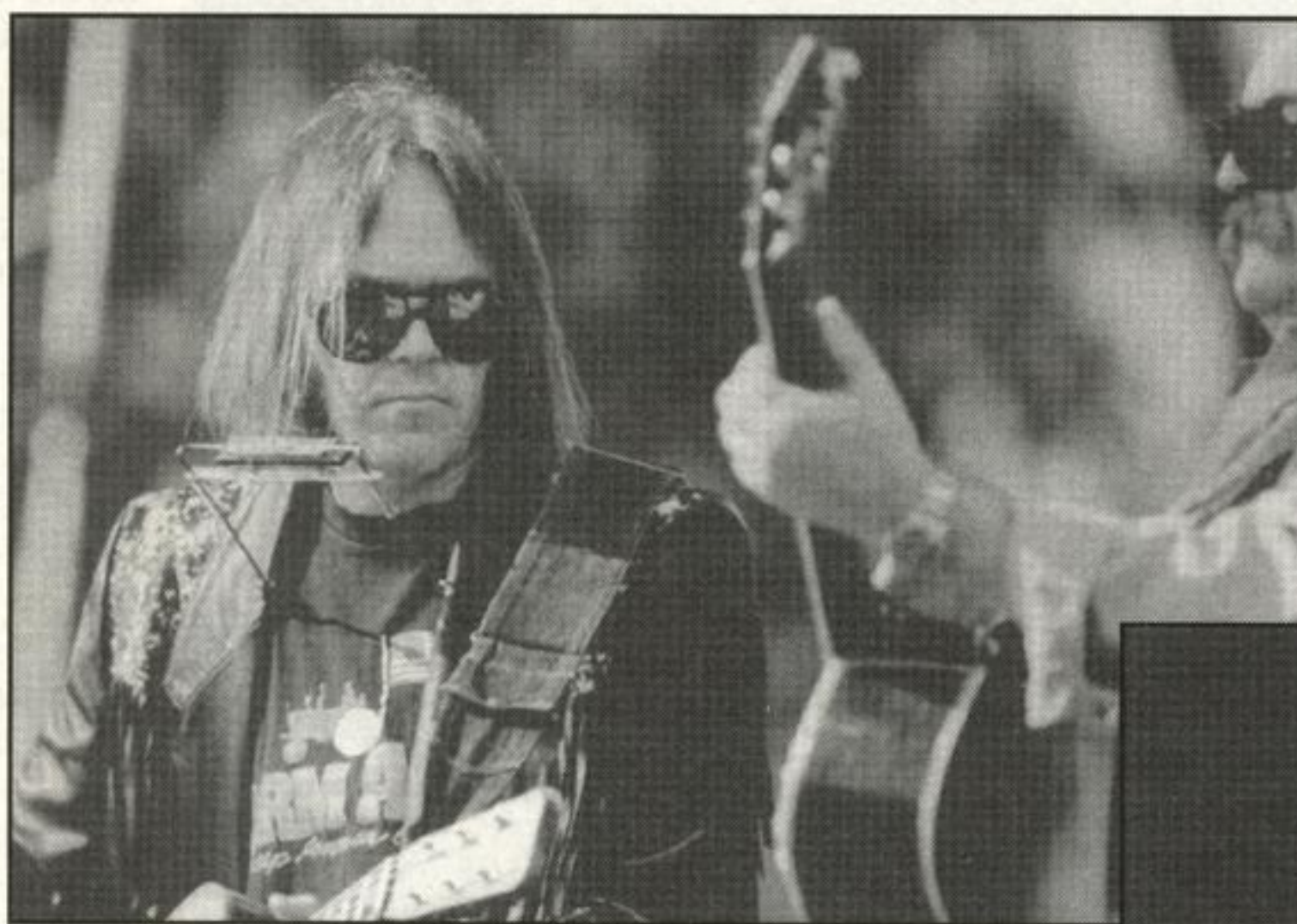
Young then produced the concert movie, *Rust Never Sleeps*, and its soundtrack, *Live Rust*, which combined the best of his electric and acoustic work, incorporating new and old material.

Along came the '80s, though, and things got tricky. Young toured to capacity crowds around the world, but ended up changing record labels from Warner/Reprise to Geffen and back again while changing styles more than twice. From the lilting country-folk of 1980's *Hawks & Doves* came the minimalistic pre-grunge hard-rock of *Re'ac'tor* the following year. The computer-droid music of *Trans* confused fans and critics alike, but only seemed to amuse Young. In 1983, *Everybody's Rockin'* ventured dangerously close to parody as Young switched to all-out rockabilly and sported the 1950's style, slicked-back haircuts and all. Crowds at his concerts were reported to have split after the "normal" set ended and the encore à la *Happy Days* began. Once again, though, Neil Young didn't seem to give a damn. He did things his own way.

Following a splendid and accomplished country-rock hoe-down tour with yet another band, the International Harvesters, Young signed on with Geffen Records, home to fellow cronies Don Henley, Joni Mitchell and Robbie Robertson, in 1984. His recorded output (*Old Ways*, *Landing On Water*, and Neil Young and the Blue Notes' *This Note's For You*) for the next several years showed typical signs of brilliance, but didn't meet the new company's "criteria."

They accused him, and even sued him, for not trying. As strange and juvenile as that seems, it only infuriated Young, who, after fulfilling his five-album deal, returned to his original recording home, Reprise.

It would seem that a musician who proved his worth in several incarnations, with electric and acoustic albums, and continually performed well in concert to loyal, maximum capacity



Young with David Crosby



crowds, should have been able to dictate his own artistic path. In that heathen-greed dominated decade of the '80s, however, that was not always the case.

As if suddenly free again, or mystically inspired, Young's late '80s and early '90s work brought the master of rust back into the mainstream with his typically eclectic mix of rock, country, folk and punk. The folks at Geffen must have second guessed their actions.

Since 1989 alone, the eternally prolific Young has put out a succession of great albums: *Freedom*, *Ragged Glory* (with Crazy Horse), *Arc*, *Weld* (both live albums), *Harvest Moon* and *MTV Unplugged*.

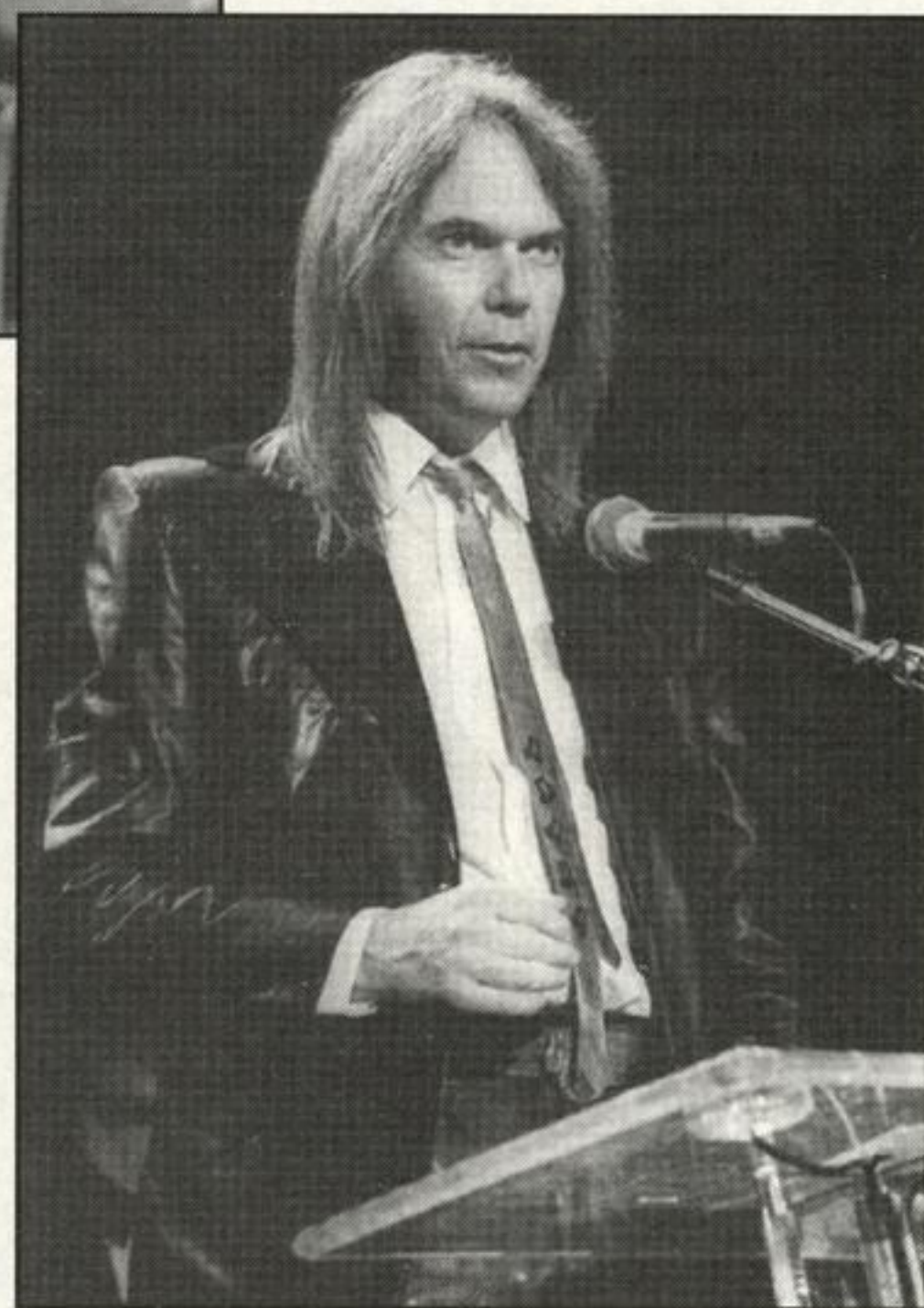
With *Harvest Moon*, Young revisits *Harvest*'s band from 20 years before, including old friends James Taylor, Linda Ronstadt and the Stray Gators, to pull off a simply gorgeous album of acoustic rock songs for the '90s. It has also snagged two Grammy nominations for Young, although he has yet to win the elusive award.

In October 1992, Young's fiery, balls-to-the-wall performance at the Bob Dylan tribute concert certainly showed whose energy was "on." He had to follow the notorious booing of Sinéad O'Connor, and he did so in characteristically chaotic form, burning through Dylan's "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" and "All Along The Watchtower." Undoubtedly, the crowd's pitiful contempt and lack of tolerance for the Pope-bashing O'Connor had an emotional effect on Young, but it wouldn't have mattered what song he played that night. He was on fire.

From that glorious moment of potential disaster came Young's latest live collaboration with Booker T & the MG's. Moreover, the close of 1993 brought the penultimate musical moment of the old meeting the new — Neil Young backed up by young hard rock heroes, Pearl Jam, at the MTV Music Awards.

While many artists, veteran or rookie, stick to tried and true formulas, Neil Young has proven throughout his career that it's possible to shine by daring to be different. ■

Ron Delany



Young at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992

BASS-ICALLY UNIQUE

Rob Wasserman and sixteen friends play trios.

By Roger Len Smith

Rob Wasserman's resume is so full, it's ridiculous. To say that the tall, curly-haired bassist is in demand is an understatement. It is no wonder because Wasserman, at 41, has already accomplished much. He has recorded and toured with legends, garnered acclaim in Critics' and Readers' Polls and even earned music's coveted prize, the Grammy.

Some of the California native's collaborations include funky pop with Oingo Boingo; soulful rock from Ireland with Van Morrison; fast-pickin' bluegrass and swing with David Grisman and Frenchman Stephane Grappelli; soulful female rock with Rickie Lee Jones; blues with the man who gave the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin something to sing about — Willie Dixon; urban rock poetry with Lou Reed; and his most recent association — an acoustic duo with Grateful Dead rhythm guitarist, Bob Weir. In addition, Wasserman has also managed to put out two critically-lauded solo albums.

Now he has finally released the long-awaited *Trios* on MCA/GRP. This astounding third album and final installment in a unique trilogy built around the acoustic and electric upright bass is also a bizarre mesh of new live-in-the-studio recordings that refuse to follow pop trends or rules. The release is accompanied by a 32-page art book that highlights photographs of the many sessions as they were being performed. This high budget, spiral bound book will help propel the project in its marketing.

Featuring a smorgasbord of musicians from diverse realms of the rock, blues, jazz, alternative and classical worlds, *Trios* is a project like no other. The Grateful Dead's John Cutler co-produced the 14 tracks with Wasserman, most of which were recorded at the Dead's studio in San Rafael. Wasserman and his bass join forces with an eclectic collage of twosomes, and the results couldn't be more varied: main Beach Boy Brian Wilson and daughter Carnie collaborate for the first time on the heartshaking "Fantasy Is Reality/Bells Of Madness;" Elvis Costello and Marc Ribot swing their way through their campy "Put Your Big Toe In The Milk Of Human Kindness;" Bruce Hornsby and Branford Marsalis jazz up "White-Wheeled Limousine;" Edie Brickell and Jerry Garcia wax strange and psychedelic on the spontaneous "Zillionaire" and the truly out-there "American Popsicle;" Willie Dixon and drummer Al Duncan groove on "Dustin' Off The Bass;" Bob Weir and Neil Young strum neogrunge-like on "Easy Answers;" Chris Whitley and Primus leader Les Claypool play funky folk on Whitley's "Home Is Where You Get Across;" and two inspired cellists, Matt Haimovitz and Kronos Quartet's Joan Jeanrenaud, integrate beautifully the classical form and backwoods gypsy spirit. Wasserman's specialized six-string Clevinger electric upright bass ties it all together.

Organizing 16 world-class musicians, however, proved to be a painstakingly slow process, soaking up five years in-between Wasserman's other high-profile projects. "Some sessions were two years in just the scheduling," cites Wasserman.

The most difficult tune to organize was the Wilson track, which is two pieces molded into one. The "Bells Of Madness" section was composed by Sam Phillips, wife of producer/musi-



Jay Blakesberg

cian T-Bone Burnett. Phillips is an accomplished songwriter in her own right and contributed the heartfelt lyrics. She poignantly captures the difficulty of a father-child relationship in a troubled family: *When I hear the bells of madness ring/I will listen to the silence/Love is louder than anything/and peaceful in its violence.*

Wasserman and the elder Wilson then added the "Fantasy Is Reality" bridge section, which is pure '60s style Beach Boys doo-wop harmony. "It was quite a challenge to put that together," says Wasserman. "It was just a major venture; that one took the longest."

Whereas such a diversity of material could threaten to disrupt the flow and cohesion of a concept album, Wasserman and his cohorts steered clear of possible confusion by remaining true to the spirit of improvisation and collaboration. It is, in fact, the spirit and variety of artistic freedom that provides its strength.

"It's not a light album, it's not like light beer or anything," laughs Wasserman, and then adds in his casual understated tone, "you've gotta actually listen. It's not a party record."

"The first side is more Western," he continues, "the whole thing goes from West to East. West as in pop, a little more in the pocket, accessible, Western harmonies. And the other side gets more and more swampy, improv. That's the way I wanted it. If you hang in there 'til the end, it's an adventure!"

Wasserman's adventure began in 1983 with the release of *Solo* (Rounder), a fluid and sparse collection of bass pieces performed live with no overdubs. On *Solo*, Wasserman ably proves that a bass can simultaneously provide rhythm, melody and even harmony. Produced in part with the help of a composer's grant from the National Endowment of the Arts, *Solo* attracted critics' and fans' ears alike.

In 1988, he stepped up to the major leagues



Al Duncan, Willie Dixon and Wasserman

with *Duets*, released on the giant MCA, featuring classy interpretations of old standard swing tunes, Tin Pan Alley songs, a specially written Leonard Cohen piece and several others. Performed by Wasserman and a handful of the best singers around today, *Duets* was nominated for three Grammys, won one (for Bobby McFerrin's "Brothers") and brought Wasserman a heaping load of glowing media praise.

Consequently, then, *Trios* begins where *Duets* left off, escorting the listener through five decades of musicians and several hemispheres of cultural influence on its strange journey from the Wilsons' opening number to its Garcia/Brickell conclusion.

Sitting on the wooden deck of Bob Weir's hillside Mill Valley home, Wasserman relaxes as he ruminates about how his trilogy came together. "[*Solo*] was sort of a sketch, an overall vision of what I wanted," he explains. "It

became more apparent when I was doing *Duets*. So one led to the next, and then I realized it was a trilogy. That seemed like it completed the cycle."

Since *Solo* is just that, one bass and no special guests, it is also the lightest, in form and content, of the trilogy. Venturing into the land of flamenco and classical, Wasserman utilizes the bow to create a resonate, cello-like intensity. Beautiful and stark in its sparseness, however, *Solo* sets the stage for something bigger.

Duets takes the listener to a world before rock 'n' roll. The sparseness is still there, but this time there's the added attraction of the splendid vocals of Aaron Neville, Rickie Lee Jones, Jennifer Warnes, Dan Hicks, Cheryl Bentz, Bobby McFerrin, Lou Reed and the crisp violin of master Stephane Grappelli. Putting composition aside for the moment, Wasserman and his eight duet partners play "songs they've loved since they were little." Except for one bass duet (with himself) and McFerrin's own "Brothers," all of the pieces on *Duets* are standards from earlier decades. Jones' contribution is a piece her father wrote and sang to her when she was a child.

