JOHN COLTRANE THE POLYPHONIC SPREE JOHN LURIE COMICS

free

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JOE STRUMMER

A MAN THAT MATTERED

Ann Summa

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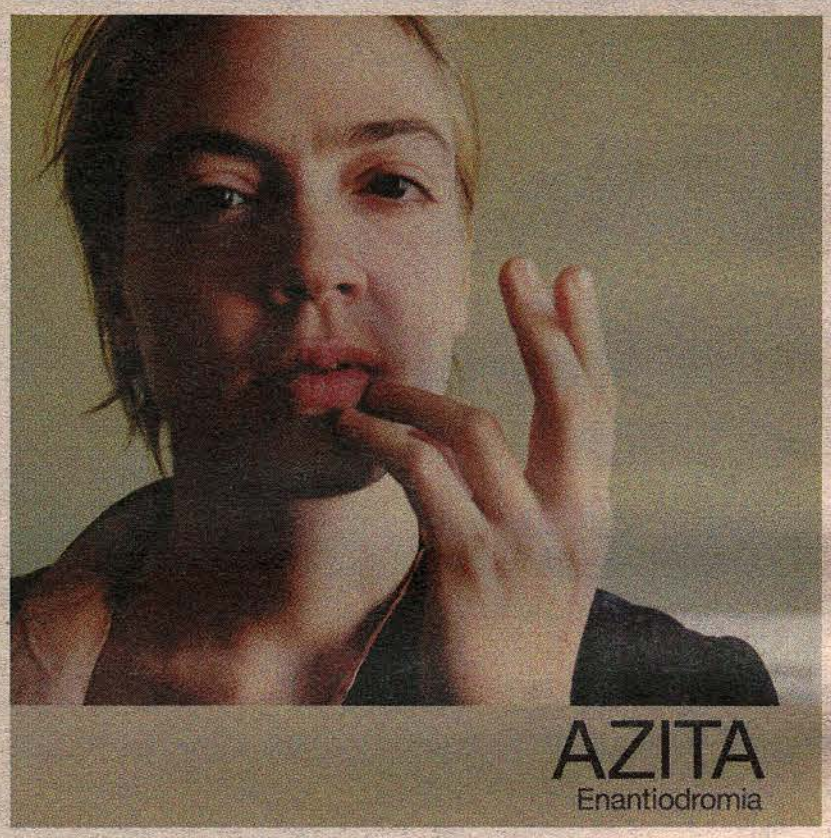
— Ladies Home Journal



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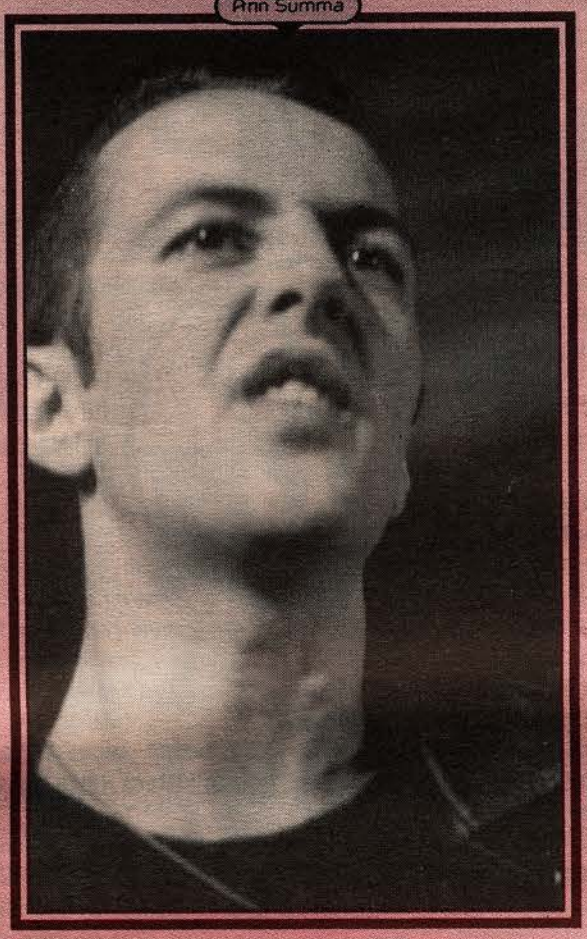

"The one thing I will never forget about Joe is that he loved looking out the window of a moving vehicle. Definitely not an aisle seat kind of guy. That and the fact that he hated Tom Waits. I took Joe and his wife to see Tom Waits in New York and he was so disgusted by Tom's 'singing hobo routine' that he spent the rest of the night smoking cigarettes with the valet in the men's restroom. The man was a classic." —Jason C. Henry

I'm Just Sayin'

King David, he was a black man
King Solomon, he was a black man
King Moses, he was a black man
From Africa, yeh

—Rod Taylor and Soul Syndicate mixed by King Tubby, "Ethiopian Version"

* * *

One of the questions we Arthur folk get asked most, besides how can you afford to do this (answer: we don't know), is who the heck is Arthur anyway. Here's an answer:

One night a coupla years ago the poet-music journo-trombonist Peter Relic and I were wandering back to my car from a dinner at Chin-Chuan on Hollywood when some middle-aged black dude walking alone near us turned and asked, "You guys S.D.S.? Weatherman?"

Pete and I were both flummoxed. 'Ha! Uh no, sorry man' or something was my reply. Guy wandered off and we were left reeling. Did that really just happen?

Did that guy just Rip Van Winkle onto Hollywood Blvd. out of 1969? What about us made him think we were members of S.D.S.? (S.D.S. is short for Students for a Democratic Society, an early-'60s group of reasonably radical leftist college students that began to fracture in 1968; the militant, anti-imperialist, bomb-mad Weatherman group was one of the surviving fractionates.)

Was it the way we were dressed, or were talking, our postures? Was it something deeper? Or was it cuz of where we were: white guys out after dark, at ease in a part of town he might've considered 'non-white,' something that perhaps characterized SDS folks in those times, to this guy at least?

He didn't seem demented. It seemed like he was happy at the prospect that we might be SDS or Weathermen, and thought it was reasonable to inquire. There wasn't a hint of urgency—it wasn't as if he were in desperate straits and needed the kind of sanctuary that liberal-leftist whitefolk might be able to provide because of their connections to Power—it was more like he just wanted to confirm something that he knew. Maybe he was fully cognizant that it was 2000, or 2001, or whatever year it was, and just thought, Well those organizations might still be around. And if they were, well, we might be the kind of guys that would be involved.

Of course this (wish-fulfilling?) line of thinking left me flattered, blushing on an intellectual-philosophical level, as I'd admired both of those groups more with each passing year. (Well, early S.D.S. at least—in the end, Weatherman was too stupid to be worthy of much beyond morbid curiosity.)

So, heightened self-regard replaced momentary bewilderment: someone who didn't know me had somehow, inexplicably, immediately realized where my mind, my spirit, was at. And to what ideals I was bound.

So, who's Arthur?

Arthur is that guy.

The one over there.

The one who tells you what you really are.

* * *

This issue of ARTHUR is dedicated to Frank Swintek, pictured above, who introduced me to free jazz during the summer of '94 in San Antonio, Texas. Thanks, Frank: you changed—and endlessly enriched—my life.

JAY BABCOCK
Los Angeles, January 2002

Send a letter of comment to ARTHUR at "I'm Just Saying," 3408 Appleton St., Los Angeles, CA 90039 or email to editorial@arthurmag.com
ARTHUR reserves the right to edit letters of comment for clarity.

ask John Lurie

[We've been informed that Arthur's regular advice columnist, Fat Possum recording artist T-Model Ford of Greenville, Mississippi, is too busy facilitating a 10-day workshop-retreat in Peru on "Transpersonal Enlightenment and Ancient Wisdom" to take any of our goddamn questions right now. He'll be back next issue, refreshed.]

Our advice columnist this issue is John Lurie, who needs no introduction. (pause)

Right. For the more curious members of Arthur's readership, here's an update on Mr. Lurie's current activities. John claims that he is on sabbatical from music, and is living in New York City while working on an autobiography entitled *What Do You Know About Music, You're Not a Lawyer.* Also, he just fired his girlfriend. None of this has been independently verified. Onto the questions...

Q: I'm 25 and have two children from previous relationships. I met my boyfriend a year ago and we hit it off immediately. He's 28, divorced with two sons. I find him funny, gorgeous, witty and charming and we are totally relaxed together.

When we first had sex, it was the best ever. He is a fantastic lover. We were planning to spend our lives together and I want this more than anything but for some reason I have gone out of my way to sabotage the relationship by sleeping with many other men. I go out with my friends and as soon as another man shows any interest, I'm there. I have met men in clubs and gone home with them. The sex is never up to much and I am disgusted with myself afterwards. I decided to stop going clubbing to avoid temptation and started just going to pubs in town with my mates.

My boyfriend found out about the flings and was devastated. I seem to go out of my way to hurt him but I felt brokenhearted when he told me recently he was seeing someone else. I thought I had lost him but he was back a week later to see how I was and we ended up sleeping together. He still comes round and we have sex but now I am the one who feels betrayed. He says he has feelings for me but he is still with the other woman. I am at my wits' end about what to do.

A: You have no business feeling betrayed as you created this situation yourself. You may have to wait a while until he feels he can trust you again. In the mean time, please forward your phone number to our staff.

Q: My daughter spends less and less time with the family since she met her boyfriend. She's 16 and has just started dating a boy of 19 who we have known for years. He was such a nice boy once but now he is abusive and rude. He has a bad temper and we know he smokes pot. We used to have a good relationship, then he was rude to me. My husband was furious and told our daughter that her boyfriend was a lout who would never be allowed to come into our house again.

Because she can't now bring him home, the only time we see our girl is at dinner and for a few minutes before she goes to bed. Do you think I'm being too possessive wanting her to spend some time away from this boy? Or should I just leave her alone and hope she comes to her senses?

You are not being too possessive wanting to see your daughter, but I don't think that is what you really mean. Are you saying you could demand that she spend time with you and away from him? Because that would be a disaster. She is 16 and not supposed to come to her senses for at least another 13 years. One thing you might try is inviting the boy to your house. You must show him how uncomfortable loutish behavior can be. If he smokes a joint, you and your husband could take out your crack pipes and start smoking. Your husband should scream at you constantly, "Smash the pipe! Smash the pipe! We'll just keep mine. Smash the pipe!" You could suggest that your husband smash his pipe, while you crawl around on the floor picking up pieces of the carpet to smoke. Make sure that you are both hyperventilating. This has been proven to work for many families with teenage daughters.

> "She is 16 and not supposed to come to her senses for another 13 years."

Q: My boyfriend is perfect for me but he can't last long when we make love. We are both 22 and have been together four months. I'm multi-orgasmic and self-satisfaction isn't what I want but most days it is what I end up with. I never tell my boyfriend how I feel because I don't want him beating himself up over this.

A: Change the "up" to "off" and have him try it an hour before visiting.

Q: I am 32, my wife is 31 and we already have three girls. We always planned to have four children and would really love for our last child to be a boy. Is there any way we can make this happen?

A: I would suggest flushing the female kittens down the toilet.

Q: My hubby is 35 and I'm 30. We've been married for 12 years and have two children, aged three and six. We have been happy, although things had become a bit dull. We hardly ever went out and only made love at weekends.

Last year two good friends of ours split up. She is 32 and he is 33. They also have two children, aged seven and nine. I should have given them my support but instead I went after the husband, even though I knew she wanted him back desperately. It was exciting at first, meeting in secret and having illicit sex while my husband was at work. We did things that my hubby and I would never do. He made me feel desirable and daring. I felt alive again for the first time in years. Eventually, it all came out and my husband left.

Worse still, I've told my lover lots of lies about his wife to keep them apart and he's treated her terribly because of it. We've both neglected our children while we've been seeing each other.

This man thinks I'm totally in love with him and that I've given up everything for him. The truth is it started out as a bit of fun and a challenge and now I want out.

How do I do it without losing face and owning up to all of my lies? And how do I get my husband back? He has now found someone else but I want him back because I've realized what a bad mistake I've made.

A: You've already lost face. You have no face at all. If you are seeing a face when you look in the mirror it is the same psychological mechanism that causes phantom limb pain in amputees.

Q: I am 21 and she is 20. We have been together for 18 months and I fancy her like mad. She's beautiful, loving and sex was brilliant at first. I started having problems six months ago. I can't satisfy her and she thinks I've lost interest. But when I'm alone with a magazine or video, everything works normally.

A: You aren't explaining what doesn't work normally when your girlfriend is there. Perhaps you could get a large cardboard box from outside the local refrigerator store. Cut a large rectangular hole on one side, glue knobs to that same side that say "POWER," "VOLUME" and "CHANNEL." Then ask your girlfriend to wear rabbit ears and step inside. Go around the house yelling "Honey! Honey I'm home." But tell her not to respond.

Q: I've been married for six years to the woman I thought was the perfect partner. She's sexy, good-looking and has been a fantastic mum to our children aged three and 11 months. We're in our early thirties. For several months my wife has said she is suffering from post-natal depression. Then two weeks ago she said she was seeing someone else and had also slept with her lover's friend on one occasion. Then she told me about the group sex video her new man wants to make. The idea horrifies me but she seems to be going along with it. She has changed totally. She ignores the children and won't do anything for them while speaking to her lover on the phone for hours. She's obsessed with this man. He's in his forties and well off. Until the other day she didn't even know his real name. He lies to her and has no respect for her.

I'm coming to the end of my tether. I know she uses me and walks all over me but she says she still loves me and he'll never love her the way I do. I'd forgive anything because I can't live without her.

A: I suggest an icicle. There is no murder weapon and no finger prints.