Unlike many of the so-called duet albums of recent years, *Duets* takes the meaning literally and features actual live duets. "That's what bothers me about all these duets' albums that are coming out," says Wasserman. "If you call two people singing amidst a sea of sidemen, 'duets', then I don't know what a duet is anymore."

For example, Frank Sinatra's recent all-star 'duet' album had the manufactured aspect of Sinatra recording all of his parts first and having the other singers put their parts on at a later date. "From what I've heard," says Wasserman, "[Sinatra] never even saw half of the people he recorded with. Not only that, they used orchestras and bands. To me, a duet is just two people."

And, as Wasserman is quick to point out, the same rule applies for *Trios*.

"*Trios* is just three people a track," he emphasizes, "and if sometimes it sounds like



Wasserman, Edie Brickell and Jerry Garcia



Henry Diltz

Wasserman with Marc Ribot and Elvis Costello

twenty, it's because we're playing twenty parts, but it's still the same three people. No side people allowed."

And while the concept of recording each tune live in the studio remains the same, the big difference with the new project is that each song is a new one. The exception is blues pioneer Willie Dixon's contribution, "Dustin' Off The Bass," which he wrote thirty years ago.

Following "Country" (part one of Wasserman's own instrumental trio that is interspersed throughout the album) and "Zillionaire," comes the gruff voice of Dixon barking out his lyrics "Rub it!" in true blues fashion. Dixon and Chuck Berry drummer, Al Duncan, slide into the mix with a smooth and swinging drum part. "You can't get a machine to play that," says Wasserman.

"[Dixon] did ['Dustin' Off The Bass'] with his son who was a bass player," Wasserman explains, "as a way to jam on stage with two basses — upright bass and electric bass. They did that for years in the show. And then we met, and I told him I wanted to do a tune with him playing bass, and he immediately wanted to do that because that was the one he'd always done with his son."

Wasserman, who is dedicating *Trios* to the late bluesman, was asked by Dixon to be a part of his Dream Band in 1990. "We were gonna do a bunch [of shows]," recalls Wasserman. The whole idea, originally, was for him to be the emcee and play bass with me, like he did with his son on a couple of tunes. But then he got sick. I talked to him, and he said that was the first gig he missed in twenty years. Then he died; it was real sad. I was extremely honored that he'd considered me someone he wanted to play his bass parts. I was sort of astonished."

"As far as I can see," offers Bob Weir upon joining us at his home where our interview took place, "there's about nothing good on the face of this earth that you couldn't dedicate to Willie."

Weir's own contribution, "Easy Answers," comes after the Dixon tune, barreling out like an industrial assault. With lyrics supplied by Robert Hunter, the tune is actually credited to five people, looking like a law firm on paper: Weir, Wasserman, Hunter, (keyboardist Vince) Welnick and (Grateful Dead MIDI and computer expert) Bob Bralove.

"I came up with an ascending progression a couple of years ago," Weir says of the tune, "and I had it sort of worked into another tune, and then I got dissatisfied with the rest of the tune, but I liked the ascending progression."

Recorded at Neil Young's home/barn studio, "Easy Answers" features both Young and Weir playing electric guitar in the same room, providing for a crossover of heavy, distorted rhythm guitar. Wasserman's electric bass has never sounded more sinister.

"It's edgy," says Weir. "It sort of hangs on a flat-5 for a long time, which is not the most tonic [note]. Hunter did the lion's share of the lyrics," he continues. "I did the lion's share of the music, but there were other people who got stuff in there, so we just incorporated them in the authorship."

"It's an example of why one writes a song to get across a point or a feeling...because sometimes just words won't do," Weir further explains. "Words in poetic form with music, will. It's like Willie Dixon. If you read his lyrics off of the page, they'll oftentimes seem just sophomoric. But once you sing them with the melody, it all falls together, and we're talking serious poetry."

Both Weir and Young's heavy guitar sounds on "Easy Answers" are reminiscent of Lou Reed's distorted guitar on "One More For The Roads" from *Duets*. "Neil had a seriously altered signal path," says Weir. "One of the reasons I liked that particular ascending progression was because I was getting the sound of a circular saw. That was interesting to me. To have a sound that's that edgy for these edgy lyrics, I thought it fit particularly well. Actually, I

came up with that riff early on in the process of writing it, and Hunter was listening to it, and I think that might have sort of coaxed him into the direction he went. So, marrying up the lyric with the feel."

"I think we did two takes. We took...the second take, it might've been the first take," Weir looks to Wasserman. "I'm not sure. Neil doesn't like to spend a lot of time. I think we recorded six verses and cut out a couple. For instance, my guitar solo, I didn't know I was taking a guitar solo at the time!" Weir laughs, "Neil thought that that was perfect."

Weir and Wasserman, who met at the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1988, have performed together as their own duet for over five years. Based on the very full sound and dynamic energy they work up in concert, they might very well be able to make a killer live album, albeit acoustic.

"That's what a lot of people seem to think, but," says Weir, who along with Wasserman and Willie Dixon, wrote the new Dead tune "Eternity," "I'm kind of anxious to work with Don Was, as well. It's a little easier for us to pop out a live album, because we're just not a real complicated band."

The pair have been writing as well as collecting material from various songwriters and friends, Bruce Cockburn and Chris Whitley among them, for an album they hope to release this year. Wasserman, meanwhile, continues his working relationship with Lou Reed as well as collaborations with the Mark Morris project.

Another high-profile bassist, Will Lee, from *Late Night With David Letterman*, summed up much about Wasserman's approach to his work when he told *Playboy*: "Albums like *Duets* do something important. They open the door a crack for other players to take artistic risks."

The same should be said for *Trios*. ■

A SELECTED ROB WASSERMAN DISCOGRAPHY

David Grisman Quintet, *Hot Dawg*
(Elektra) 1979

David Grisman/Stephane Grappelli,
Live (Elektra) 1981

David Grisman Quintet, *Acousticity*
(MCA) 1982

Van Morrison, *Beautiful Visions*
(Warner Brothers) 1982

Rob Wasserman, *Solo* (Rounder) 1983

Rob Wasserman, *Duets*
(MCA/GRP) 1988

Rickie Lee Jones, *Flying Cowboys*
(Geffen) 1989

Lou Reed, *New York*
(Sire/Reprise) 1989

Elvis Costello, *Mighty Like A Rose*
(WB) 1991

Lou Reed, *Magic & Loss*
(Sire/Reprise) 1991

Rob Wasserman, *Trios*
(MCA/GRP) 1994

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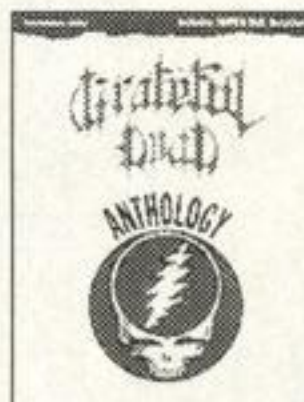
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BOB BRALOVE

BY TONI A. BROWN

Bob Bralove, the wizard behind the Grateful Dead's MIDI technology, has been with the band for almost seven years. He is strengthening his musical identity through several solo projects. *Vortex* is one of the side aggregations he has been working with.

BRALOVE: Vortex played at this year's Digital Arts Be-In (in San Francisco, January '94). There were some technical problems that interrupted us, but we had a good time playing. Henry Kaiser is on guitar. He was nominated for a Grammy for *World Out Of Time Vol. II* in the World Music category. Bobby Strickland is on saxophone, bass clarinet, woodwinds, oboe; he seems to be able to play just about anything really well. [The *Relix*] audience should know him from Todd Rundgren and from the Affordables. I'm playing keyboards. Sometimes Vince [Welnick] sits in with us on keyboards. He didn't at this recent gig, but it's always a pleasure to have him. He's always a great addition to the band. And there are two brothers from Holland on bass and drums, Paul Van Wageningen and Mark Van Wageningen on bass. Vinnie turned me on to them. The musicality between them is just incredible. They're from the Bay Area and play here on a lot of jazz gigs. They're the first-call percussion sections for many of the Latin and Brazilian gigs, and they've played on a lot of records. This is really a different context for them to be playing in.

I'm hoping to finish a *Vortex* album in the next month. The band has only played out three times, the first time was for the first Digital Arts Be-In. That was the reason to create the band. Someone offered me a time slot at the Be-In to fill as I pleased, and at first I thought I'd do something with a lot of machines and me, and maybe I'd do something kind of spacey and weird, a kind of drum solo vibe, which is what this guy knew me for. That was why he offered me the opening spot. But then I realized that I get to do that drum solo thing with the Dead so much, and here was an opportunity to do something else.

I thought it would be great to go through my little book of musicians and see who I haven't played with that I'd love to play with, and what I could put together that would be different and fun for me.

I got these guys together with the arrangement that whatever we played, we would be co-writing. The point was to come in and share, not for me to be an autocratic band leader, but to really write together and share in the creative process. The understanding was that we would be improvising. We got together three days before the first gig, and with the help of the brilliant John Cutler, we recorded the re-

hearsal sessions. So we wrote, recorded and rehearsed for three days. We just walked in the first day and said, "Okay, I've got these ideas. What are we going to do with them?"

For the second gig we did the same thing. After these seven days of recording (three days for the first gig and four days for the second gig), I have more than enough material for an album. These are brilliant improvisers. The trick is to unleash people like these and see what happens. They're all such sophisticated musicians that they catch each other's references. So real musical conversations come up. A tune can take a dramatic left turn, and everyone will realize, "That was a hip way to go. Let's go there." That creates the environment for people to really play and be supported, and I think that some wonderful music has come out of the band.

My big hope is to get a [record] deal for the album and then to perhaps put a little tour together supported by the record company.

RELIX: What music do you listen to personally?

BRALOVE: I'm a really eclectic listener. I listen for things that work for me. If I like it, it's good music. I listen to everything. I'm always amazed at how much great music is out there. I've certainly been listening to the Dead a lot the last six or seven years. But I like a lot of different kinds of music. I come from a traditional classical background. I used to write and study chamber music in school. In that scene I love Bartok, there's some Copeland that I think is absolutely brilliant. Stravinsky is one of my favorite composers. We do a piece with *Vortex* in which I'm using samples of "The Right Of Spring." The keyboard is divided up in half — "The Right Of Spring" and the other half is gunfire and explosions.

It's an interesting balance because we have a lot of technical stuff at our disposal. With the technical people like me and Henry (Kaiser) there, in terms of the technical stuff, we're very sophisticated. We know how to get something out. And with the other people that are sort of initially being exposed to it, it's a wonderful check. We use samples and synthesizers, and somebody can say, "That's a really great sound, but it doesn't feel right for here." So it allows us to put that stuff in balance. And the technical aspects of the band, to me, don't feel like the most important issue. The music is the most



Bob Minkin

important issue. The technical stuff is just another means of getting it across. That's kind of Grateful Dead training for me. When I was with Stevie Wonder, the technical thing had a sort of supreme seat in that pop scene where you want to be the first out with a certain sound on your record. You wanted to be the first one to use a certain technology, the first one to master a certain machine. The Grateful Dead, you just have to make it right.

RELIX: In playing out on your own, you're bringing more back into the Grateful Dead.

BRALOVE: Yes. I really feel that encouragement from the band. The kinds of things I have learned just by playing out and being able to assess what it is one is hearing and experiencing in that moment of creation is allowing me not only to communicate with the band members better, but design sounds that will be easily integrated into *that moment*. Sometimes you want to feel *that moment*, and you want a new sound to come in and *surprise* you, and bring out the energy and move it into a direction that you expected it to go in, but didn't know how to pull in. Sometimes *that moment* is very subtly integrated. Vinnie might be playing a keyboard sound, and very gently that piano sound turns into a flute. But over that length, there's a whole phrase while a horn section maybe needs to come in right *now* for this chorus. And being out there, getting a sense of what it's like to be playing, and hoping and expecting things like that has really given me a handle on how to communicate non-verbally with the musicians.

RELIX: Can we expect any technological updates within the Grateful Dead?

BRALOVE: I'm just now setting up a more sophisticated MIDI communication system. I'm not quite in a position yet to say that it's going

to be what I expect because as software and hardware communication developments happen, things take different turns. Until it's there, one is never sure. There's now the ability to network communication boxes and machines in the digital domain so that in the short run, it will allow say, Vinnie and myself, a more solidly interactive communication with the sound sources. It will give us each additional power, so we've gone from course tuning to fine tuning the sound. That development will also carry over to everyone else. The drum system will get refined in the same way.

The software that I'm trying to write now will allow me, in performance, to come up with a mix for sound, a certain combination of instruments and volumes for those instruments. In live performance, I'll have [a band member] turn around to me and say, "That's it, that's the one I like." And we'll be able to store it, digitally, right there and still each of us have the ability to manipulate it.

RELIX: Are there any other projects you're working on?

BRALOVE: Several of us have been asked to write orchestral pieces for a large orchestra and Jerry Garcia. I'm doing one, David Grisman is doing one, John Kahn is doing one and David Byrne is doing one. I'm very excited about the material I'm working on. Each piece will be five to ten minutes long. My impression is that it's for a recorded project as well as something live. It's about a year off. I can't be more specific at this time.

RELIX: Do the members of the Grateful Dead have technical equipment at home with which to work?

BRALOVE: Everyone has differing degrees and styles in which they work. I think to some extent, everyone has some option to set things up the way they want. Phil does a lot of his pre-writing, or sketches for tunes, with MIDI, drum machines and parts done out. Bobby and Mickey have full 24-track studios in their homes, and at the same time, Bobby can come up with a tune for an acoustic guitar and say, "This is the kind of feel I want." Or he might call me and say, "Let's do a MIDI version of this." He'll have written it. Or sometimes we'll have writing parties up at his place to do that sort of thing. It all depends on how involved they'll be for a given thing. When Jerry was ill, for example, I used to go up there and play with his stuff in the MIDI realm and in the visual realm as well, install painting programs and stuff like that. His computer art is mind-boggling. You saw the cover for *Infrared Roses*. He does other stuff that's really gorgeous.

Everybody has differing degrees of sophistication, but certainly everybody is capable of coming up with stuff like that. But it's not always the way you want to express yourself. Sometimes you just want to clap your hands and sing a lyric. At the point you want to get it to the band, there are enough competent people to help that happen and have the band members do just as much as they want. Most poignantly, in Phil's case, it's a full board demo that he could bring out of his home with vocals and bass and drums and keyboards and horns, anything he wants to bring in. If everybody had to do these demos, some of the tunes might not have the same organic quality that they do. Personally, when I'm writing with a band member, I enjoy leaving holes in the demo because if I come up with a drum pattern, I don't want to put something there that's going to try to be what Mickey and Billy can come up with. I want



VORTEX (l - r): Mark Van Wageningen, Paul Van Wageningen, Henry Kaiser, Bob Bralove, Bobby Strickland and Vince Welnick

to put something there that's going to keep time, so that when Mickey and Billy come up with something, they'll blow me away!

My approach to writing for them in the MIDI world is much simpler than in other situations. I'm in the midst of doing this sound track with Jerry for a dive video called *Touch Of Blue*. It's a couple of dives with Jerry in Hawaii. That's extensive MIDI work. We're trying to really scope that out. That would be very different than doing a demo.

RELIX: During a Dead performance, do you ever find yourself with a gap in the middle of a solo, and you have to fill in that space?

BRALOVE: There's been this little section between drums and Space that seems to be opening up where I'm playing and nobody's on stage. That's been growing a little bit. The equipment that I have to prepare for that, which is pretty much a keyboard, has allowed certain seamless qualities to open up so that, if indeed, I'm setting up for a moment and somebody's not there, I can add it. Then they can turn around and say, "Oh, that's what you meant!" and be right on it. It's a lot of fun that way. This is during the drum solo where I can add a line underneath somebody.

RELIX: Do you have freedom on stage to develop what you'll deliver?

BRALOVE: That's how that stuff develops. You have to have your freedom or you're not going to be able to deliver. But the most important thing to me during a drum solo is to make Billy and Mickey happy. And I have full freedom to do what makes them happy.

RELIX: Have you ever not made them happy?

BRALOVE: I would think so. But I don't focus on the way things don't work, unless it's technical, as much as when they do work. I try to figure out what it is that we did when it worked for us more than the moments that we missed. It's a fine line — how to give them the space that they need and also provide support. Every night we go out there, it's different.

There are sometimes references that we like, or sonic environments that we like or processing that we like. Sometimes Mickey will say, "Kill this, and move this up," or Billy will say, "Just change my sound. I've played this sound

enough." We're right in each other's faces back there, so communication is not only musical, but visual and auditory. We hear what we're doing with these headphone monitors. That's the thing that has dramatically opened up that moment of the show where I'm playing solo. Before, when I had the speaker monitors, I couldn't hear what Jerry, Bobby and Phil were doing. I couldn't even tell when they were out there. I couldn't see them because they were blocked by speakers, and I couldn't hear them because my volume was so loud near me that it was burying any subtlety that they were doing. Now if I'm playing, I can plug into Jerry's, Bobby's or Phil's monitor and say, "How are they playing to me?" and figure out the best way to make that segue to support what they're doing. The thing is how to make it happen musically, and when you can't hear them, it's pretty tough!

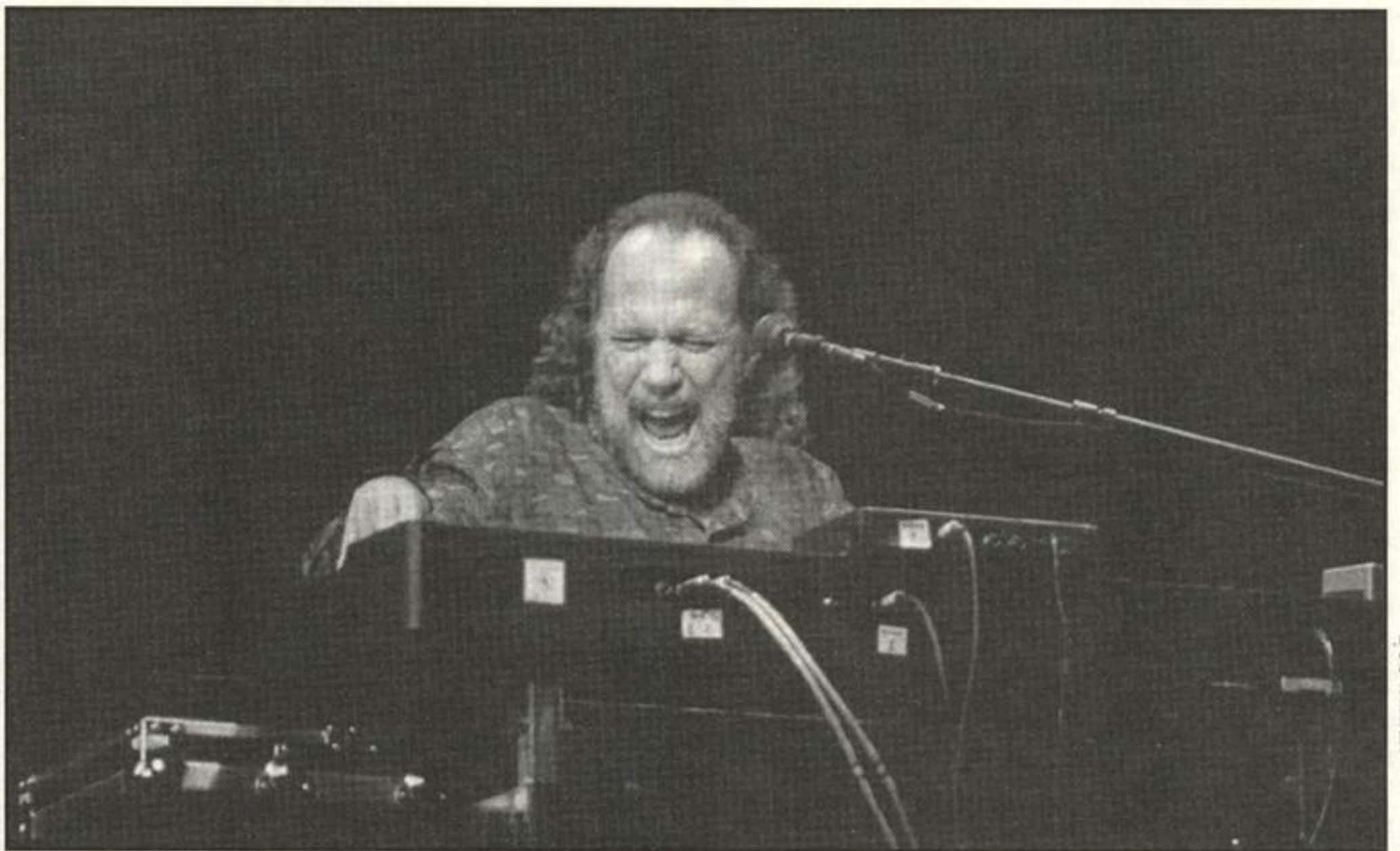
RELIX: It's impressive that the Grateful Dead has been able to progress technologically the way they have. They haven't isolated themselves within their own music.

BRALOVE: I think that's part of the magic of who they are. They are not isolated musicians. One doesn't have to look very far to see the vast influences that come across this band. Whether it's the Guyoto Monks or Phil reading an Elliott Carter String Quartet score on the plane or Jerry listening to reggae music or Bobby doing what he's doing with Rob Wasserman — this is a band that really feeds musically on its diversity and its disagreement. Part of the magic to me is that they are such different musicians. There isn't anyone who's replaceable, in a musical sense, that if the person is replaced it would truly define the band. When Vinnie came in, it seems to me that the sound of the band changed. To me, the technology is an advancement of that. It's viewed by the musicians as an element in helping to explore the diversity and difference that they can make musically with each other. But because it is an element in this bigger picture, it's not relied on as the sole element. They were always diverse musically, and they will continue to be. And they're using all the tools that they have.

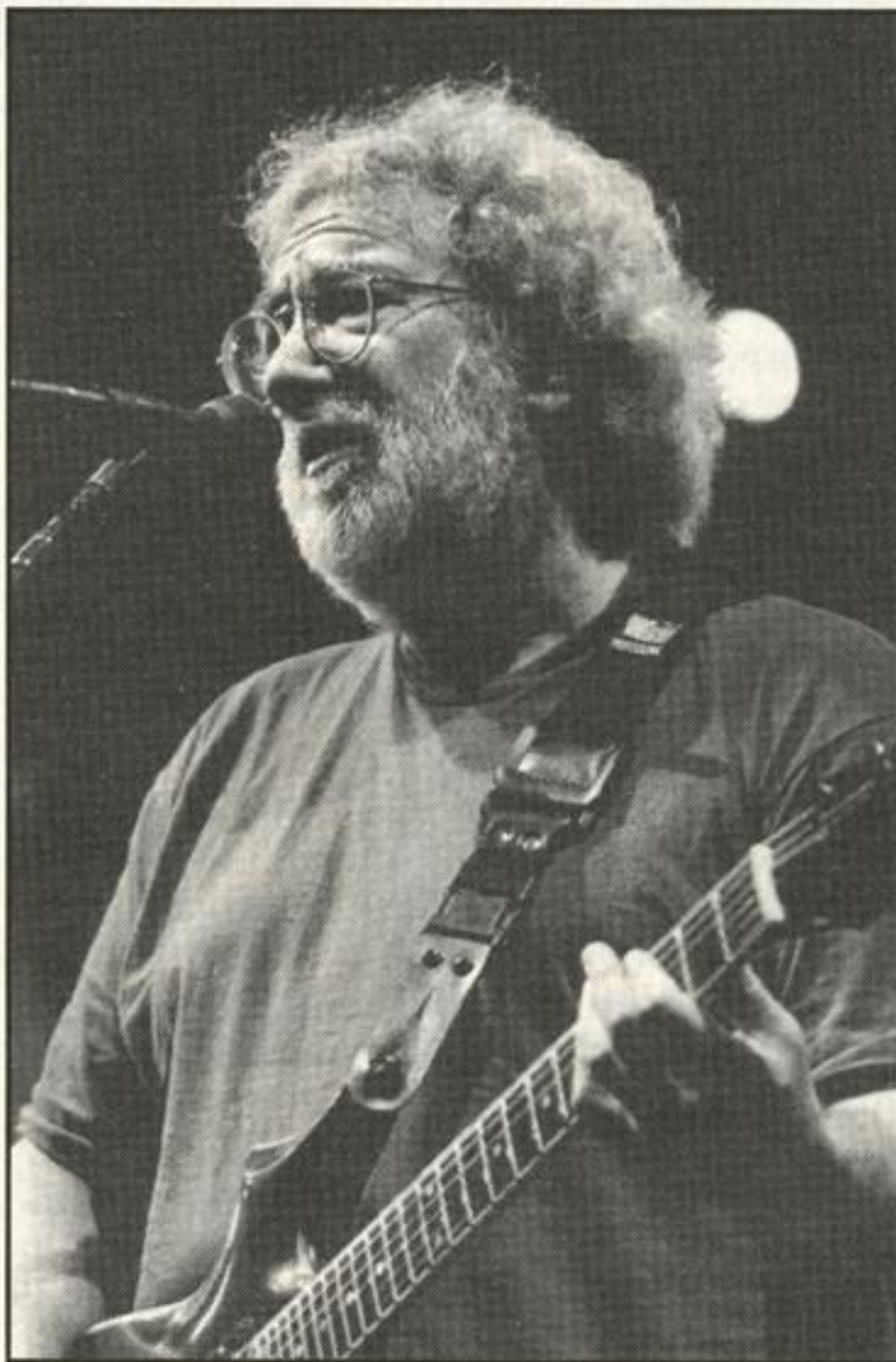
I think the sound system has always been that high-end quality. It seems like they were the first band to realize that you're not going to find interactive musical magic in a system that you can't hear each other with. So their sound system on-stage is very sophisticated, and has been for a while. And then when you make the assumption that if we have to hear well, then what are we doing this for? They have to hear well! The audience has to hear what we're doing. So you end up with the best sound and monitor system in the world. My feeling is that when [the Dead] had the opportunity to explore the MIDI realms and the digital communications possible through musical instruments, it's sort of the next step in a continuing march. A lot of people think there are very distinct stages in this. The only distinct stage that I experienced was when I got hired, and everything else seems pretty fluid in its development, to me. When Jerry first played his MIDI guitar, I suppose it was a big moment to the audience. But for me, it was the next logical step to where we had been going. Some day he was going to play this. And when he felt comfortable enough, and I had done my job well enough, he was going to play that little horn line, because it sounds like a horn when he does it. Of course, it's a great moment when something I've been working on is performed in front of an audience because that's what we're all living for, making that moment happen. But it's not like that moment lives by itself for me.

RELIX: The Grateful Dead has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame!

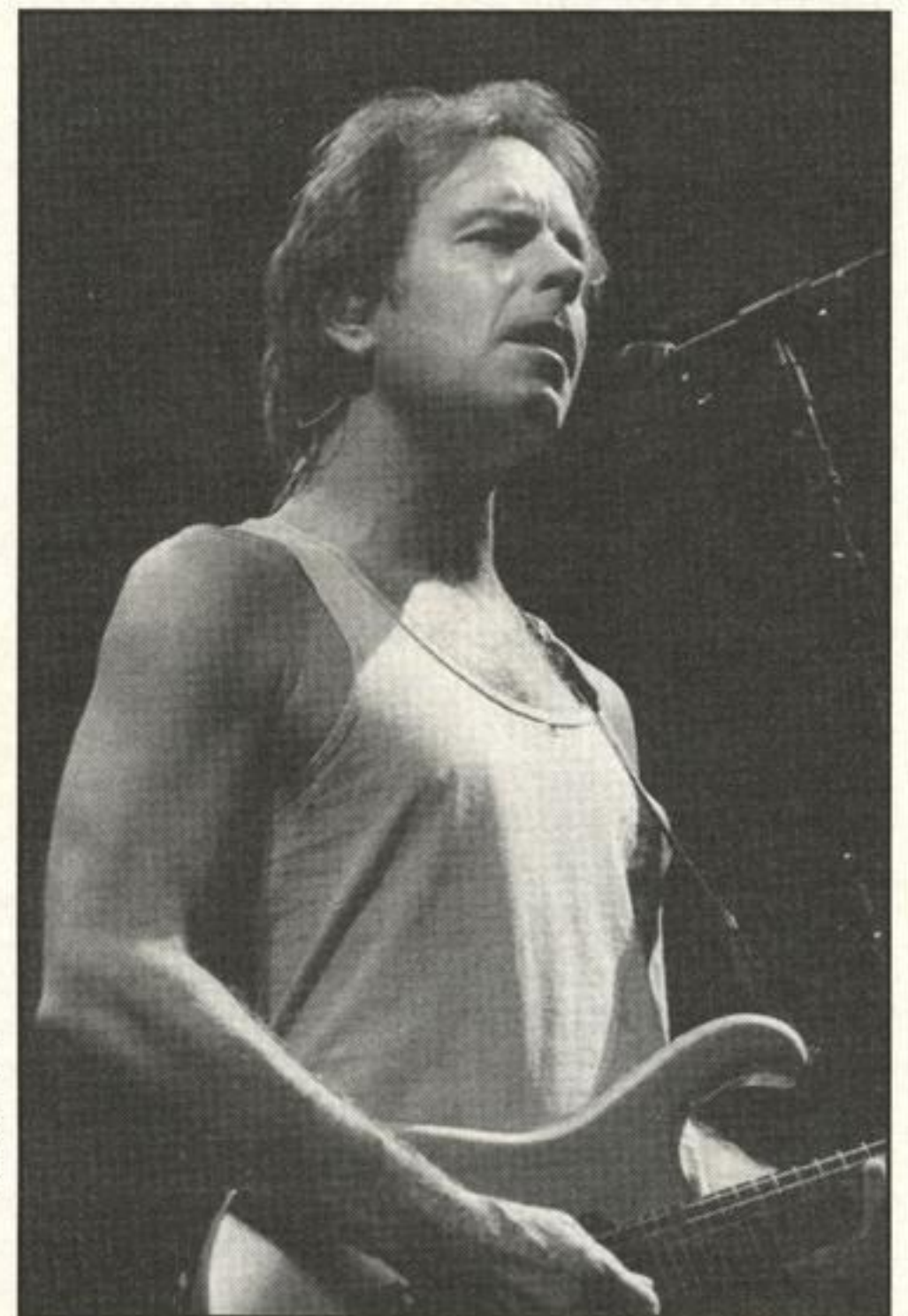
BRALOVE: They deserve to be there. I feel very privileged to have worked with two acts that have entered that scene (Stevie Wonder was inducted previously). To me, it's a great honor because it means that their music really does stand up over the long haul. It's also meaningless because their music would stand up either way, but it's a very nice recognition. I just feel privileged to be part of that music, whether it gets into the Hall of Fame, or not! I worked with Stevie for six or seven years, and now with the Dead for six or seven years. That's a huge artistic and emotional commitment for me, and I can't do that without really believing in these people, sharing the vision that they've been trying to communicate. It's nice that somebody else sees that, too. ■



Bob Minkin



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TEDDY BEAR'S PICNIC: Jerry Garcia and David Grisman continued right where they left off during a recent two-day run at San Francisco's Warfield Theater. The two acousticats debuted songs from their delightful new release, *Not For Kids Only* (Acoustic Disc). While the release only featured Garcia and Grisman, the live shows included the awesome ensemble of bassist Jim Kerwin and fiddler/percussionist Joe Craven. During their January 12th concert, Garcia and Grisman opened with "Teddy Bear's Picnic." The sleepy Dixieland tune was greeted with a rousing ovation and was followed by the more familiar "Jack A Row." While Garcia appeared tentative in the first set, almost winded vocally, Grisman's virtuoso mandolin playing was downright inspiring on the Grateful Dead classic "Friend Of The Devil," as well as "Grateful Dawg" and "Two Soldiers" from Garcia and Grisman's debut effort. Garcia proved to be a fine interpreter of some classic folk and jug band material including emotional readings of Merle Travis's "Dark As A Dungeon," Elizabeth Cotton's "Freight Train" and the Grateful Dead's "Stealin'." The band loosened up for the second set, especially on Jimmy Cliff's "Sitting In Limbo." They stretched out on "Russian Lullabye" and the Grisman-penned opus "Arabia," which showcased more crafty mandolin work. "Ripple," which was greeted by the Deadhead audience like a long lost friend, closed the set as it frequently does in Garcia's annual performances with Grisman.

The following evening found Garcia and Grisman in much better form, having benefited from the previous night's workout. The bluegrass-tinged "Shady Grove" set the tone for the evening. The band soared during Charlie Monroe's "Rosalie McFall," and allowed Garcia to concentrate on his vocals. Grisman also hit his stride during "Dawg Waltz" and "Hot Corn, Cold Corn." The band really swung in the second set, especially during the lengthy working of Miles Davis's "So What."

Grisman has remained busy, recording more songs in the studio with Garcia. He has also recorded with world class guitarist Tony Rice and plans to release *Tone Poems: The Sound Of The Great Vintage Guitars And Mandolins* soon. Fans of the mid-'70s David Grisman Quintet are well acquainted with Tony Rice, and the two were known at the time as the "Gasoline Brothers," a term that described their incendiary playing. As Grisman's label, Acoustic Disc, enters its fourth year, the master mandolinist also plans to release *The Kitchen Tapes*, some of his classic recordings of Red Allen and Frank Wakefield. Furthermore, he has released an Acoustic Disc sampler titled *100% Hand Made Music* that features cuts from most of the Acoustic Disc catalog. This set also includes an unreleased bonus tune, "Louis Collins," featuring Garcia, Grisman and Rice.

RAMBLIN' ON MY MIND: Country Joe McDonald and the Berkeley Historical Society recently presented "Berkeley Renaissance — A Reunion Concert," held at Berkeley's Veteran's Auditorium. Joining the three-hour celebration was Country Joe with Barry "The Fish" Melton, Terry Garthwait, Will Scarlett, Mayne Smith, Sandy Rothman, "Dynamite" Annie Johnson and Barry Oliver. Also on display at the adjoining Historical Society Museum was rare artwork and posters that chronicled the folk movement of the '50s and '60s. Berkeley was a thriving folk mecca during this period, attracting the top folk singers of the day such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Odetta,

Bay Area Bits™

BY J. C. JUANIS

Tom Paxton, Pete Seeger, Doc Watson, Jesse Fuller and Josh White. Barry Oliver, a local guitar teacher and folk legend, was responsible for KPFA's live music show, "Midnight Special" (where Jerry Garcia and Phil Lesh first met), as well as the definitive Berkeley Folk Festival from 1958 until 1970.