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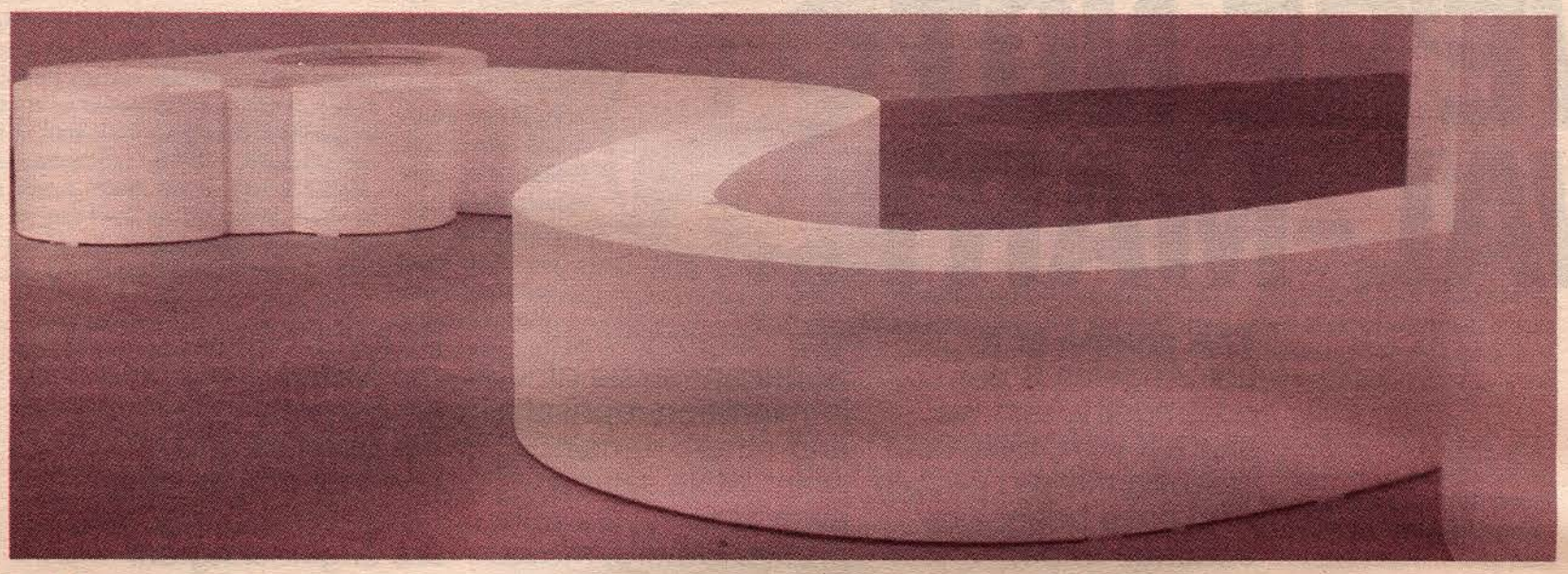
The Stuff That Surrounds You

In artist SHIRLEY TSE's hands, plastic aspires to more than Pop.

by Mimi Zeiger



Uber glossy, chicer-than-thou, magazine Wallpaper subtitles itself "the stuff that surrounds you." The lifestyle porn peddler advocates a world filled with things: Palms, Karim Rashid baubles and Prada shoes. Anything. Any high-end object from the precious to the perverse to fill the vacuum of consumer culture.

But what is all that stuff that surrounds you? Embraces you? Suffocates you? Artist Shirley Tse looks around and sees plastic. She sees that injected-molded form used to shape your iBook or Oral B, the packaging that surrounds the products: it's the miracle of plastic that fills the vacuum surrounding us these days. In the translucent, bubble-pack Styrofoam between the box and the object lies the impetus for her artistic vision.

"It is symbolic of our culture," says Tse. "When you see a computer, you don't even think about the box. You don't think about what it takes to move that product from its origin to your house. Looking at the box makes you think about the process."

Rather than aspiring to package lifestyle, Tse's most recent sculpture, *Shelf Life* (2002), is life-sized packaging. Strangely beautiful, it is a 20-foot wide synthetic iceberg lodged in the second floor galleries of the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC) in San Francisco, seemingly filling the room to eye level with white polystyrene. There's so much Styrofoam that prior to the show's opening, Tse—the Capp Street Project Visiting Artist at the CCAC Wattis Institute—is jokingly apprehensive about how people will react to the piece.

The artist, in her work.

"It is a lot of Styrofoam," she laughs. "Being here in San Francisco, with the tradition of radicalism, I have this nightmare that people are going to picket outside the gallery. They'll boycott my show because of the amount of Styrofoam used."

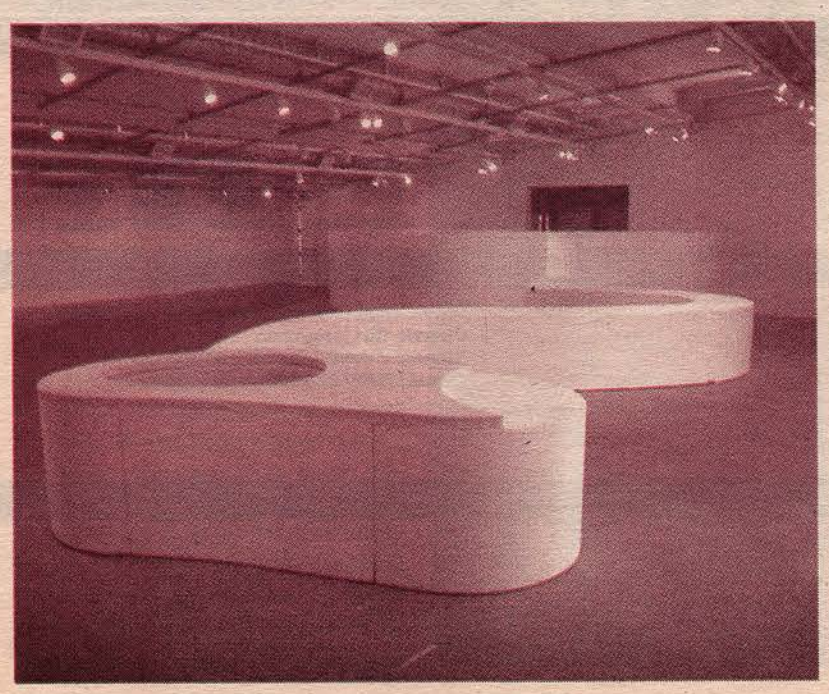
Like a three-chord pop song, Tse's work seems simple enough for anyone to put together (given enough packaging material from stereo components), but its artistry comes in her handling of the few elements. Tse's earlier work is on a slightly smaller scale: sculptures made of polystyrene sheets, hand-routed into elaborate topographies. The scale of the artwork invites the viewer to make comparisons to things out in the world of culture, pop and plain.

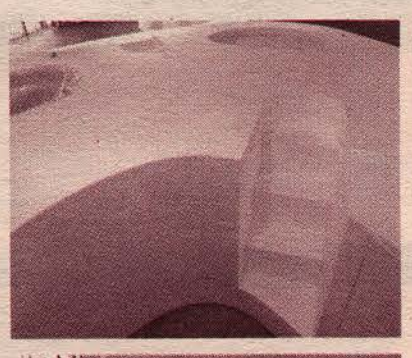
"I've been told it looks like a model for something bigger; it looks like a spaceship; it looks like a city," explains Tse. "Which is fine, but I don't want this piece to stop as a representation of something else. At some point I want my viewer to stop and look at the piece and go, "Oh, it's just foam, it's not a city.""

Complexity-in-simplicity is a truism in modern and contemporary art discourse: it's why paint dribbled by Jackson Pollock is an artwork and paint dribbled by a two-year-old is a mess. In Pop Art, it's why a Campbell's soup can gets elevated to artistic status. For Tse, this duality is inherent in plastic: the simplicity spells out all sorts of arty questions.