By the time Country Joe arrived in Berkeley in 1965, the folk scene was in full bloom. McDonald began working at Lundberg's Fretted Instruments, learning to repair guitars. The guitar shop was often the center of activity, a place where everyone from Doc Watson to Eric Clapton came to buy vintage instruments or to get them repaired. When co-owner Deidre Lundberg died in 1980, she left McDonald a cache of music posters that had accumulated in the shop over the years. These posters made up the bulk that are currently on exhibit. One of the posters displayed was a 1967 concert at Berkeley's Golden Sheaf Bakery, which featured Country Joe and the Fish and Big Brother and the Holding Company. "That was the night Janis Joplin and I met and started our relationship," McDonald recalled to writer Larry Kelp. "We were both tripping on LSD. It was beautiful, of course."

In 1966, rock bands were beginning to emerge on the San Francisco music scene. The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Country Joe and the Fish were well steeped in folk and old-time music as well, which helped define the music of the era. Although the sound was changing to electric instruments, these group's roots were very much evident. And it was a celebration of these roots when Country Joe and Barry "The Fish" Melton took to the stage one more time, delighting the crowd with the classic "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die Rag." Individually, and in various groups, these folk music veterans recalled an era of days gone by. Sandy Rothman and friends regaled the

audience with some outstanding bluegrass music. The nearly four-hour fete ended with the entire cast (all that were still awake that is) joining in on the Woody Guthrie anthem "This Land Is Your Land."

FOREVER IS NOWHERE: Zero has released a new recording titled *Live At The Great American Music Hall* (Whirled Records). The legendary Bay Area band recorded the sessions at the venerable San Francisco landmark and featured some of their special musical friends. Zero (consisting of drummer Greg Anton, guitarist Steve Kimock, keyboardist Pete Sears, vocalist Judge Murphy and bassist Bobby Vega) is joined by Nicky Hopkins and Vince Welnick on keyboards, and John Kahn on bass. The recording also features five new songs penned by Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter: "Chance In A Million," "Home On The Range," Catalina," "Horses" and "End Of The World Blues." Recorded by Grateful Dead sound man Dan Healy with help from the team at Ultra Sound, this release further benefits from the out-of-this-world mastering by the Sebastapol-based Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab, which has set the standard in the industry in recording reproduction. Known up until now as primarily an instrumental band, Zero is propelled by the powerhouse vocals of Judge Murphy, who breaths life into some of the finest Robert Hunter lyrics in years. Zero fans will not, however, be disappointed with the group's two instrumental excursions, "Forever Is Nowhere" and "Roll Me After." Rounding out the release is a rollicking rendition of the K.C. Douglas classic "Mercury Blues." *Live At The Great American Music Hall* begins a new chapter for Zero but, as always, it's the music that speaks volumes from this great band.

RUNAWAY TRAIN: The ongoing complaints of noise and violence from residents of the surrounding communities of the Shoreline Amphitheater





Ron Delany

BERKELEY RENAISSANCE

theater in Mountain View have again plagued the first-class outdoor venue. The noise problem is a combination of weather conditions, referred to as inversion layers, and certain types of live music that cause the walls to rattle in neighboring Palo Alto some seven miles away from the concert site. The biggest noise complaints have occurred during shows by Lynyrd Skynyrd, Steely Dan and Def Leppard, leading more than one member of the Abate Shoreline Amphitheater Noise Group to suggest that it has more to do with the volume of each particular band rather than weather conditions. Jim Lewis, a member of the community watchdog group that monitors the concerts, also revealed a shocking report that the August 26th concert by the Grateful Dead was the worst offender of 39 concerts held during the April to October season. During that show, four police officers were injured, two police cars were damaged by rocks and bottles, and someone was stabbed in the parking lot. The public, however, never learned of the riot until it was reported in the December 28th edition of the San Jose Mercury News. The four-month delay in revealing the trouble at Shoreline has prompted cries of cover-up by Lewis and his group. Lewis states that the public was kept in the dark about the riot because Mountain View Police attach a "Handle With Care" label to all events held at Shoreline. The Amphitheater is a major cash cow to the City of Mountain View bringing \$1.5 million into the city coffers each year. The venue was ranked by an industry trade publication as the second best amphitheater in the nation in attendance and revenue.

All six Grateful Dead concerts held last year were complete sell outs. The trouble at the Dead show started when undercover narcotic officers tried to arrest a drug dealer in the parking lot and found themselves surrounded by a "hostile crowd." The unruly crowd fought the police officers, trying to free the man under arrest. Officers were injured when the crowd pelted them with rocks and beer bottles. The unrelated stabbing also occurred in the parking lot close to the end of the show. Mountain View Police Chief Brown Taylor denied allegations of

a cover-up and was, in fact, philosophical on the brouhaha, stating, "It's like being at a train wreck. From one person's view, it may look real ugly. But from other points of view, it's not that bad."

NOTORIOUS BYRD BROTHER:

Michael Clarke, the original drummer for the legendary folk-rock group the Byrds, died December 19th at his home in Treasure Island, Florida. He was 49. Clarke was 19 and a jazz drummer when he first met David Crosby while hitchhiking in California. In 1964, Clarke eventually joined Crosby, lead guitarist Roger McGuinn, bassist Chris Hillman and vocalist Gene Clark in a collaboration that became the Byrds. The group mixed the British-influenced beat of the Beatles with folk songs by Bob Dylan, and literally invented a sound that became known the world over as "folk-rock." Clarke, along with bassist Chris Hillman, and then Byrd Gram Parsons, left the Byrds in 1968 to form the Flying Burrito Brothers, a group that defined the term "country-rock." The Burritos went on to become one of the most influential groups at the time. In 1974, Clarke drifted to Boulder, Colorado and teamed up with ex-Byrds and Burrito sideman Rick Roberts, and former Spirit bassist Mark Andes, to form Firefall. Firefall enjoyed much success before calling it quits in 1982. In celebration of the legendary group's 20th anniversary, Michael Clarke, original Byrd Gene Clark, Rick Roberts, the Band's bassist Rick Danko and Paul Butterfield toured in 1984 as "Tribute to the Byrds." The following year, Gene Clark and Michael Clarke toured and billed themselves as the Byrds, angering original members Roger McGuinn, David Crosby and Chris Hillman. To re-establish their claim to the Byrds' name, McGuinn, Crosby and Hillman performed briefly in Southern California in 1989 and received a court injunction that prohibited anyone else from usurping the group's name. In 1991, all five original members regrouped for an emotional set following their induction to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The next year, Gene Clark passed away. Ironically, at the time of his death, Clarke was in the process of billing a New Year's Eve concert as "Michael Clarke's Byrds."

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: For the second year in a row, Deadheads were forced to find alternate plans for New Year's Eve. In Ben Lomond, near Santa Cruz, reveling Heads turned out in droves to bring in the New Year with Relix Recording artists the New Riders of the Purple Sage and Stackabones. Stackabones have been picking up quite a number of new fans, resulting from its sold-out monthly gigs at the Catalyst in Santa Cruz. Led by the two guitar attack of Jimmy Brighton and Steve Doblick, Stackabones had everyone up and on their feet during its hour-long set of original material. The New Riders of the Purple Sage has certainly enjoyed a renaissance during the past few years with the 1993 release of some vintage material on *Live On Stage* (Relix Records), along with a successful tour of Japan. The New Riders, which includes John "Marmaduke" Dawson (vocal and guitar), Rusty Gauthier (guitar, fiddle, pedal steel and vocals), Keith Allen (guitar and vocals) and Bill Laymon (bass and vocals), were joined on this occasion by legendary session drummer Johnny C. The New Riders had no trouble wowing the audience with its legendary

songbook of such hits as "Panama Red," "Midnight Moonlight," "Lonesome LA Cowboy," "Glendale Train" and "Henry." Consistent with the past 20 years, the New Riders of the Purple Sage tore up the house while they raised some much needed funds for the Ben Lomond Fire Department, the beneficiary of the evening's receipts.

IT'S IN THE GENES: Tony Saunders, the multi-talented bassist son of famed San Francisco keyboardist Merl Saunders, is coming into his own. After 18 years of performing worldwide with such musical giants as Eric Clapton, David Crosby, Patti LaBelle, Zero and his father, Tony has staked out his own turf, supervising the soundtrack of a new motion picture entitled *Farmer & Chase*. Tony Saunders is no stranger to producing and recording movie soundtracks, having worked on such films as *The Godfather Part III* and *Willow*. With Merl supervising the film's music, principals include Bob Weir, the Jerry Garcia Band, David Grisman, Clarence Clemons, Austin deLone and Norton Buffalo. Based on Director Michael Seizman's original screenplay, *Farmer & Chase* is a gritty chronicle of a father and son crime team. Famed Jerry Garcia Band keyboardist Melvin Seals will engineer the film's music, and bass player John Kahn will co-produce several tracks. Filming is scheduled to commence in the Bay Area on May 1st, with a 1995 projected release date. Tony Saunders has also been recording and performing with his own band Paradize. The group is currently in the studio recording its second album.

SHORT BITS: Bay Area songwriter Ron Marcus has just released a text of his lyrics entitled *Changes Of My Days* (Potted Shrimp Publishing). Marcus maintains a wonderful literary tradition, traveling on a road charted by Jack Kerouac and Robert Hunter. His sense of rhyme and rhythm hearken back to the great San Francisco Beat poets. Recommended is the real life "Waitress Of Love."...Congratulations to the Bruce Latimer Show, which recently broadcast its 200th show. The weekly television variety hour features some of the finest musical talent in the world and is based in Pacifica, California. Recent guests have included NRPS, Tom Constanten, Kingfish, George Michalski, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, the Sam Andrew Band, Al Rapone, J.C. Flyer and Bill Spooner...Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter interviewed hip rockers Blind Melon in the January issue of *Creem* magazine. During Hunter's freewheeling conversation, the group is joined by Zero drummer Greg Anton. Hunter reveals the vow of commitment to the Grateful Dead in the early days, "After the Dead had been together a few years, we got this manager (Lenny Hart) who said, 'Why don't you all define what it is you want to do?' We sat down that day and committed to the band as a lifetime project. We've had as many internal hassles as any other band, but there's always the memory of that spoken commitment."...Bay Area music fans were treated to a New Year's Eve broadcast of filmmaker Jesse Block's video *Hot Tuna — Live At Sweetwater* on PBS. Featured were special guests Bob Weir, Maria Muldaur and Happy Traum. This footage was filmed at the shows that comprise the fine Relix Records releases *Hot Tuna — Live at Sweetwater One and Two*. ■

(Thanks to Audrey Pickell, Steve Block, Ron Taylor, Gordon and Robin Kraft and Jessica Blue Sky for their contributions.)



ANTHONY CRAWFORD



SUSAN STREITWIESER

Independents

★ DAZE™ ★

by Mick Skidmore

Of Seattle songwriter **Jim Page**, Robert Hunter has said, "If Jim Page ain't the bastard son of Woody Guthrie, I'm T-Bone Walker!" Grab your attention yet?

Page's latest album, *More Than Anything In The World* (Whid-isl), is chock full of intelligent and thought-provoking songs. He broaches lots of sensitive socio-political issues and handles them with the right mix of sarcasm and humor. The titles of "Valdez" and "Gays In The Military" speak for themselves, but the most impressive song is "Roll Out The Red Carpet For The Nineties," in which Page takes a sardonic view of politicians as he sings of Bill Clinton, "He's fast food fed. He likes the Grateful Dead. He was against the war in Viet Nam..." then quickly adds a cautionary note "...real democracy comes from the bottom up, not the top down." Page isn't exceptional vocally, but he knows how to get the most from his intricate storytelling songs with just his voice and guitar, as is evidenced in the poignant Dylan-esque "Saratoga Billy." Page is one fine wordsmith. (Greenwood, P.O. Box 30198, Seattle, WA 98103)

Another extremely talented singer/songwriter is **Will Hoppey** as his debut CD, *Lonely Hotel* (Bag 'O Cats), highlights. Hoppey is a literate writer with a great voice. He's not afraid to add a tougher edge to his folk/rock-based material. In fact, Hoppey sounds as if he'd be more comfortable fronting a band. For the most part, he and lead guitarist Lenny Hayden almost sound like one! In places, Hoppey is a little reminiscent of Eric Anderson, especially on the intense "Lover's Lament." The title cut is a powerful ballad with some shimmering electric guitar leads. In fact, there's not a bad song on this solid album. (P.O. Box 563, Sparrow Bush, NY 12780)

Christine Lavin remains one of the funniest folkies around today. Her humor is rivaled only

by Loudon Wainwright. *Live At The Cactus Club - What Was I Thinking* (Philo) is a wonderful, totally live album. She lambastes Republicans, Prince Charles and Di, and Dan Quayle and also sings of the joys of bald-headed men. She also shows her sensitive and serious side in "The Dakota," a song about the death of John Lennon (the Dakota was the apartment house where Lennon was shot). (Distributed by Rounder Records, One Camp Street, Cambridge, MA 02140)

Also in the singer/songwriter field, but a little more mainstream, is **Anthony Crawford** who has played and recorded with Neil Young, Steve Winwood, Rosanne Cash and Vince Gill, to name a few. Now he steps out on his own with a self-titled debut on Little Dog Records. Crawford's music sits somewhere between commercially good country rock and folk-rock. Throughout, he displays fine guitar skills and wispy high-pitched vocals. Best cuts on this promising effort are "Been So Long" and the dreamy acoustic "Cut My Sole In Two." (Available from: 1-800-788-8931)

When it comes to country and folk **Bridget Ball** is no slouch. Her latest album is *Bricks And Windows* (Hudson River). The guest list of musicians is impressive: The Band's Garth Hudson plays accordion while John Sebastian and fiddler extraordinaire Larry Packer contribute their services. None of these stars overshadows Ball's good voice and memorable songs. The upbeat country-ish "Once In A While," which has some exquisite dobro from Cindy Cashdollar, is a standout as is an a capella rendition of the traditional Irish "Donal Og." There's also an interesting reworking of the Linda Ronstadt/Stone Pony's hit "Different Drum." (P.O. Box 609, Averill Park, NY 12018)

Equally as interesting is *Susan's Room* (Zanna), the self-titled release from a contemporary folk-rock ensemble led by singer/

songwriter **Susan Streitwieser**. Surprisingly, one of the more rock tracks, "When I Have Time To Fall Apart," which focuses on Streitwieser's emotive vocals, is one of the best. It also has some fine twangy electric guitar leads from Tom Manche. Other high points are "Some Shiny Thing," about a shoplifter, and an enticing folky take on Prince's "When Doves Cry." CD's are \$13 plus \$3 P&H, P.O. Box 36M52, Los Angeles, CA 90036.

One of the most eclectic and highly regarded bands around is **NRBQ**. For almost two decades, they have been making music that's fresh and vibrant and pays little notice to fads or trends. There are no genres or musical boundaries when it comes to this band. They play it all from gritty rock 'n' roll to country, jazz, blues and avant garde. *Message For The Mess Age* (Forward) not only has a cute title, but is the band's most precise and rewarding studio effort to date. That in itself should be recommendation enough, but if you need more fuel, take a listen to the buoyant pop/rock of "A Little Bit Of Bad," the more intense "Don't Bite The Head" or the gorgeous pop/rock of "Ramona." (10635 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025)

Crash Willy is an impressive band from Chicago that has a fairly distinctive sound. The band focuses on the original songs of vocalist Chris Wiley. Also in the band is Marcus David who played with Nick Gravenites, John Cipollina and Clover. *Lost In Vacationland* (Monsterdisc) is the band's debut. It contains some quirky but excellent songs that highlight the band's sharp musical sensibilities. The hard-hitting rock of "John Doe" and the gritty look at relationships in "Mr. Perfect" are two of the standouts. There's also an interesting arrangement of Dylan's "Blowing In The Wind," retitled "Nine Questions." It's set to a slow guttural, rock beat and includes a rap-like section of new lyrics in the middle. (2524 N. Lincoln Ave., Suite 31, Chicago, IL 60614)

The death of **Frank Zappa** late last year was indeed a major blow to music and the world in general. He was rude, lewd and outrageous at times, but was also a true visionary and musical genius who will be sorely missed. Shortly before his death, Rhino released the wonderful *The Yellow Shark*, a suite of music written by Zappa for the unusual yet highly regarded "classical" **Ensemble Modern**. The ensuing album was recorded live in Frankfurt, Berlin and Vienna in September 1992. It ranges from string ensembles to full 26-piece orchestral arrangements, of which Zappa conducted several pieces. In addition to the new pieces, there are exciting rearrangements of a number of older Zappa tunes including "Dog Breath Variations" and "Uncle Meat," which are combined into "Dog/Meat." The sound is great, and the music is as groundbreaking and exciting as one would expect from Zappa. It's a true masterpiece with plenty of avant garde twists.

The Flash Girls is an esoteric folky duo consisting of Emma Bull on guitar and vocals (from a Minneapolis band I like a lot, Cats Laughing) and Lorraine Garland on vocals and fiddle. *The Return Of Pansy Smith And Violet Jones* (Spin Art) is its debut CD. This is highly recommended to anyone with an inkling of in-



THE FLASH GIRLS

terest in music of the British Isles, as that's what it draws heavily on, with some unusual twists thrown in. There's a haunting reworking of a Cats' tune, "Signal To Noise" as well as some beautiful traditional and original instrumentals. Even better is the a capella rendition of "What Will We Do," which highlights Bull's gorgeous voice. CD's are \$15 and tapes are \$10 from Spin Art, c/o Steel Dragon Press, Box 7253, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Guitarist **Marino** has played sessions and toured with artists such as Justin Hayward of the Moody Blues, Rick Wakeman and Al Stewart, but his real influence comes from Carlos Santana. This is very evident in his new album *Sunyata* (ESP). In this all-instrumental set, Marino's playing is full of spirited and emotional spiraling melodic leads. The opening "Midnight Lover" is a prime example, as is the very Santana-influenced "Jasmine." The title cut has a spacey atmospheric sound with hints of Hendrix at his most melodic, while "Ruby Grace (An Angel's Lullaby)" is a lushly-textured elegiac acoustic song that veers closer to New Age. (Marino, P.O. Box 25274, Los Angeles, CA 90025)

For those of you out there with a sense for the musically daring, **Material's** *Hallucination Engine* (Island) should pique your interest. This album epitomizes the word fusion. There's jazz, funk, hip-hop, electronics, Eastern mysticism, reggae and rock all thrown together in a coherent, if somewhat outrageous, melting pot. The results are truly rewarding. Producer/bassist Bill Laswell has combined some diverse and formidable musical talents for this project including percussionist Zakir Hussain, bassist Sly Dunbar, saxophonist Wayne Shorter, poet William Burroughs, violinist Shankar, guitarist Nicky Skopelitis and many more. The music is as diverse as the performers. "Mantra" features some exquisite Eastern ragas while fun is the prime element in an adventurous reworking of Weather Report's "Cucumber Slumber." Even better is the 13-minute segue of the original "The Hidden Garden" with John Coltrane's "Naima." The cut goes through sweeping string passages to propulsive Egyp-

tian sounds. Kind of Kaleidoscope meets Brian Eno.

Former Police guitarist **Andy Summers** has found a niche for himself performing acoustic-based music that skirts the frontiers of avant garde jazz and New Age. His latest album is *Invisible Thread* (Mesa), a collaboration with fellow guitarist **John Etheridge**. Together these two expand the horizons of the acoustic guitar with some intense playing. This is not wimpy, middle of the road stuff, but virtuoso playing that's full of passion and intensity. Best examples of this are the thundering riffs of "Radiant Lizards," a wonderful take of Django Rheinhardt's "Nuages" and the superb "Archimedes." (Distributed by Rhino Records)

Kerry Kearney, the guitarist from the Marty Balin Band, appeared on and wrote a couple of songs for Balin's *Better Generation* album. *Ships In The Forest* (GWE) is his solo debut. Balin returns the favor here, singing on their joint composition the full-tilt rocker "Love Me Slow." The album's pretty mainstream, but Kearney is a fine player with some

good songs, notably the infectious "Need A Little Loving Sometimes." (70 Route 202 North, Peterborough, NH 03458)

Doug Jay is one hot harmonica player as his latest solo album, *Until We Meet Again* (Blue Jay), proves. Jay, originally from New York, settled in the Bay Area in the early '90s. Jay hops about roots music with ease and conviction, and is backed here by some of the area's best blues players. There's some enticing jump blues on "Knucklehead" and B.B. King's "She's Dynamite" with a splash of rockabilly on "Love My Baby." He rocks out on "I'm All Alone" and wails away crazily on the atmospheric instrumental title cut (which evokes images of spaghetti westerns). Jay adds a swampy Bayou feeling to the Creedence-influenced "I'll Be Your Fool." (\$15 plus \$1.50 P&P to: Blue Jay Productions, P.O. Box 470998, San Francisco, CA 94147)

Arlen Roth has long been a noted session guitarist (he played the guitar parts in the movie *Crossroads*) and author of a number of instructional books on guitar playing. *Toolin' Around* (Blue Plate Music) is his latest solo album. Some of the backing in this instrumental set doesn't match Roth's virtuoso playing, yet the end results are still of note. He swaps licks with Danny Gatton on a lively "Tequila" and delves into contemporary country in "Let It Slide" (with dobro player Jerry Douglas). The best examples of Roth's playing are in Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade Of Pale" and the rockabilly run-through of "Six Days On The Road" with Stray Cat Brian Setzer. (33 Music Square West,

Suite 102A, Nashville, TN 37203)

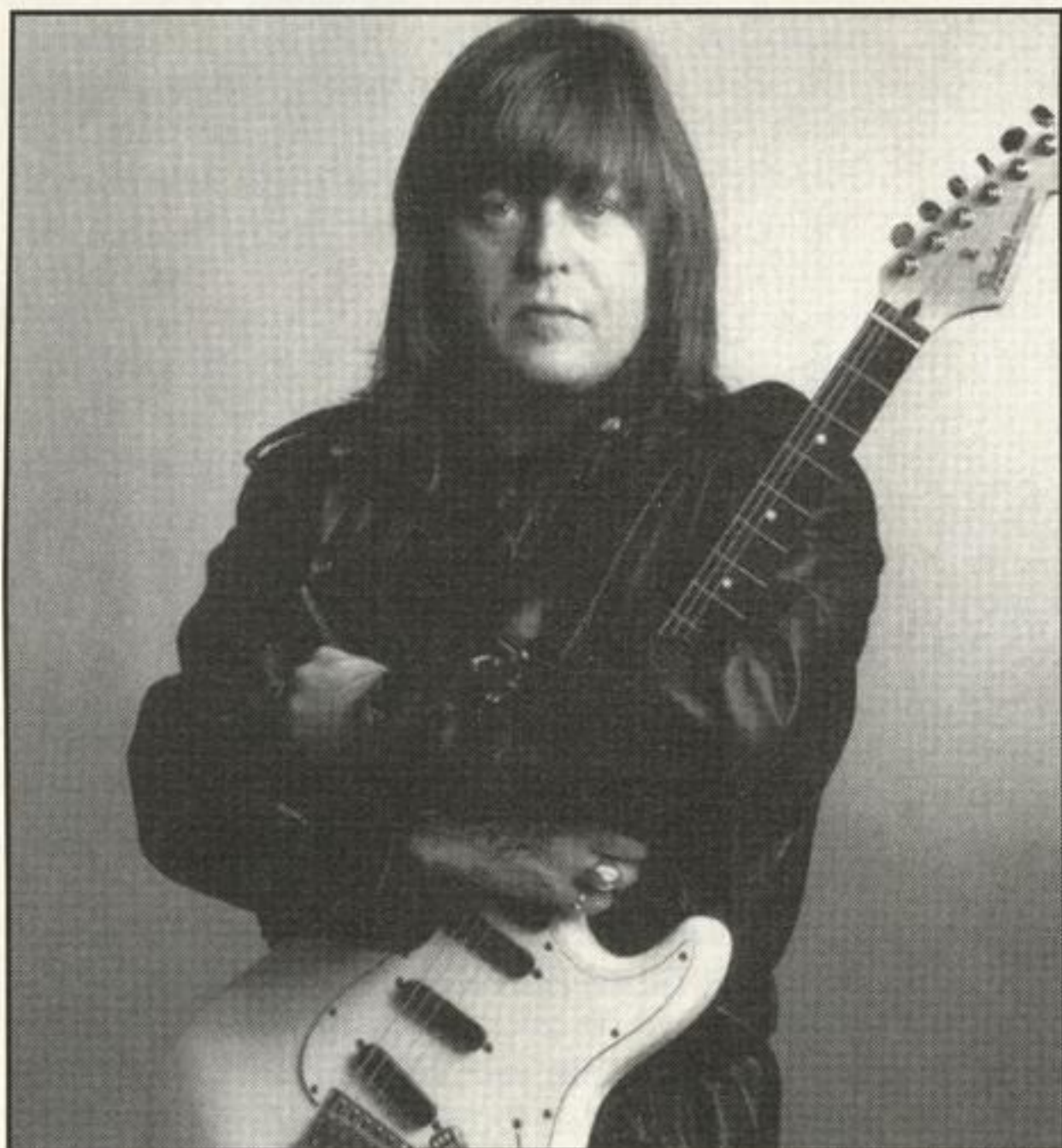
Rick Derringer is another noted guitarist whose forte is hard-hitting blues-rock. *Back To The Blues* (BBI) is his first solo album since 1983. No new ground is broken here, but there's some tenacious playing that'll delight fans and do his considerable reputation no harm at all. His playing is as crisp and powerful as ever. From a songwriting point of view, there's no "Rock & Roll Hoochie Koo," although several cuts stand out, especially the breakneck rocker "Blue Suede Blues," the slip and sliding "Blues All Night Long" and the guttural blues of "Sorry For Your Heartache." (P.O. Box 27766, Los Angeles, CA 90027)

Guitarist **Loren Mazzacane** has a sound of his own. Avant garde barely points you in the right direction. He is, however, a guitar player with a cunning sense of adventure and a real feel for mood and texture. His latest album, *Hell's Kitchen Park* (Black Label), is a cityscape suite for guitar and voice. The music was inspired by the old New York Irish slum of the turn of the century. Mazzacane weaves an eerie and mesmerizing mix of blues influences with hints of Irish melodies. Intense, if offbeat, stuff. (P.O. Box 2344, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008)

An album that touches on New Age and World Beat with sensitivity and imagination is *One Fine Mama* (Raven) by **Native Ground**. This trio consists of guitarist Al Shackman, percussionist Gordy Ryan (who has played with Carlos Santana, Mickey Hart and Olatunji's Drums of Passion) and Gary Thomas who plays the Australian Aboriginal instrument, the didgeridoo. *One Fine Mama* is an atmospheric melding of diverse sounds, but is remarkably cohesive due to the obvious musical empathy between these guys. Shackman's melodic gui-



MARINO



RICK DERRINGER

tar lines weave over the mix of African and Australian percussion sounds, and the music is rich in melody and feeling. Highly recommended. (CD \$15.95 post paid from Raven, P.O. Box 2034, Red Bank, NJ 07701)

It's true you can't get away from the R.E.M. influence in the music of Atlanta-based **Three Walls Down**. In fact, *Building Our House* (Rust Records) was produced by R.E.M.'s Mike Mills. Three Walls focuses on buoyant pop/rock with a folk twist and strong melodic leanings. The opening "Wooden Nails" is a

strong cut, but again smacks of R.E.M. Nonetheless, the band is at its best in the strident "Stalking Dissidents," a song that attacks censorship and political oppression, and the tougher-sounding "Things I've Tried." Both songs have them forging more of their own identity. All in all, a very promising band. (P.O. Box 939, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272)

Last, but not least, are a number of good country and bluegrass albums. **Sandy Rothman** has a finely crafted album of traditional bluegrass out, *The Old Road Home* (Tone Bar). Roth shows how adept he is with a variety of traditional sounds. There's old-time banjo-fiddle duets and a couple of gospel cuts. Original Kentucky Colonel LeRoy McNees plays dobro on two of the gospel-flavored cuts, "Gone Home" and "Give Me Flowers While I'm Living." (1678 Shattuck

Ave., Box 29, Berkeley, CA 94709)

Former Nitty Gritty Dirt Band banjo player **John McEuen** offers *String Wizards II* (Vanguard), his second album that contains an all-star line-up of contemporary and traditional bluegrass and country players. David Grisman, Darol Anger, Rob Wasserman and Byron Berline are just some of the musicians that help McEuen out. Best cuts are the synthesizer/banjo "Journey Through Dixie" and McEuen's live medley of banjo favorites. ■

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JUKE JOINT™

by Andrew M. Robble

Alligator Records continues to release excellent blues recordings, and its latest releases are no exception. **Billy Boy Arnold's** first domestic recording in thirty years, *Back Where I Belong*, is killer. Influenced by the first Sonny Boy Williamson, Arnold's signature harp sound propelled Bo Diddley's hit recordings "Bo Diddley" and "I'm A Man" for Chess Records. Arnold's Chicago South Side soulful voice, combined with the amplified harp effects of Little Walter, make *Back Where I Belong* one of the greatest comeback recordings I've ever heard. Backed by the driving sounds of the Taildraggers, Arnold covers three of his Vee-Jay tunes ("I Wish You Would," "You Got Me Wrong" and "Prisoner's Plea") that were

recorded over forty years ago. His rendition of Slim Harpo's "Shake Your Hips" is, without a doubt, one of the hottest versions ever waxed. Arnold has penned several new songs on this release including "Whiskey, Beer And Reefer" and "Wandering Eye." Billy Boy Arnold is a world class harp player who belongs in the ranks with James Cotton, Junior Wells and Charlie Musselwhite.

Steady Rollin' Bob Margolin is best known as Muddy Waters' guitarist of some eight years. Margolin's latest, *Down In The Alley* (Alligator Records), covers a wide range of blues. Margolin's guitar playing can best be described as attacking and ferocious, yet tasteful. He is a master slide player and owns the same dirty tone that Muddy Waters used to get out of his guitar. Margolin has learned his lessons well, and he is one of the few guitarists carrying on the tradition in the Muddy Waters vein. Margolin has played with all the greats: B.B. King, Lightning Hopkins, Duane Allman, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Johnny Winter, the Band, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton. He is joined by guitar great Ronnie Earl for the rockin' tunes "Boogie At Midnight," "Lonesome Bedroom Blues" and "Look What You Done." Margolin loves the vintage sound, and he grinds it out on "Brown Liquor." Muddy Waters has been gone for a long time, and Bob Margolin just might be as close to Muddy as we're gonna get.

Koko Taylor proves why she is the undisputed queen of the blues on her latest, *Force Of Nature*. Surrounded by a fine ensemble (the Blues Machine) of musicians including the best young blues drummer on the scene, Ray "Killer" Allison, Ms. Taylor sounds inspiring. Remarkable guest appearances are given by Buddy Guy and harpist Carey Bell. Taylor, who has been at her trade for a long time, has personally paved the way for all female blues singers who have followed her. Her strong work ethic and perseverance are finally gaining her the acclaim she so richly deserves. The raw power in Taylor's voice resurrects the feel of the great Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. The opening track, "Mother Nature," fea-

tures Bell's blaring harp and Taylor's powerful and expressive vocals. Her re-working of Willie Dixon's "Born Under A Bad Sign" is haunting. Buddy Guy evokes the memory of the late Albert King through his guitar playing and joins Taylor in the vocals. It certainly doesn't get any bluesier than Koko Taylor and Buddy Guy together. The autobiographical "63 Year Old Mama" is a number where Taylor tells her tale backed with some intense, piercing, distortion-filled guitar by Criss Johnson. *Force Of Nature* is possibly the best recording that Koko Taylor has ever made, and she has made some great recordings.

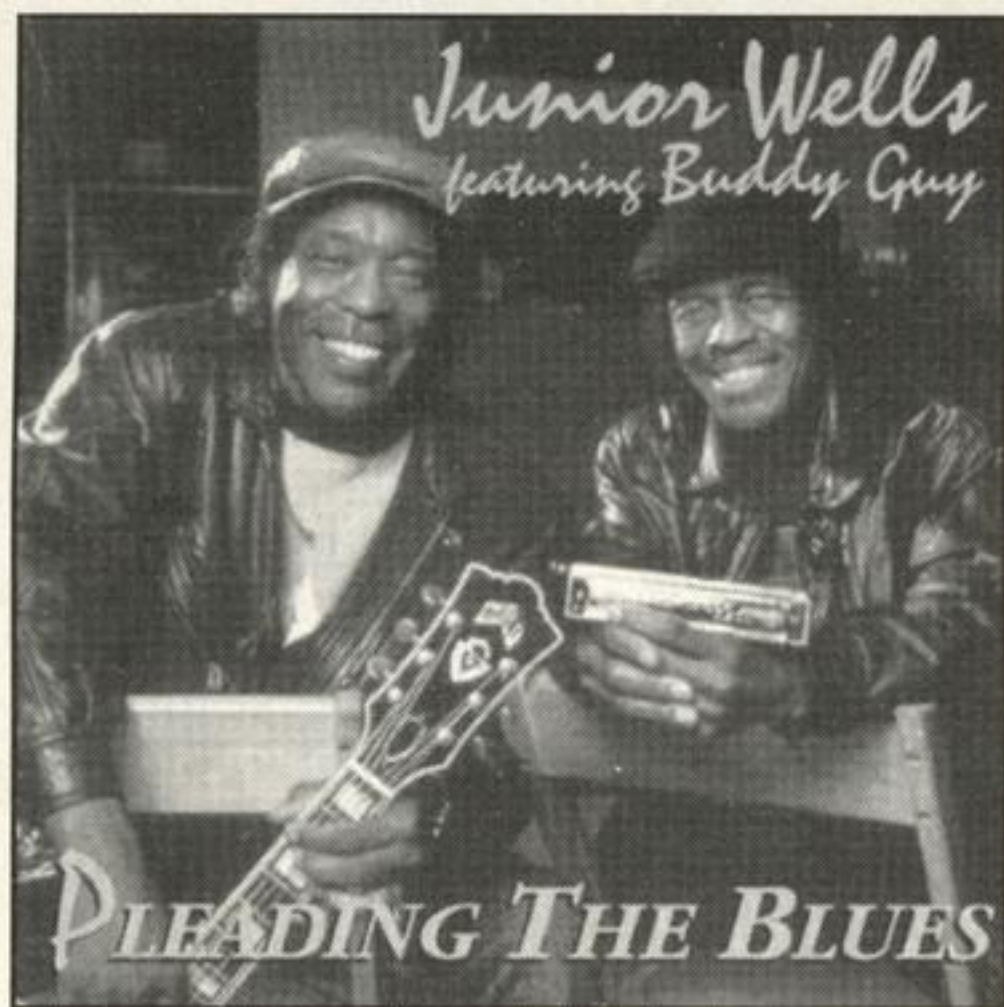
Evidence Records has just released a number of recordings that have been previously unavailable in the U.S. All are laced with fine blues, and are reproduced and packaged well with informative liner notes.