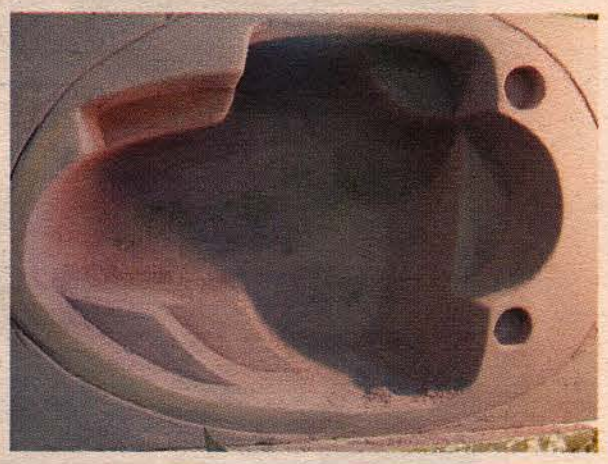
"I love how plastic embraces the paradox of a lot of things," she explains. "It's soft, but hard; it's surface *and* structure. It is something so ubiquitous and at the same time so alien. We live with it, but say things like 'that's phony.' Plastic asks all these questions about originality."

In Tse's hands, plastic aspires to more than pop. Despite its alien material, the work *Shelf Life* is desirously





Shirley Tse



physical. The claustrophobic entry, where Styrofoam surrounds you on three sides, is relieved by a small set of steps. The short flight finishes on a foam plateau. From this vantage point, with your head nearly touching the gallery air conditioning vents and track lighting, what had seemed so stifling now stretches out into a landscape. The block is carved into organic shapes and marked with surface totems.

"Is landscape really that natural anymore? It's not," Tse asks and then emphatically answers. "Even the landscape that we do see these days, like national parks, are totally manipulated. I can't tell you when the packaging begins and when the landscape ends. The two things are going on at the same time."

Walking across the polymer landscape, Calvin Klein-minimalism gives way to something weirder. Seamier. The material properties come to life. White Styrofoam gets dirty. It gives under the weight of heels and toes, leaving small divots behind. The edges crumble and *Shelf Life* makes noises, high feedback squeaks and lower-toned groans as it adjusts to pressure.

Nestled in the foam terrain are three fiberglass tubs—fleshy peach with lip-gloss sheen. A fourth tub is set in the end of Styrofoam jetty that juts out into the empty area of the gallery space. They are decidedly unnatural and they seem to mimic beauty products. It's appropriate that the vacuum-formed tubs were fabricated at Warner Brothers Studio Facilities, the heart of the Hollywood culture industry.

Two of the tubs are lined in "memory foam." The material akin to the sponges used to apply make-up is used in the piece because it holds an impression—place a foot on it and the print remains in the foam for a several seconds. Other tubs bring to mind the hedonistic high times of Jacuzzi baths. Sensuous curves fit the body. Climbing all the way into the tub, there is something sinister in the way that the plastic supports your spine and provides cubbyholes for arms and feet. This is vacuum-packed, human-sized packaging. Hot tub luxury is transformed into a disposable womb or tomb.

> "I can't tell you when the packaging begins and when the landscape ends."

As frightening as it is to find yourself ensconced in plastic like a GI Joe or Barbie, Tse sees the work as liberating rather than confining.

"At the end of the day, when I ask myself why my interest in plastic is sustained, it has a lot to do with plastic itself and its history and all that, but it is also an entry to the world for me. It has allowed me to slice through the layers and see what is going on the world. It's a navigational tool: a way to open up."

Without evoking fist-raising slogans, Tse's work asks the uneasy question: Are we packaging our own existence? The confines of the shiny fiberglass sarcophagus make clear what really is the stuff that surrounds us: "brand new trash" as Tse likes to call it. The artist wrestles with her own position as a consumer and producer in the world of plastic.

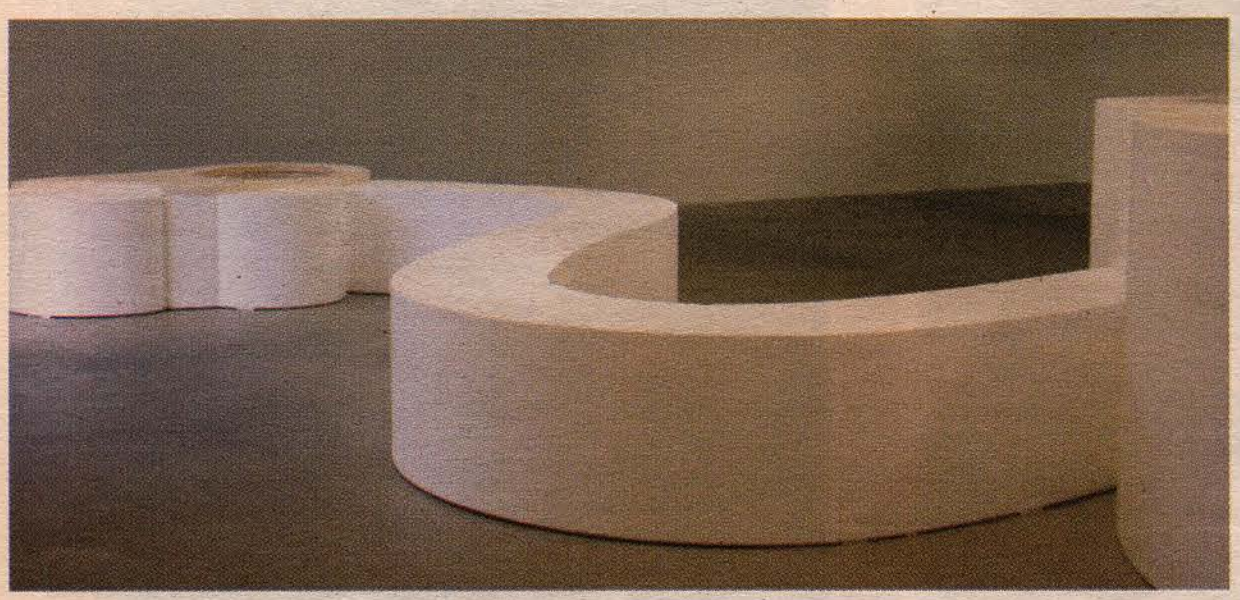
"The whole issue of recycling and the environmental aspects of the work is a complicated one for me. On the one hand, I do recycle material, but on the other hand I buy new material," she says. "It's a moral issue. When I ask myself these hard questions, I ask 'Is it necessary?' And yes, I think it is necessary precisely because I want to use this material that makes up so much of our culture. Part of the environmental issue is that the plastic is used once and then thrown away, but as artwork, hopefully it won't get thrown away, so it isn't consumed in the way we usually use Styrofoam."

Tse grew up in Hong Kong and now lives in Los Angeles. The artwork she makes fills the gap between these two polar existences: supply and demand.

"Sometimes you see artwork from someone from outside the United States, and you can tell that that's a Latin or Korean artist because the work references something in their cultural heritage. I don't think that there is anything that jumps out from my work and says that I'm Chinese or from Hong Kong, necessarily," she reflects. "It is all about it, just not directly. There is the whole issue of commodity, artificially, synthetic exchange and movement—all coming from the place I grew up in."