Jr. Wells Featuring Buddy Guy, *Pleading With The Blues* (Evidence), was originally recorded in 1979 and released on the French Isabel label. This recording finds the original "blues brothers" in top form. Jr. Wells, a recognized master of the harp, is equally at home playing slow blues, shuffles or flat-out straight ahead Chicago blues. His alter-ego, Buddy Guy, fills the same niche and more. The dynamic duo is joined by Buddy's brother, Phil Guy, on rhythm guitar; J. W. Williams on bass; and Ray "Killer" Allison on drums. The opening cut, "Pleading The Blues," showcases Wells' harp and sympathetic interplay with Guy's guitar. Wells' funky, soulful voice might be the precursor to today's "trash talking" rappers. He gets down in the streets and creates his endless vamp on "Quit Teasing My Baby." The guys do a great version and pay homage to Sonny Boy on "It Hurts Me Too." This recording is a throw-back to one of the greatest blues recordings ever — Jr. Wells' 1965 Delmark release, *Hoodoo Man*, that featured Buddy Guy using the moniker of Friendly Chap. The only drawback to *Pleading The Blues*, which will keep the fires lit for Guy fans, is that it ends much too soon.

Andrew "Big Voice" Odom possessed one of the most beautiful, pure, bluesy voices ever to emerge out of Chicago. His vocal approach has been compared to Bobby "Blue" Bland, but had an intensity that could bring a tear to the eye of even the roughest soul. Odom, who was also known as B.B. Odom, died in 1991 after many years on the blues circuit. The moving



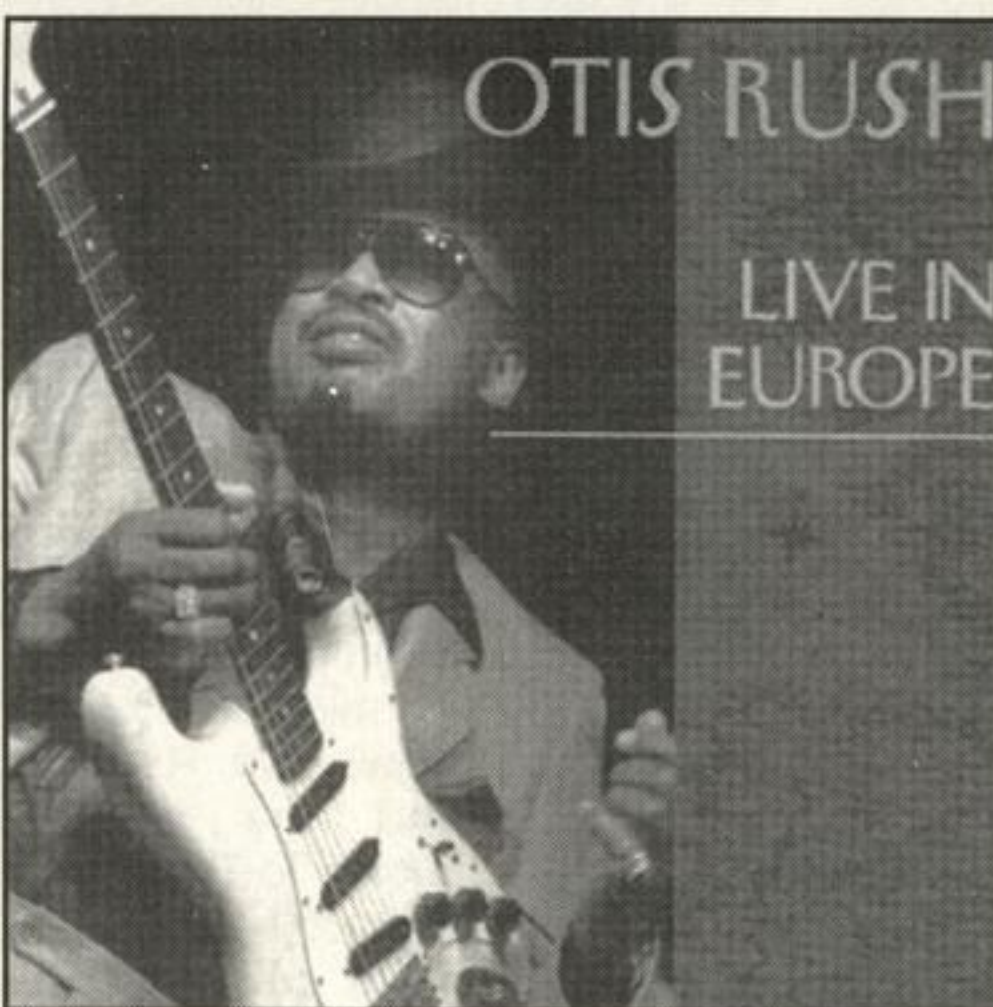
Koko Taylor



Feels So Good (Evidence), featuring the guitar playing of Guitar Slim and John Primer, was recorded in 1982 in Paris. The recording lends itself to B.B. King's "Woke Up This Morning" and Lowell Fulson's "Reconsider Baby." Odom originals "Memo Blues," "Bad Feeling," and the poignant title track, "Feel So Good," are destined to become blues classics. The recording is packed full of great, soulful singing and fine playing.

As we all know, Chicago is known for great blues and great blues guitarists. **Otis Rush**, Magic Sam and Buddy Guy are always mentioned in the same breath as the best of the second generation blues men. Magic Sam, unfortunately, passed away in 1969, and Buddy Guy has come to epitomize the blues. Otis Rush, on the other hand, is still trying to reestablish himself after the days of his legendary Cobra recordings from the late 1950s. With a history of busted record deals and mismanagement, Rush spent many years out of circulation. The left-handed Rush's sound has never been duplicated, and his guitar playing, when he is on, is tops. *Live In Europe* (Evidence), recorded in 1977, showcases Rush's uncompromising and impressive playing. The performance is fine, although Rush overdoes some of his solos by taking up to 11 choruses. Since it is Otis Rush, though, each chorus is unique. Rush's razor sharp attack is prevalent in "All My Love" and "You're Breaking My Heart." The Rush classic "I Can't Quit You," that turned on the blues world in 1956, is still as fresh in this performance in as it was back then. Backed by Bob Levis on rhythm guitar, Bob Stroger on bass and Jesse Green on drums, *Live In Europe* is an essential addition to any blues collection. The band blazes through John Lee Hooker's "I Wonder Why" and really does it up during "Crosscut Saw." "All My Love" features the quivering guitar effects (without using a slide) that only Rush can employ and also features his skills using distortion and sustain to create a beautiful melody. For starved Otis Rush fans, this recording will help ease the hunger.

West Coast blues has been defined as up-town swinging blues. The sound was created around the saxophone-like chromatic harmonica of the late George "Harmonica" Smith; the fat-bodied heavy jazz-chording guitar of Pee Wee Crayton and others; the upright acoustic bass; and a double shuffle drum beat. **Hollywood Fats** (aka Michael Mann), one of the greats of the West Coast blues sound, was the first white guitarist to play with both Muddy Waters and Albert King. Rumor has it that King



forced Fats to quit his band because Fats was getting more attention. Hollywood Fats, who got his nickname from Buddy Guy during the "Ashgrove Days" in Los Angeles, also worked with J.B. Hutto, John Lee Hooker and Jimmy Witherspoon.

Hollywood Fats died at the age of 32, but his legacy lives on through the young players that he influenced including Stevie Ray Vaughan, Duke Robillard (ex-Fabulous Thunderbirds), Roomful of Blues and a host of others. The only recording of the Hollywood Fats Band is a 1979 recording, *Rock This House*, which has just been re-issued (Black Top). The band was known for its vintage guitars and amps, acoustic bass, piano and small jazz drum kit. Although this recording was made during the years of instrumental self-indulgence by many bands in all genres of music, every cut on this release is excellent. The band swings like few others. Joining the great Hollywood Fats is Larry Taylor (Canned Heat) on bass, Al Blake on harp, Fred Kaplan on piano and Richard Innes (Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers) on drums. Killer cuts are "Rock This House," "All Pretty Women" and the piano-rollicking "Red Headed Women." This recording is a testament to Hollywood Fats and the sound that he helped create. Great guitar...great sound...it swings...buy it!

When it comes to great bar bands, **The Nighthawks** are without peer. For the past 20 years, the group has played 300 plus nights a year and laid down some of the

heaviest blues/rock sounds anywhere. This past February, the band recorded *Rock This House* (Big Mo Record) live in its home turf at The Barns of Wolf Trap, Vienna, Virginia. The Nighthawks are a live band, and this recording smokes. Granted, the recording favors the blues/rock orientation, but the band does cover Muddy Waters' "Nineteen Years Old" and Otis Rush's "Double Trouble." The rockers include "Rock This House," "I'm A Hog For You," "Cat Clothes On" and James Brown's "I'll Go Crazy." Harpist Mark Wenner is in top form, and the Hawks' rhythm section of drummer Pete Ragusa and Jan Zukowski form an incredibly tight unit. Former Nighthawk guitarist, Jimmy Thackery, seemed impossible to replace, but guitarist Danny Morris fills the very large void and has blended in well with the band during the last few years. With close to 10,000 gigs under its belt, the Nighthawks always provide a great show. James Cotton said of the band, "If you need any more proof that these guys can cook, just check out this disc."

Until next time, Peace and Blues Power. ■

Dedicated to the memory of Lefty Dizz



Billy Boy Arnold

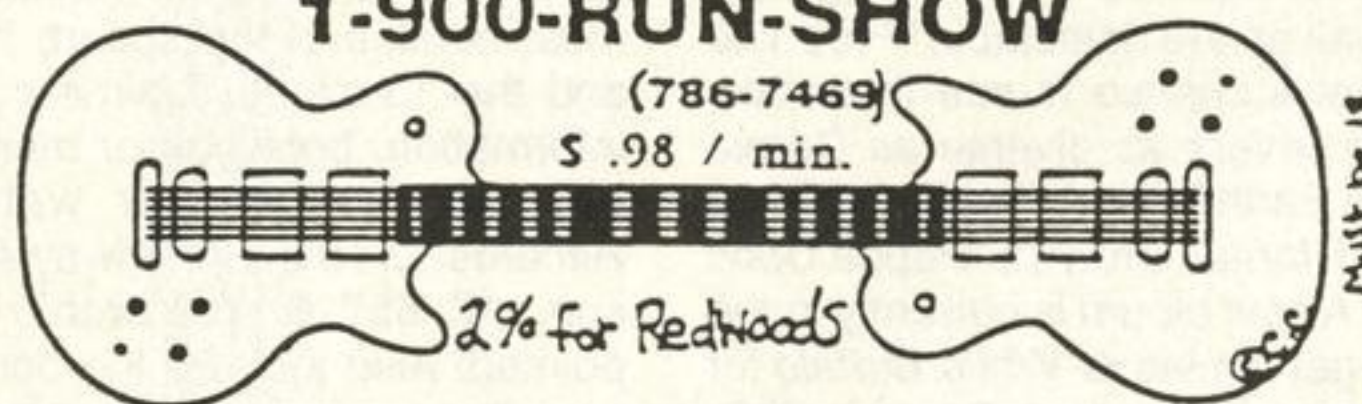
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WHITE BUFFALO

Too New To Be Known™

by Mick Skidmore

These days there seems to be no end to the flow of interesting "Southern rock" bands. **White Buffalo**, a spunky four-piece band from Athens, Georgia is one. Its sound is a mixture of Southern-fried boogie that's laced with heavy doses of funk.

The band's been touring for three years — 200 gigs a year — and has opened for the likes of Allgood, Widespread Panic and the Black Crowes. It also got a spot on the Atlanta leg of 1993's H.O.R.D.E. tour. Early last year they released an impressive self-titled CD, which was produced by noted producer Johnny Sandlin. Nine of the ten songs are originals. The sole cover is a spirited version of Van Morrison's "I've Been Working."

Buffalo's rhythm section is solid and funky, yet not overbearing. It leaves plenty of room for guitarist Britt West to sprinkle sharp blues-based solos throughout. The band's two main attractions are sassy vocalist Samantha Woods and jam-oriented songs.

Standouts on the CD are two of the funkier cuts "New 92" and "Mama's Got A Funky New Boyfriend," as well as the delectable "Free The Weed." If you get a chance to see them live, they also slip in covers as diverse as Carole King's "I Feel The Earth Move," Hendrix's "Cross Town Traffic" and James Brown's "Pappa Don't Take No Mess." A new album is currently in the works. You can get copies of *White Buffalo* for \$13.50 post paid from Earthtone Records, P.O. Box 366, Athens, GA 30603.

Almost as impressive as White Buffalo is the six-piece **L.A. Ramblers**, who actually hail from Kansas. This band started out a number of years ago as a Grateful Dead cover band although its CD, *Lost In Nogales*, (Tailspin)

shows that it has developed way beyond that. The spirit of the Dead prevails, but the group's songs stand on their own merits. The Ramblers flit from loose jams to tight country-rock with ease. Vocally, they are very strong. This is best exemplified in the mid-paced rocker "Saw You Runnin'" and the soaring "Down To The River." Also of note are the more complex meanderings of "Adam," which features some nice keyboard work, and the catchy "Mama Said." For more info on the band, write TMA Entertainment, 720 E.

9th St., Suite 1, Lawrence, KS 66044.

Stone House is a roots-rock band from Florida. Formed three years ago, this four-piece has opened for the Fabulous Thunderbirds, among others. The band's self-produced debut CD, *Flip Your Egg*, has a few rough edges, but for the most part contains some good unpretentious originals. The opening "Sun Shines On Me" has a neat jug-band-meets-country-rock sound and is a standout. "Human Beings," another cut with country-rock leanings, is also notable. The group delves into R&B-based songs, too, although not with quite as much success. Nonetheless, Stone House hits a good groove in the complex seven and a half minute "So Thin," which highlights its potential. For more information, write Stone House, c/o, 2926 Bright Street, Port St. Lucie, FL 34953.

Spacefish, a somewhat eclectic and extremely interesting band from Tucson, Arizona, has a lot going for it. Formed in 1990, it already has a self-produced CD out, *OLMEC* (Coriva). Much of the music is improvisational in nature. Musical reference points fall somewhere between Phish, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Spin Doctors and even the Grateful Dead, although its overall sound is original.

The band uses a blues and jazz base for its sparkling instrumental excursions, but has an iconoclastic approach. Strong funk elements are thrown in as well as snippets of reggae and calypso. Some of the songs have wacky tongue-in-cheek lyrics, as in "Orgasmatron" and "Wanna Mbili." The playing, though, is truly inspired. The solos are not only innovative, they're irresistible. This is most notable in the superb "Wide Tie" and the 13-minute "Jaime's Jam." For information, bookings or merchandise, call 602-624-8634 or write Coriva Records, 1718 E. Speedway, #303, Tucson, AZ 85719. You won't be disappointed! Also look for the band in your area this summer as they intend to tour in support of the album.

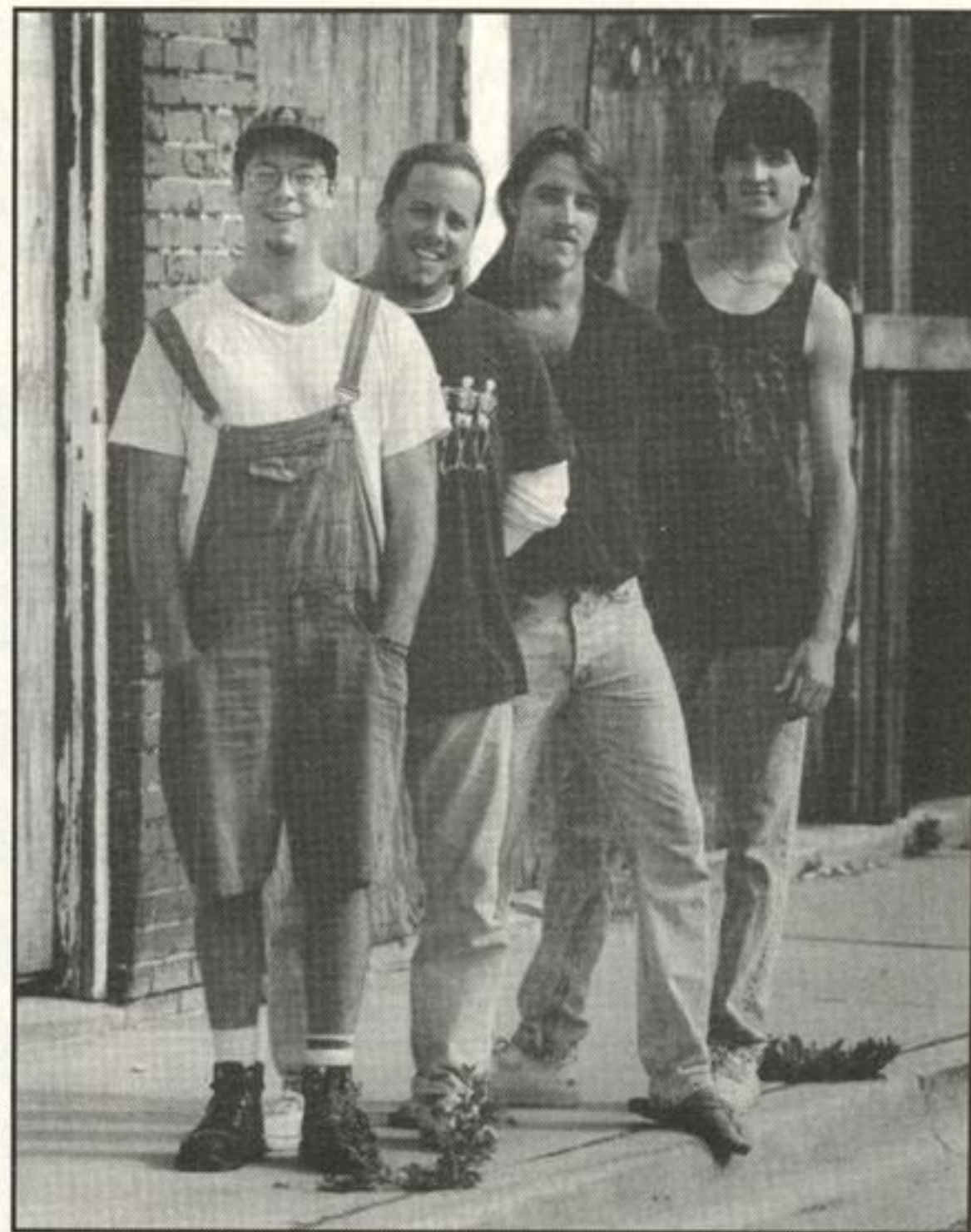
In many ways the **Dharma Bums** are not "too new to be known," but are more "too esoteric." Formed back in 1976, this New York band has played as far away as the prestigious Glastonbury

Festival in England and in Tibet (they were the first American band to do so). The band is led by songwriter Phil Void and has, at times, included name musicians such as drummer Howie Wyeth, guitarist Steve Burgh and violinists Scarlet Rivera and Joe Flood.