For Tse, the stuff that surrounds her and her cultural heritage are one and the same. It is plastic: malleable and rigid, beautiful and artificial.

Mimi Zeiger is editor of the architecture + pop culture zine, **loud paper.** She also writes frequently for **Dwell Magazine.**



Above: Behind the sheen: fabricating *Shelf Life* at Warner Brothers.

from Shawn Mortensen:

Just A Poem — A JUST Poem

Here - it's too hard to believe - to swallow -
it's making EVERYONE I know want to drink
to get drunk. We are at war and going
deeper and WE don't want to go —
the "everyday people" people - being led by
a President who waves at Stevie Wonder
(a visionary), but does not listen to what
he says! Sad.

We are in the dark
War is black magic!
These are the days we have all feared.
The blind leading the blind

Where is our clean water? Everywhere in
New York City are signs that say
"conserve water." Water. They sell it now
Pepsi Co. and Coca-Cola Corp.
Like soda pop.
Gotta have it!

Will someday the U.S.A. invade Canada
for it's fresh water?
We are in a draught.
It is raining outside.
I thought I was having a nightmare,
but this is LIFE now.

They kill poets now ya know and DJ's too -
Sounds crazy. It is. True.
These are the days of our lives
Plenty of opera - too much soap - not enough water.
As the World turns - and I think it still does -
but I wish everything could just stop. The war.
The vengence. My dear friends and their drug dependence.
The fear. The invisible. The unseen. The ineffible. The
intangible. The brave. The lost. The losing. The winning.
The lot.
WE not ME. US not YOU. THINK.
Is a war FOUGHT BY ROBOTS / DRONES ANY
BETTER? OR WORSE? WHO WOULD HAVE ONE (WON)?
WHO WOULD HAVE LOST? AT WHAT COST?
11/1/02

Hooked on Polyphonics

Tim DeLaughter is the cheerful mastermind behind THE POLYPHONIC SPREE, the world's happiest symphonic pop band. Ornate on record and staggering live, the grand tradition of Texas psychedelia has never sounded so ecstatic—or tasted so sweet.

by Gabe Soria

"This is going to be fun," says the impish man with the curly black hair. He's dressed in a flowing white robe, and he chuckles. The crowd titters in agreement. Then, like the thunderclap before a sudden and wonderful summer rainstorm, a firecracker burst of a drum roll breaks the anticipatory silence and the band behind and besides the man kicks in, and the choir behind them starts boogeying and the hairs on the back of your neck are standing up because you feel like you're rocketing down the first drop of the world's best wooden roller coaster, full of terror and elation, brimming with the beauty and potential of life, coupled with a stirring acknowledgment of its sadness and inevitable mortality.

"This is gonna be fun," said the man in the white robe, and he wasn't telling tales out of school. The band—the French horn player, the trombonist, the harpist, the flautist, the drummer, the ten person choir, and so on—are, like the singer, dressed in matching white robes, and although they're only two songs into their set at the second anniversary of Dallas' Good Records store, you can hear that they're already working up an ecstatic sweat. The audience is besides themselves with excitement. And then the defiant simplicity of the song's main refrain, almost like a school yard chant, comes in:

"You gotta be good!

"You gotta be strong!

"You gotta be two thousand places at once!"

By the time the song winds down, the entire audience will be chanting along, singing with the band, hands in the air, beaming, beatific smiles on their faces. The only people enjoying it more than the folks watching are the band themselves, all two dozen of them looking like they're fit to burst from elation. That is what watching the Polyphonic Spree live is like. It's the type of thing that makes you raise your hands up and say "Yeah!" while joyous tears of hope and fear brim at your eyes.

"So... how was your day?" I ask.

"Today was... wow," laughs Polyphonic Spree ringmaster Tim DeLaughter, 37, over the phone from Dallas. He excuses himself from his dinner companions—he explains that the maelstrom of noise and chatter in the background is simply the sound of what seems to be his hometown's busiest Tex-Mex restaurant—and walks outside to continue our conversation in relative silence. And this isn't the first time he's going to say that word, that "wow." It peppers his speech liberally, and the way he wraps his soda-pop sweet Texas accent (it splits the difference aw-shucks good-ol' boy and cosmic space cowboy) around it, it's given its due as the English language's best shorthand for awe and amazement. This fella (and his band) have got a lot of time for the wonder and the glory in this terrible and grim world and he wears it on his sleeve.

"We're recording our second record right now," he says, "So my mornings consist of—I have three kids and my wife is one of the singers and also one of the managers of the group—my mornings consist of getting up, running around, taking baths, trying to get the kids dressed (which is a total nightmare), and once we do that we head to the donut shop. They like to get donuts, so we do that and then we get them off to school, and that's basically when our other day starts. We take care of all the things we need to take care of and then we head to the studio around 11:30 and spend all day here until midnight tonight. I'm just taking a break to get something to eat."

> Imagine Vince Guaraldi writing Charlie Brown pop while on a Flaming Lips-n-gospel binge.

And a break seems to be in order. Formed late in 2000 by DeLaughter (formerly of indie-rock could-have-beens Tripping Daisy, who broke up in 1999 after the overdose death of guitarist Wes Berggren) with a mere dozen members, by the beginning of the 2002, the Polyphonic Spree had doubled in size (the youngest band member is 17, and in what would seem a natural evolution, some members of the band are in relationships, some used to be in relationships, and some are related). They self-released their debut album, *The Beginning Stages of...* on the Good Records label in February (Tim is one of the owners of Good Records, both the label and its eponymous record store), and it was one of last year's most surprising records—imagine Vince Guaraldi writing a record of Charlie Brown-esque symphonic pop while on a Flaming Lips-n-gospel binge and combine that with an edge of oddly familiar sadness, the sort of late summer twilight melancholia that you half remember from your childhood, memories filmed in grainy seventies film stock. It was a stunning record to say the least, but they were still simply a glorious oddity all but unknown outside the Dallas area.

But then came their now legendary show in March at the South by Southwest music festival in Austin. That rare out-of-town show was received rapturously by those in attendance, instantly lifting the band from Dallas obscurity to genuine phenomenon. After that, the floodgates opened dramatically. The Spree have been over to England three times (once at the behest of David Bowie for the Meltdown festival he curated, and in a tip of the hat to one of their spiritual forefathers, they began including Bowie's "Five Years" into their set; their titanically heartfelt version of the song has become a highlight of their shows), stormed New York twice and even made it out to Los Angeles. (While they have tour support when they travel to England, the band is proud of the fact that their (limited) touring in the States is generally self-financed.) Jarvis Cocker of Pulp offered his services and directed a stunningly sumptuous and endearingly goofy video for the band's second British single, "Hanging Around." They've been remixed. They've remixed others. And as of last December, they were hard at work recording the follow-up to their debut record *The Beginning Stages of...*, preparing for their third annual

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Like Walt Whitman, the Polyphonic Spree contains multitudes, and ARTHUR wanted to give the rest of the band the opportunity to put in their collective two cents by asking three boilerplate questions:

1) Recommend a book

2) Tell us how you got mixed up with the Polyphonic Spree.

3) What is you ultimate ambition?

This is what they had to say...

Roy Ivy, choir muppet

1: *Confederacy of Dunces*, John Kennedy Toole

2: Dumb luck and a little drunken bravado.