The Bums are all-around good guys having promoted the causes of Greenpeace and Cultural Survival as well as playing many benefit performances on behalf of the Tibetan freedom struggle. The band has several excellent sounding cassettes available including *Sacred Herb*, which includes the hemp-praising title cut "Rangzen/Free Tibet," and *Sword of Islam*. The musicianship is impeccable throughout, and the lyrical content is intelligent and thought-provoking. The songs are steeped in political and environmental concerns. In addition, there's a spiritual undertone that is a result of Void's commitment to Tibetan Buddhism. The best musical comparison is Dylan's Rolling Thunder era with a few more exotic sounds thrown in. You can reach the Dharma Bums at P.O. Box 2, Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10013.

Seattle's favorite rock 'n' reggae band, the **Ganja Farmers**, is back and sounding better than ever on its new release, *Higher Education*. New vocalist Ernest Humphrey Jr. has given the band more focus with his strong vocals. Also, some of the songs he collaborated on with guitarist Michael Auchter are particularly notable. This album is the best recorded work the band has put out to date. Highlights are the infectious "We No Trouble," which segues nicely into the lush textured "World Citizen." (1028 E. Shelby St., Seattle, WA 98102)

Zen Cats is a duo consisting of the brothers Doug and Scott Hewitt. Doug was reviewed in this column a number of years back as a solo folk/blues artist, but he and his brother have taken things a step farther in this latest venture. These days the music blends folky harmonics with sophisticated jazz-rock. The duo play regularly in Massachusetts, Vermont and New Jersey. Live, the Cats play a mix of classic rock and original jazz: "Beat It On Down The Line," "Crazy Fingers," Gershwin's "Summertime" and the Beatles' "Dear Prudence."



STONE HOUSE



DHARMA BUMS

At present, the duo has a 12-song digitally recorded tape of originals available. The brothers are joined on this excellent sounding tape by a couple of drummers and several guest musicians that help bolster the sound. The opening cut, "Magic," best highlights the jazzy aspects of its music while the spiraling "Almost You" and the closing instrumental "Zen Cats" have more of a progressive rock sensibility with some fine guitar playing from Doug Hewitt. You can get the cassette (chrome) for \$10 from Watercourse, P.O. Box 199, Amherst, MA 01004.

The Black Dog Band is a New York-based blues-rock trio fronted by guitarist Jon Ridnell.

The group has played regularly on the New York club scene for a number of years, but have come of age with its third cassette release, *Still Movin'*.

Ridnell is a guitarist that has drawn on such influences as Eric Clapton, although the R&B sounds of James Brown seem to have had an equal effect on him. He is a versatile player, and his band offers solid backing. At times, Ridnell's vocals recall early Steve Miller. Although the songs do not quite equal the band's playing abilities, there's still some notable stuff here. The title cut hops and bops with its rich rhythmic back beat and slick jazzy guitar fills. Also impressive is the more mainstream blues-rock of "Listen" and the funk-filled stomper "Junky Monkey." For more info, call the Blackdog hotline at (607) 533-7170.

Broken Sky is a five-piece New York City-based band with a more than competent demo of five original songs. The band's music is an unpretentious melding of guitar-dominated rock and good melodic hooks with a folly base. Best cuts on the demo are the lilting "Broken Skies" and the meatier rock of "Today." Judging from the quality of this tape, it would be worth taking



L.A. RAMBLERS

the time to see them live. For more info, write: 442 West 23rd St., Apt A, New York, NY 10011.

Mitch Infydels (reviewed a couple of issues ago) has undergone a line-up change with guitarist Chris Vasi replacing the departed Peter Wagoner. The band is currently working on its next cassette tape, which should be available soon. In the meantime, if you want the first tape, *Walking To The Store On A Sunny Day*, send \$6.75 to Mitch's Infydels, 329 Deerhurst Park Blvd., Tonawanda, NY 14223...Keyboardist/multi instrumentalist Jason Crosby has joined Solar Circus...Oroboros has just completed their latest release, *The Serpents Dream*, recorded live in 1993. ■

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CD Reissues and Compilations

by Mick Skidmore

Janis (Columbia/Legacy) is the much anticipated and long-awaited three-CD retrospective of **Janis Joplin's** music. The sound is extremely good, and there's a healthy helping of rarities sprinkled in with many of her most popular hits such as "Kozmic Blues," "Mercedes Benz," "Try (Just A Little Bit Harder)" and "Piece Of My Heart."

There are two tracks from the infamous "type-writer tapes" with Jorma Kaukonen. Another high point is a wonderful acoustic demo of "Me & Bobby McGee." Best of all, though, are half a dozen cuts from **Big Brother's** first album, making its debut on CD, and several live cuts from the Avalon in 1967. This album also boasts fine liner notes and recording information. More than anything, it offers a good overview of one of the great blues/soul singers. This set is a good introduction for the uninitiated as well as a great offering for the most ardent fan. The striking packaging also adds to this important collection.

In the wake of its 1993 reunion, **Steely Dan** also gets the box-set treatment with the four-CD *Citizen* (MCA). Given the \$70 price tag, the booklet and recording information is a little skimpy, as is the inclusion of rarities. What you get is virtually every song recorded by the band plus a couple of rarities: a live "Bodhisattva" and a demo of "Everyone's Gone To The Movies" being the most notable.

Steely Dan's version of "Dallas," a song they gave to Poco, is conspicuous in its absence (it was released in the U.K. on a sampler album back in the mid-'70s), but that's a minor grumble. One can't argue with the timeless quality of Steely Dan's unique jazz-rock music. Even the oldest stuff doesn't sound dated, and sonically, it sounds better than it ever did. Ultimately, this set offers a convenient way to replace those scratchy old albums in one fell swoop.

Following hot on the heels of Warner Brother's reissue of **Lowell George's** only solo album, *Thanks I'll Eat It Here*, comes a wonderful collectors' item in *Lowell George & The Factory* (Bizarre/Straight). This album contains all the missing pieces in the George story with 15 unreleased tracks, dating primarily from '66 and '67. Most were recorded with the Factory, a band that also included Richard Hayward from Little Feat. The title song is a quirky Frank Zappa-produced cut, while much of the other material has strong psychedelic folk/rock elements ("Candy Cane Madness"). There are several unfinished songs from 1969 including an early and totally different "Teenage Nervous Breakdown" and a great version of Lieber & Stoller's "Framed." (Distributed by Rhino Records)

Neil Young fans have cause for celebration as Reprise has six more Young albums slated for release in CD format (that'll probably be out by the time you read this), which will make his entire Reprise catalog now available in CD. The releases are '72's *Journey Through The Past*, '73's *Time Fades Away*, '74's *On The Beach*, '77's *American Stars 'N Bars* and, from the early '80s, *Hawks And Doves* and *Re'ac'tor*. These releases are a direct result of fan requests, so remember

that what you want does matter, and let the powers that be know! Meanwhile, the second volume of Young's *Decade* compilation seems to be missing in action.

The latest release in the **Grateful Dead's** archival series is the two-CD set, *Dicks Picks*, which was recorded in Tampa, Florida on 12/19/73. It's not the cleanest sounding recording the band has put out, but it is still much more than passable. Musically, there are a couple of real gems, namely an entire "Weather Report Suite," a 21-minute excursion of "Playing In The Band" and a great take on "Nobody's Fault But Mine." Also notable is how an emotive "He's Gone" slips into "Truckin'." It's nice to have another good album from the period when Keith Godchaux was in the band. *Dick's Picks* is only available through mailorder. Send \$18.95 to *Dick's Picks*, Box 2139 Dept. R, Novato, CA 94948 (California residents add 7.25 percent sales tax) or call 1-800-323-2300.

The latest onslaught from One Way Records includes the self-titled debut album from San Francisco's **The Sopwith Camel**. Despite the fact that the band made great music that was sort of a psychedelic version of the Lovin' Spoonful, they never got much beyond their one hit, the delightful "Hello Hello" (included here). Other cuts that have stood the test of time are "Postcard From Jamaica" and "Frantic Desolation." There's also one bonus track, "Treadin'." Now all we need is the Camel's only other release, 1973's jazzy *The Return Of The Miraculous Hump!*

The **Hawkwind** releases keep coming. *Stasis - The U.A. Years 1971-1975* (One Way) is a good place to start listening to these space-rock pioneers. The collection is a combination of live and studio tracks from the band's work on U.A. The disc also boasts well-written and informative liner notes. There are single edits of "Silver Machine" and "Psychedelic Warlords," and several remixed tracks ("Paradox" and "Seven By Seven").

Other good One Way issues are **John McLaughlin's** 1971 jazz-fusion masterpiece *Where Fortune Smiles* and the excellent 1982 **Robin Trower/Jack Bruce** collaboration *Truce*. Equally as good is **SRC's** 20-track collection of unreleased material, *Lost Masters*. SRC was a late '60s band that mixed psychedelia with Eastern influences, rock 'n' roll and R&B. The band never gained much popularity outside of the Midwest, but its music still sounds remarkably fresh today. The first ten songs are what would have been the group's fourth album, had it been released, with the soaring "Gypsy Eyes" showing the band at its best. The remain-

ing ten are various rarities and oddities including some good covers such as "Lovelight," Willie Dixon's "Evil" and the Animals' "I'm Crying." One Way also has the group's other three albums available: *Milestones*, *SRC* and *Traveler's Tale*. The latter two both have bonus tracks. Lastly, former Mother of Invention Jimmy Carl Black's early '70s band **Geronimo Black's** self-titled album is also released on One Way with one additional track.

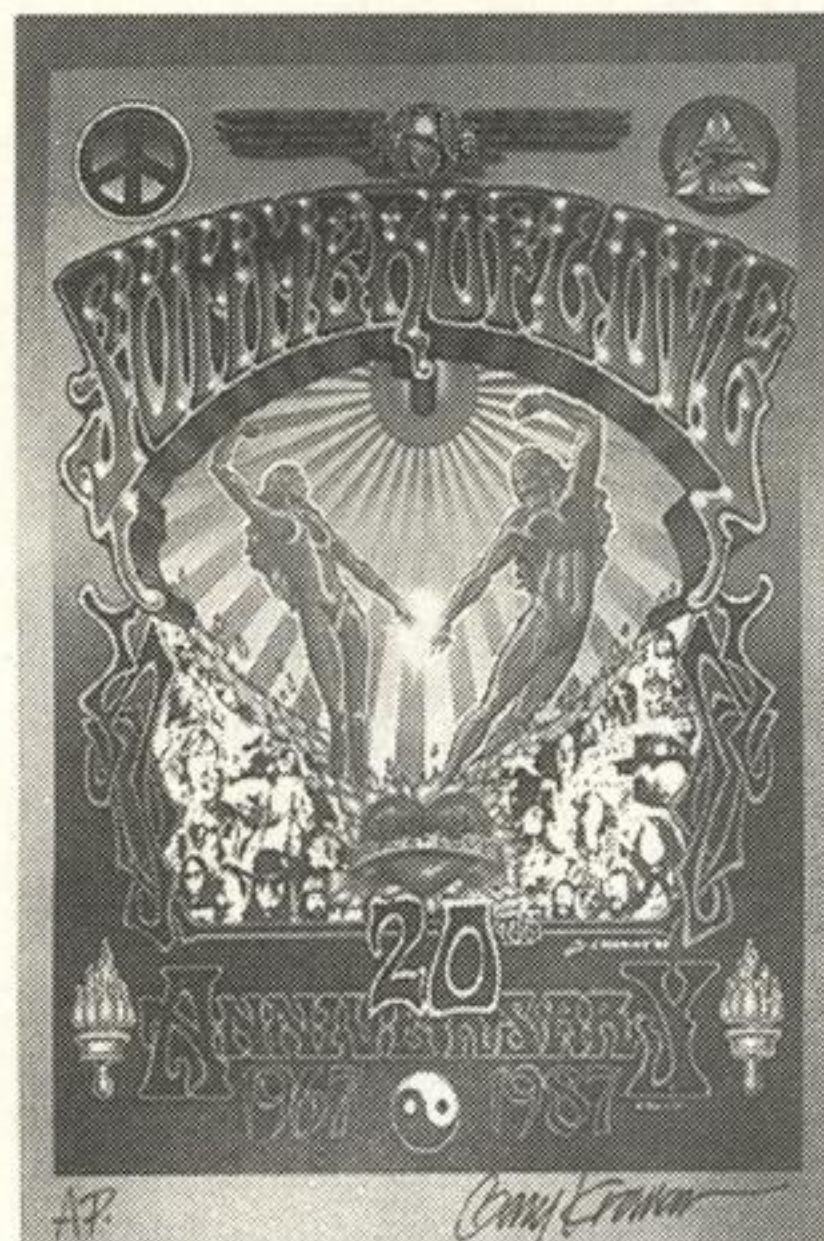
Blue Wave has issued *Buried Bones*, a 70-minute plus compilation of blues rockers **Mark Doyle & Joe Whiting**. The 17-cut set, which contains eight previously unreleased tracks, scans their best work together in bands such as Backbone Slip, the Doyle Whiting Band, Free Will and Jukin' Bones.

Also in the blues-rock field is Blind Pig's reissue of **Willie and the Poor Boys** self-titled debut album. Willie and the Poor Boys, a band from the mid-'70s, featured founders Charlie Watts and Bill Wyman from the Stones, Mickey Gee, Andy Fairweather Low and Geraint Watkins. Paul Rodgers, Jimmy Page and Kenney Jones are also among the guests performing on this low-key run-through of blues, R&B and rock 'n' roll.

For fans of bluegrass/country guitar master **Doc Watson**, Sugar Hill has reissued two albums, *Elementary Doctor Watson* (with four bonus tracks) and the superb 22-track *Memories*. The latter represents one of the most expansive and diverse albums from Watson and amply showcases his intricate picking.

Lastly, Rounder has reissued bassist **Rob Wasserman's** first solo album, *Solos*. As the title suggests, this album features short but fascinating bass solos from Wasserman. It is surprisingly refreshing and accessible. ■

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BOOK BEAT

by Andrew M. Robble

Rage & Roll

By John Glatt

288 pp., \$19.95

Birch Lane Press, New York 1993

Bill Graham's presence, shrewdness, exhortations and entrepreneurial skills provided the muscular backbone that kept the psychedelic movement afloat in its infancy. Birch Lane Press has just released John Glatt's stunning book, *Rage & Roll: Bill Graham And The Selling Of Rock*. It traces the life of the rock impresario from his dire childhood as a refugee of the holocaust, to the building of his multi-million dollar empire, to his tragic death in 1991. Glatt has researched this work thoroughly and succeeds in painting a picture of a troubled, obsessive, addictive and egocentric man.

Bill Graham was always the businessman looking to make a buck. His acquisition of the Fillmore, at the expense of Family Dog members Chet Helms and Lurie Castell, is disturbing, yet clearly foretells Graham's tyrannical business future.

Rage & Roll embraces numerous anecdotes from many San Francisco musicians and luminaries who knew Graham from his origins in the city by the bay. Recollections of Graham's treatment of Janis Joplin in the early days are described in a no-holds-barred scenario by Nick Gravenites and David Getz. After chastising Joplin in his loud and abusive manner, Graham threw her out of the Fillmore in tears. Gravenites reflected to Glatt on the experience, "It totally freaked me out...I thought being an artist made you immune to his actions...He was a very strange guy with a lot of weird habits...Graham was the Sam Goldwyn of the rock 'n' roll business." Graham later embraced Joplin as the greatest singer of her generation, all the while paying Big Brother the lowest wages for its performances. Similar stories involve the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Santana, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix and a cast of thousands.

In airing Graham's dirty laundry, his unhappy marriage and numerous affairs are recounted. His addiction to the drug Halcyon, and use of cocaine and Ecstasy are also mentioned, which somewhat explain his irrational mood and temper changes.

But it was Graham's unrelenting quest to be the best and control everything to the most minute detail that led to his rise in becoming the top promoter in the world. These motivations contributed to his greatest disappointment and near mental breakdown when he lost the Rolling Stones' tour after the band discovered that he was cheating them on concert receipts.

Rage & Roll is an uncensored portrait of the music business as big business, and the flamboyant life of rock's greatest impresario. Glatt

has crafted an interesting and insightful book that will enlighten its readers.

Musical Gumbo:

The Music Of New Orleans

By Grace Lichtenstein and Laura Danker
367 pp., \$25.00

W.W. Norton Co., New York 1993

New Orleans has always been a hot spot for R&B, Cajun, jazz and blues in a city that never sleeps. The Crescent City's "N'awlins" sound features a uniquely famous second-line rhythm.

Musical Gumbo: The Music Of New Orleans, by Grace Lichtenstein and Laura Danker, is an authoritative resource guide to the rich history of New Orleans. The authors start their journey from the historical origins of the city, accompanied by a descriptive sampling of New Orleans' famous jambalaya, crawfish pie and file gumbo. There are excellent chapters on the birth of jazz with Louie Armstrong, Sidney Bechet and Jelly Roll Morton. The heavies of the R&B movement including Professor Longhair, Fats Domino, Allen Toussaint as well as the second wave, featuring Dr. John, Irma Thomas, Clifton Chenier, the Marsalis family and Harry Connick Jr., all receive elaborate treatment.

Musical Gumbo is loaded with many rare photographs. There is also a wonderful "where to go and what to see" chapter. A rich discography section plus helpful information on the clubs, record stores, museums, music festivals, coffee houses and the Mardi Gras adds quite a bit of spice.

Nothing But The Blues:

The Music And The Musicians

Lawrence Cohn, editor

432 pp., \$45.00

Abbeville Press, New York 1993

Nothing But The Blues is a coffee table book that presents a historical retrospective of the blues from the roots to the 1990s. Editor Cohn is best-known as the producer of, and man responsible for, the Columbia Legacy's Records "Roots and Blues" series, which released the Grammy Award winning Robert Johnson box set. Cohn selected 11 blues researchers to contribute individual chapters on certain periods of the blues. The foreword is by B.B. King, and chapters range from truly academic to disorganized. This beautifully produced reference work contains hundreds of rare and excellent photographs.

The three outstanding chapters in this tome are Bright Lights, Big City, Urban Blues, by Mark Humphrey; Workin' On The Building, Roots And Influences, by Samuel Charters; and I Once Was Lost, But Now I'm Found, Blues Revival of the 1960s, by Jim O'Neal. Blues fans will be familiar with the other authors and, in some cases, reworkings of previously published pieces. The discography presents an interesting assortment of blues selections intended as an introduction to the genre. Generally, this volume will make a welcome addition to any music library, unquestionably for the photographs alone.

Harmonicas, Harps, And Heavy Breathers: The Evolution Of The People's Instrument

By Kim Field

344 pp., \$14.00

Fireside Book/Simon and Schuster, New York 1993

Finally, a book that addresses the people's instrument, the harmonica. Musician and writer, Kim Field, has compiled an interesting and thoroughly researched book that traces the evolution of the harmonica from its origins and the

effect it has had on the development of American music. There is a chapter devoted to the early harmonica bands with rare photographs of Johnny Puleo and His Harmonica Gang, the Philharmonicas and the Mulcays. Field goes on to examine all genres of music that have incorporated the harmonica including country, pop, blues, classical, folk, jazz and rock. Through in-depth interviews and time-staking research, Field profiles many of the great harp blowers. The blues is a particularly strong section. The

profiles are long enough to give a working knowledge of the musicians, their backgrounds and influences, and a few choice personal experiences, without exhausting the reader. The blues section features the two Sonny Boy Williamsons, Little Walter, James Cotton, Charlie Musselwhite, Junior Wells, Jazz Gillum, Big Walter Horton and Jimmy Reed from Chicago. Will Shade and Noah "Furry" Lewis (composer of "Minglewood Blues") represent the Memphis contingency, and Slim Harpo rounds out the Southern blues men. Under the rock umbrella, profiles include Paul Butterfield (obviously classified incorrectly), Magic Dick, Bob Dylan, Lee Oskar and Kim Wilson. Conspicuously absent are composites of the West Coast blues players such as George "Harmonica" Smith, Rod Piazza, William Clarke, Rick Estrin and Chicago harpist Carey Bell. Although there are references to these musicians, they too deserve profiles, particularly George Smith. The sections on the country, country and western, and classical harp blowers are the best ever assembled.

Harmonicas, Harps, And Heavy Breathers contains a plethora of information. This is everything you ever wanted to know about the harmonica and more, complete with a selected discography and comprehensive bibliography. This is an essential volume for players, scholars and fans alike. Field's writing style provides for easy reading, and his command of the field is unparalleled.

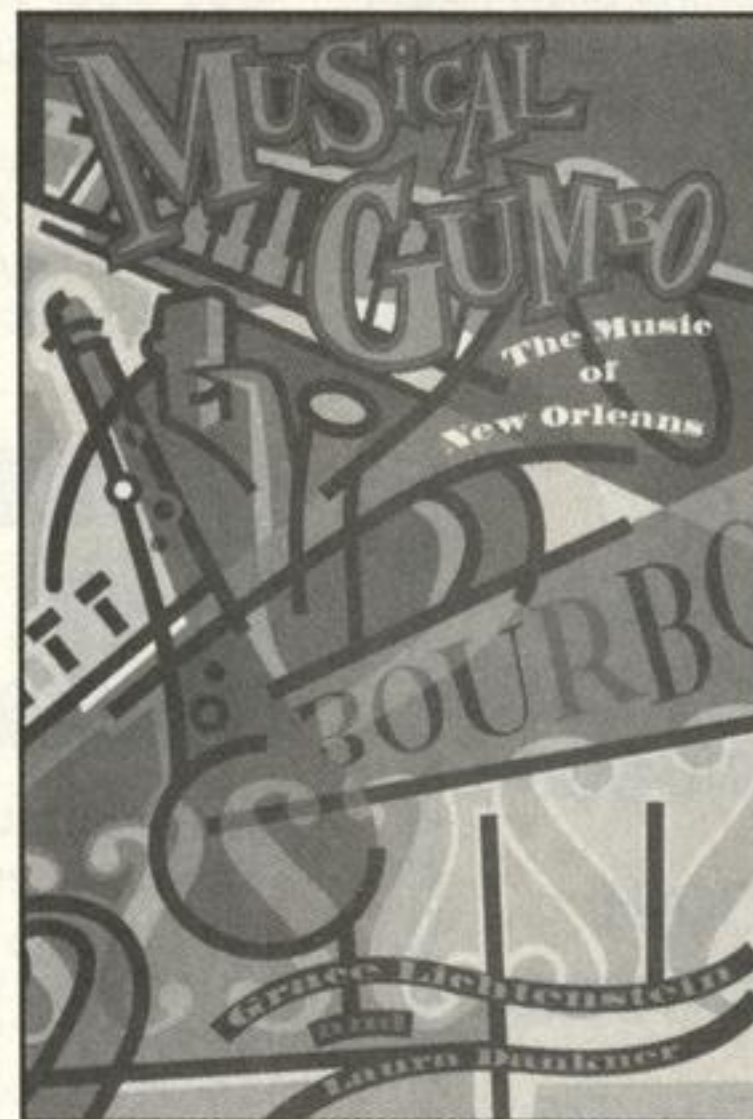
Hard Rain: A Dylan Commentary

By Tim Riley

356 pp., \$13.00

Vintage Press, New York 1993

The Dylan mystique is as complex and deep as some of the lyrics that he has penned. Author Tim Riley refers to Bob Dylan as, "The most important American rock 'n' roller since



Elvis." Working from this premise, Riley has constructed a masterful survey of the career, the times and the man, and comes closer than anyone else in cracking the Dylan mystique. Tracing Dylan's career, from his first recordings in 1962 through his playing with the Traveling Wilburys, Riley exposes, assesses and dissects the unconventional Dylan. All the musicians and stories are here, from Joan Baez and the Band, to the Grateful Dead and the Rolling Thunder Revue.

Riley's re-analysis of Dylan's compositions shine a new and reflective light on their meanings as Dylan's songs have long been misunderstood. The consensus today is that most of his "put down" songs were aimed at himself, not others. In the early days, however, Dylan concedes that he really didn't know what he was singing about. Understanding and using this theory to analyze Dylan, Riley

offers several thought-provoking meanings as to what, and to whom, Dylan addressed in his songs.

Riley concludes his fine work on Dylan with this thought, "Now if only Dylan would act like he knows whom he's singing about when he's singing about himself." *Hard Rain* is a thoroughly enjoyable, stimulating book that is difficult to put down. Highly recommended.

COOKING GOOD

Dick and Sandy St. John's (aka Dick and Dee Dee) *Rock & Roll Cookbook* features favorite recipes from chart toppers and rock 'n' roll legends. Not a health-conscious collection, recipes include song titles — Bobby Lewis's I Was Tossin' And Turnin' All Night Thinkin' About Stuffed Calves Hearts; Stevie Wonder's Do I Do Oatmeal Cookies; Paul Anka's Taboulie My

Way; Nirvana's Kurt Cobain's Smells Like Butternut Squash, Apple And Pear Soup; The Spin Doctor's Chris Barron's Pocket Full Of Banana Pancakes — you get the idea. An interesting, if not always tempting, recipe book.

Another cookbook has been published, and this one is a bit more understated and a lot healthier! Edited by the Center For Science In The Public Interest, also publishers of the Nutrition Action Newsletter, *Cooking With The Stars, Healthy Delicious Recipes From Celebrities Own Kitchens* features recipes from Paul and Linda McCartney, Phil and Jill Lesh, Whoopi Goldberg, Al and Tipper Gore, Ross Perot and Anne Bankroft, amongst dozens of others. The book is available through mail-order for \$14.95, which includes shipping, from CSPI, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20009-5728. Proceeds will fund future nutrition projects. ■

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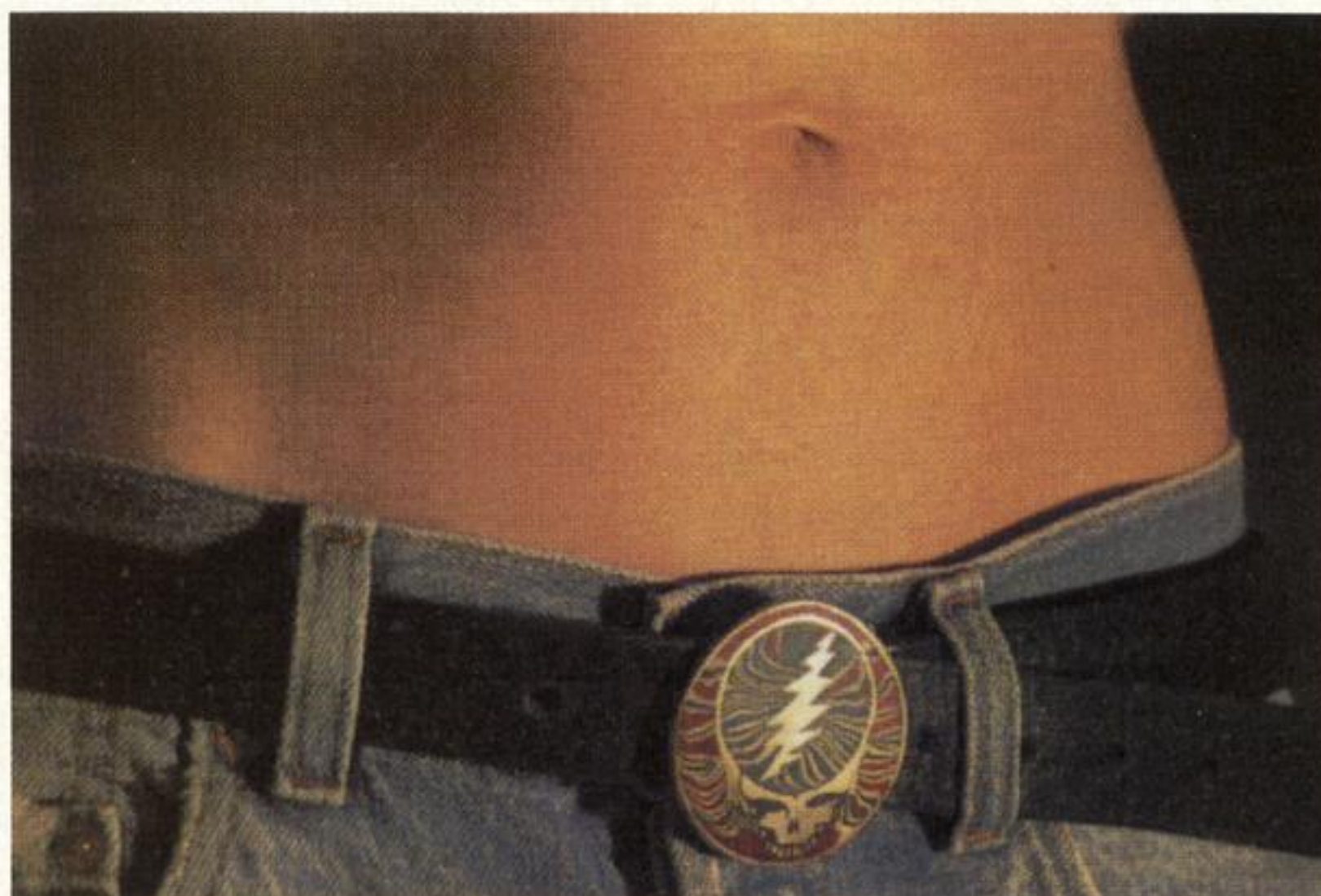


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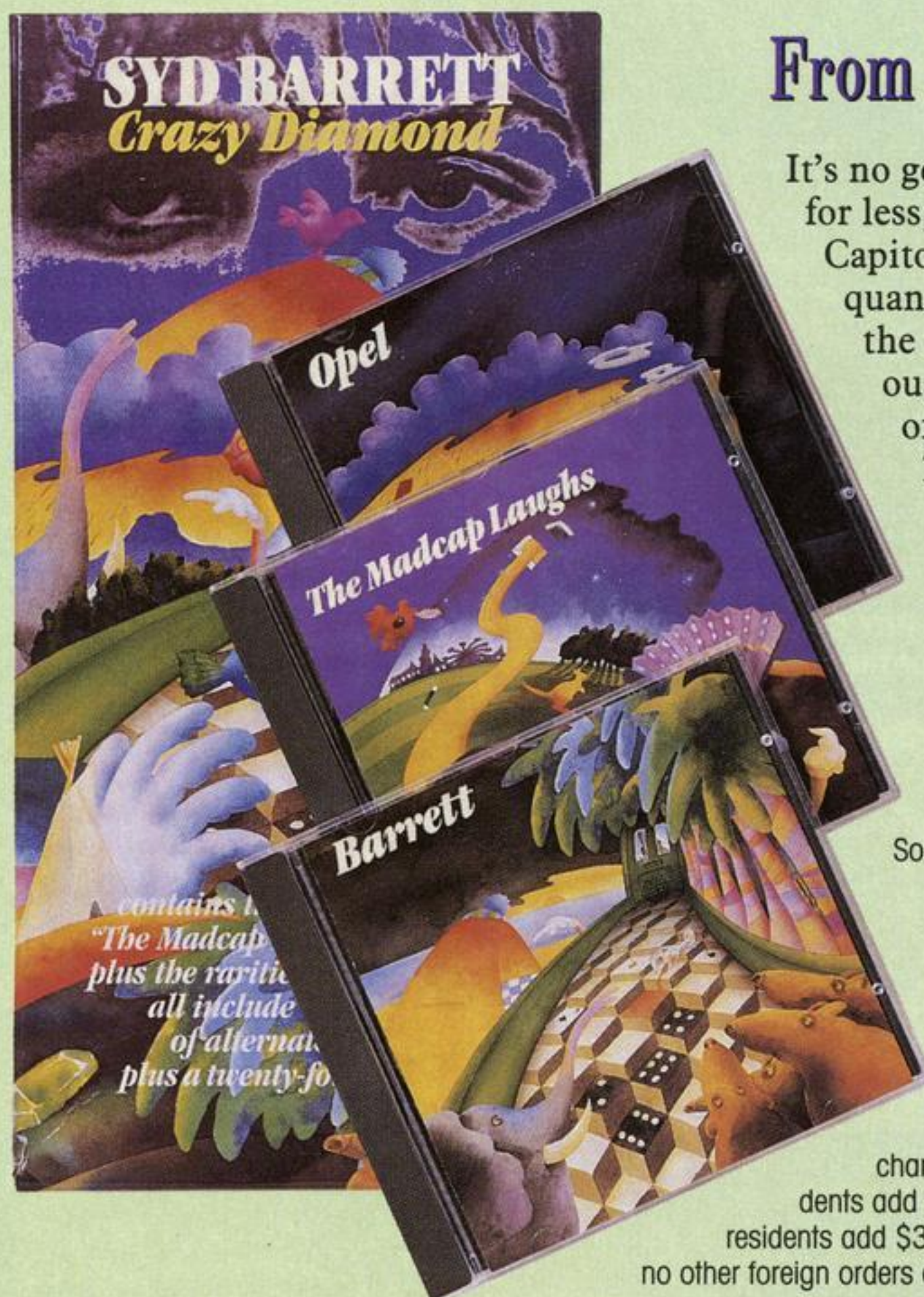
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