3: To be able to support myself, a wife, and kids by making good music. To never work a day job again.

Jessica Jordan, choir

1: *Love You Forever*, Sheila McGraw

2: The first Polyphonic show I went to was the first annual Christmas show. This also was the day I knew I was pregnant. Mix those two for a bizarre emotional experience. Fell in love with the band. A little over a year later, asked to audition for an opening there was in the choir.

3: To live happily ever after

James Reimer, trombone

1: *The Way Of Zen*, Alan Watts

2: If anything, I have become a lot less mixed up...

3: To absolve myself of ultimate ambitions.

Toby "Little Bean" Halbrooks, theremin, synth, tambo, rock moves

1: *Wise Blood*, Flannery O'Connor

2: I smashed a drum set, broke guitars, ripped up a feather pillow, and inadvertently impressed some people in The Polyphonic Spree.

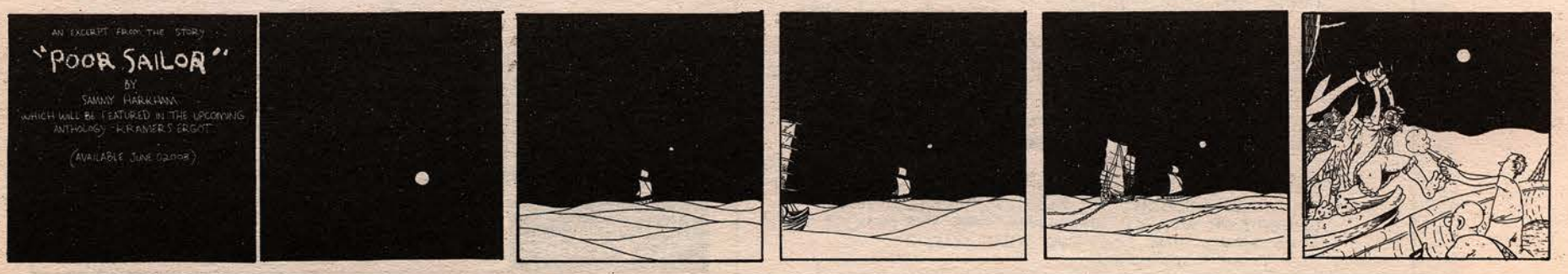
3: To be as awesome as possible all the time.

Michael Turner, choir

1: *Franny and Zooey*, J.D. Salinger

2: The Polyphonic Spree had already performed about five shows before the first time I saw them and they instantly became my favorite band. There was a very strong, familiar feeling in the air in that room that night. The Spree immediately seemed like the band I had waited my whole life to see, without even knowing it. Not long after, my good friend Charlie introduced me to Jennifer Jobe (lead chorister), who soon became a good friend as well and learned of my love for The Polyphonic Spree (I was now going to every show). She asked if I could sing, received a shy demonstration, talked to Tim, invited me to a rehearsal, and the next night I performed in my first show with The Spree. I was so nervous; my friends all later told me I looked like I was going to pass out or be sick, but I was so excited. I'm still excited!

3: Well, I guess my primary goal is to SHARE LOVE — to collaborate and create positive, hopeful, strong, encouraging, honest, beautiful things, energies, systems, works of art, maybe even children, that might survive for future generations, in whatever form makes sense in the



Spree leader Tim DeLaughter: "Today was...WOW."

Christmas revue (Tim promises real reindeer, stilt walkers, Christmas films, two sets by the band, performance art hairdressers and milk and cookies) as well as another British tour. This would be impressive for your average working band, but for a band made up of 24 people... whew. That's dedication. That's a work ethic. What that is not is your average touring band. And for a lot of folks, that sort of co-operation is suspect. Average people just do not do this sort of thing: they don't get along, they don't have a purpose, they don't pass out two page newsletters out at their shows entreating the audience to join something called "The Happiness Revival."

If it all seems a bit... spiritual, that's because it is. Many of the band are, in fact, religious. DeLaughter unabashedly admitted as much in an NME interview, but noted that "the majority of the band don't go to church," and when on to say, "Are we preaching about God? No, not really. But are we singing about life and a better way of looking about things? by the Polyphonic Spree and our shows really seem to be spirited and I'm completely moved along with everybody else in the group. I've never been moved like that before in past musical experiences.

> Average people don't pass out two-page newsletters called 'The Happiness Revival' at their shows.

"There's a certain spirit that's conveyed and conjured up when this band plays and I'm experiencing it at the same time that everybody else is. When I put this thing together I was not even thinking about the aftermath of the Polyphonic Spree, like what we would do, it was self-centered. I always wanted to create something sonically that was appealing to me for a long time and that was strictly my agenda at that particular time. I had no idea what was going to come after that, you don't know how the people in your band are going to react, because I didn't know half of them. It's just one of those things that you don't know about until you do them, and that's what's so exciting about it, it's because it's totally evolving in front of us, the people that are doing it, just as much as much as it is the audience."

He pauses, chews a mental thumbnail, winds up for his next thought.

"[The love between the band] shows when we play together. I'm a fan, too. You always want that experience of being in the audience, of being able to hear it like an audience member. That's the biggest dilemma of anybody creating music: they want to experience it like you would. And when this was coming together, I would come in and I had ideas of how it would sound and all, but it was all in the head, I hadn't heard it yet. So I'm in my living room when we were first getting together, and I was just playing guitar, and we started adding some instruments, and at first I said that we were going to improvise and for the other guys to just play whatever turns you on at that particular point, just play it. I just wanted to hear what it would sound like. We started doing one song, and everybody starts playing, and they were automatically sensitive to where other people were going to interject their part, orchestrating themselves and improvising at the same time, and by the time the song was over I was WEEPING. I had tears running down my cheeks. I felt it, I experienced it. I was like "Oh my God! It's happening!" I was overwhelmed and the band was looking at me like I was crazy, but they were getting excited because I was getting so excited, and I was like "This is wonderful!" And so I got a glimpse of what people can get from this band. It can be a bit overwhelming. The feedback and response that I get from people when I'm talking to them after a show, if it's a really on show, or even if it's a mediocre show, the choice of words that they use to describe the experience of seeing the band... it's real spirited." ▶

> "I just wanted to hear what it would sound like. By the time we finished playing the first song, I was weeping."

moment. I want to be challenged to understand and accept differences, just as I want to be understood and accepted.

Evan Anthony Hisey, I play organ/synth for The Polyphonic Spree

1: In Watermelon Sugar, Richard Brautigan. I've read it 3 times, but each time it fills me with a wonderful sadness of the beauty of life, the relationships that we have, and how fleeting they can unfortunately be.
2: I used to buy 'shrooms off Tim back in the '50s. whenever we would start peaking, we would talk about how cool it would be to play in a band together. Kind of a free jazz/Beatles thing in mind with a little Mozart thrown in so the parents wouldn't cut off our trust funds.
3: Seriously: happiness, in a nutshell. but i'm trying to learn the value of complete honesty with my friends, and with myself foremost.

Mark Pirro, Bass player of the Polyphonic Spree

1: The Bible Code. A number one best seller investigating a 'hidden' code within the original hebrew text of the bible. supposedly, predictions are revealed regarding modern day events. [Editor's note: This book is absolute bullocks.]
2: Tim and I played nine years together in a previous band called Tripping Daisy. A year and half after Tripping Daisy broke up, Tim asked me if I would be interested in playing bass in a new project he had been planning to put together called the Polyphonic Spree. I, of course, said, "yes."
3: To be the first to own and operate a full recording studio on the moon once human beings functionally colonize it.

Yeah, I think so."

It's this sort of talk that has caused some earnest and cynical wags to put two and two together and get five, calling the band the "c" word and making snide references about not drinking the Kool-Aid. They are, after all, from Texas, a state that has a history of producing more than its fair share of megalomaniacs and acid-damaged psychedelic music messiahs. DeLaughter sighs and explains that Jonestown-style messianic apocalypse is just about the furthest thing from his mind.

"It got a little bit irritating over there [in England] because that's the first thing they'd say. It's cheeky journalism at its best. Of course you're going to play that side of it up. It's funny. And I'll go along with it, it's great. But at the same time I'm starting to think about it like what if I find out ten years on down the line, you know, this is a cult. I don't know, maybe it is. I don't think it is, it certainly wasn't the intent by any stretch of the imagination, but people are really moved

Audrey Easley, Flutes

1: The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho
2: Tim called me after hearing about me from a cello player.
3: To have David Lee Roth wear a maid's uniform while he cleans my house and while we're listening to the soundtrack to *Blue Velvet*.

Stephen Shelton Kirkham, backup yeller

1: *Wendel, His Cat, and the Progress of Man* by V. Campunodi
2: By being mixed up with Toby Halbrooks.
3: To always improve as a musician and a man, so it's really more of a perpetual ambition than an ultimate one. Ultimately, one day I will die. That is the only ultimate I know in my life.

Chris Curiel, "My role is to learn, which I have, and in return, to give what I have learned. I also happily play the trumpet in the band."

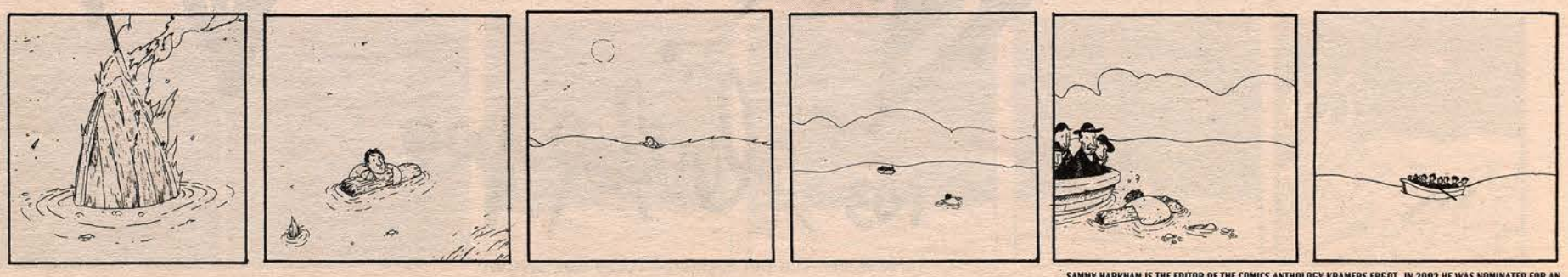
1: *The Stand*, Stephen King
2: Mark McKeever, our keyboardist, invited me to a rehearsal and I jumped in, did my thing, Tim dug it, and said "You're in."
3: To have meaning, to be fulfilled, to expect more out of myself than others expect out of me, and to be a genuine friend to everyone that I meet.

Mike Melendi, percussion

1: *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky.
2: Toby said I could sing. He lied.
3: To do whatever I want for the rest of MY life.

Christy Stewart, choir

1: *Job*, Robert Heinlein. Vaguely based on the book Job ▶



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in the Bible and if you are familiar with that book it's full of craziness. The overall feel of the book is that love is ultimately all you need.
2: I became mixed up with the Spree originally when Mark [McKeever] joined. After the first show Tim was talking to Mark about needing another female choir member and Mark let Tim know that I could sing. Tim asked me to join the choir that day.
3: My ultimate ambition is for Mark and I to have a wonderful life together and for us to raise wonderful children when we have them and to be able to both stay home and watch them grow.

Jennie Kelley, choir
1: *Immortality*, Milan Kundera.
2: I sang back-up vocals with Julie on a Tripping Daisy demo - quite childlike in sound. At the time I was in a relationship with Mark Pirro when Tim asked me if I would like to sing in the choir in his new project.
3: Live and love—is that vague enough?

Kelly Repka, choir
1: *Red Dragon*, Thomas Harris
2: I've sang all my life and one day my aunt called and said "Would you like to sing on a CD for us?" of course I said yes and the rest is history.
3: To make music, and spread our music around the world.

Jesse "PoDunk" Hester, choir
1: *Howl*, Allen Ginsberg.
2: When I was ten or eleven, I met Tim and Julie around the corner from my house and we became well acquainted. I played my music for Tim as I grew, and at the age of seventeen he called me and asked me if I wanted to help him, and I said, "YES. I still want to help you."
3: My ultimate ambition is to use my own band, Sweet Lee Morrow (named for Tim's grandfather William Lee Morrow, A.K.A. Bill), to spread a good message throughout our world in a huge way.

Mark McKeever, "Been known to: tinkle the plastic and genuine ivories, fiddle with the Moog Rogue, sample some mad sounds yo, blow on a trumpet, and has also been caught synthin' it."
1: The Bible
2: Tim asked me nicely
3: To live a happy, peaceful and productive life making music and lovin'.

And spirited it is. But what many seem to overlook about the Spree is the streak of melancholy that runs throughout their music. DeLaughter has acknowledged that his mourning of Berggren was one of the motivating factors for forming the Polyphonic Spree. Happy and uplifting they may be, but there is indeed a sadness about the band—the rousing second track of *The Beginning Stages of...*, "Sun", seems to make oblique reference to Berggren's death when, in-between rapturous choir breaks, DeLaughter sadly sings "Suicide is a shame." The band's music can, at times, be majestically bittersweet.

"Yeah, the first record, to me that's a very somber record," DeLaughter says. "But at the same time the overtones of it are positive. Lyrically speaking that's the kind of the stuff I always write about, it's always about aspiring and wanting more and hope. You can have everything you want, you're capable of everything that you want to do and it's always like that, in relationships, anything. And I know that, but at the same time it's still kind of somber to me."

But he brightens up when asked about the album the band is working on. As yet untitled and due sometime in late summer, it is, by DeLaughter's reckoning, going to be a sprawling monster of a recording.

"It's hard for me to end these songs," he admits. "*The Beginning Stages of...* seems like one big song to me. That whole record was written on guitar and the majority, 95 percent of this record was written on piano. I've got some songs that are thirteen minutes long on here that I just don't want to end, that I just want to keep going, but that's where the next song begins, you know? We were talking about [putting out a double CD] the other day. It might turn out to be like that." He pauses.

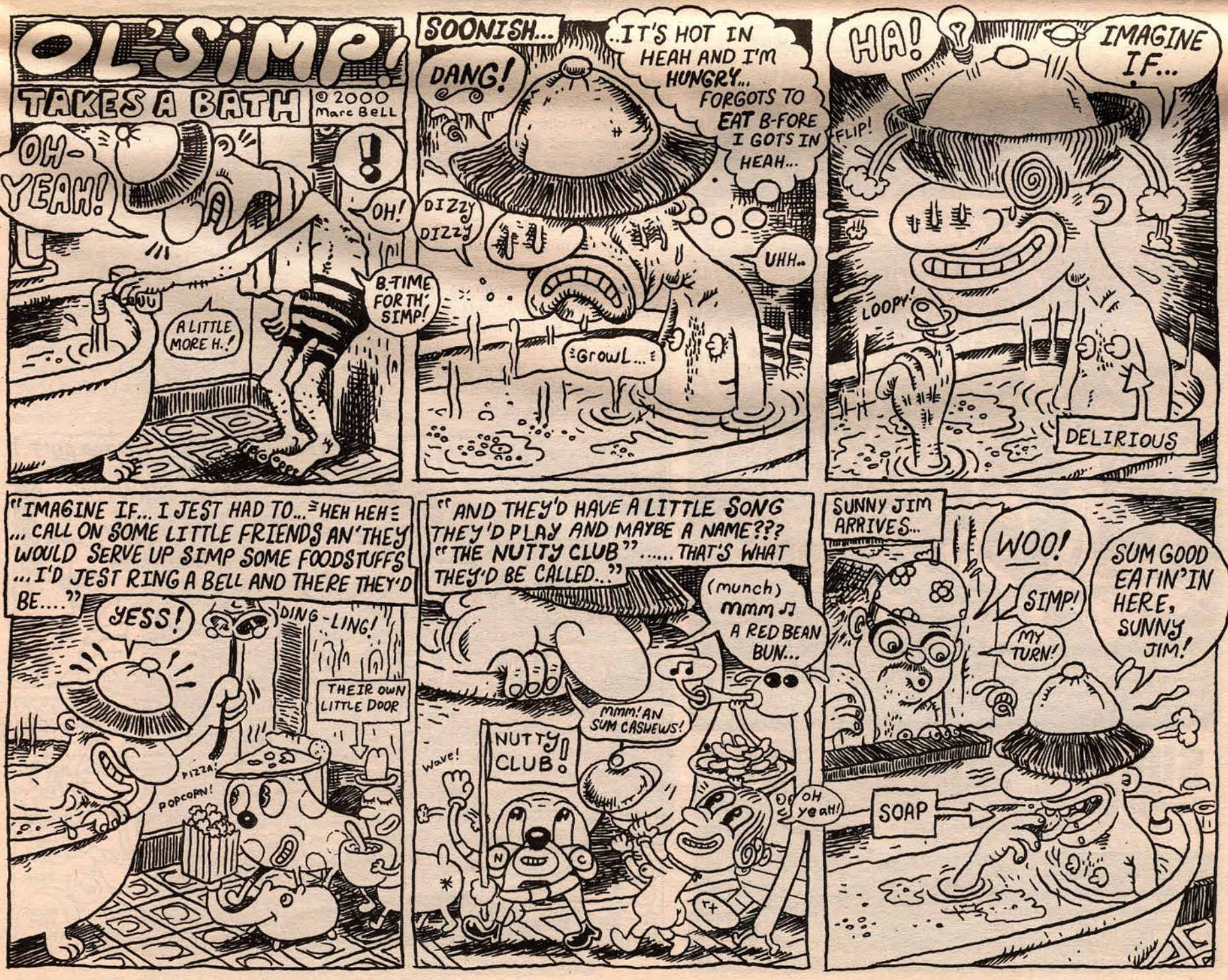
> "We've always overloaded our plates. We really wouldn't have it any other way."

"We've got a lot of music," he laughs as he simply sums up.

"I hate being in a band and talking about it because I'm really excited," he continues. "I think that it's fantastic. I think people are really going to be, um... it's just a major contribution to music today and I'm real fortunate and privileged to be a part of it. I'm happy to be part of it because it's great. It's going to be amazing. It has everything that the first record has, because it's the Polyphonic Spree, there's no changes there, this band doesn't have to reinvent itself, it is what it is and it's just more of what was already on there. As you listen to it, it's more and more like you're listening to a musical."

A musical? Is he kidding? Not at all. And he doesn't mean concept record. He means musical. Whether this would take the form of a Ziggy Stardust-esque conceptual concert or turn into a full-fledged stage show is up in the air. It is, at the moment, simply cloud talk. But it's still occupying DeLaughter's mind.

"I've been thinking about that seriously for quite some time, because that's what I was getting from it, as this thing was evolving an unfolding, I was like 'Oh my God, this thing now is like a musical.' There again, that wasn't the intention, but when you leave something alone and let it do what it's going to do, you get to be surprised about what its going to be. So yeah, I've been getting hints of that and it's starting to make sense to me, because how I write songs, and how I was writing these new songs and why did they have this musical feel, especially this new record as well. I'm not really one who sits down and writes lyrics. I evolve the lyrics out of listening to music, I'll sit there and hear the music I'm playing and all of a



sudden it spawns this mental picture and then as I'm playing it's constantly unfolding, I'm singing what I'm seeing in my head. and it kind of plays this little role out, just like a musical would. If you could visualize everything that I'm singing about, it would totally play itself out. But at the same time, just the aspect of the band, forming together and getting out there and doing what we do and the crowd interacting and the stories that are being told, it's just... wow. It's turning into that."

If it all seems like a bit much to the average person, DeLaughter insists that he wouldn't have it any other way.

"Our plate is full and we're really, really busy. We've always overloaded our plates so to speak, it's a pattern we've always been into. My wife and I have been together for twenty years and we like it like that. It's stressful sometimes but it's also exhilarating and it keeps you on your toes. You get the most out of it. We're kind of used to it. It freaks some people out when we tell 'em what we've got going on. When they find out, they're like 'How the hell are you balancing all of this?' and it's just years of practice. We're just doing it and we really wouldn't have it any other way. We kind of get bored unless we've got a lot of things going on."

DeLaughter has that tone in his voice by now, the one that indicates that even though he'd love to be talking, he does need to get back to work. After all, his plate is full; the man does have a possible double album to fill with epic songs of gladness and sadness, a massive family of musicians to marshall and a brood of kids at home who are waiting on their pop. As we say our goodbyes, I mention that part of my intention in interviewing him and writing this article is an attempt to delineate for myself exactly what it is about the Polyphonic Spree is so affecting and special. He offers no easy answers, but commiserates with the difficulty (and possible utter futility) of putting your finger on something so ineffable.

"If you find out, well, help me out, cause I'm with you. It certainly wasn't the agenda to go and make a band that was going to spread happiness and give people a reason to feel uplifted. It wasn't about that at all and it's turned out that it was something that I had no control over. And that's the beauty of it. I'm going to find out years on down the line what the Polyphonic Spree was." @

Andrew Tinker, "French Horn and French Kissing extraordinaire"
1: *Siddhartha*, Herman Hesse
2: Thousands of years worth of karma.
3: To clear all that karma, realize God, and transcend into pure spirit when I die.

Julie Doyle, "I sing in the choir"
1: *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, Judy Blume
2: I was just supposed to, I guess.
3: To do a documentary on blue collar America, in particular, the day in and day out world of the Shell gas station located in Oak Cliff, Texas on Kiest Blvd.

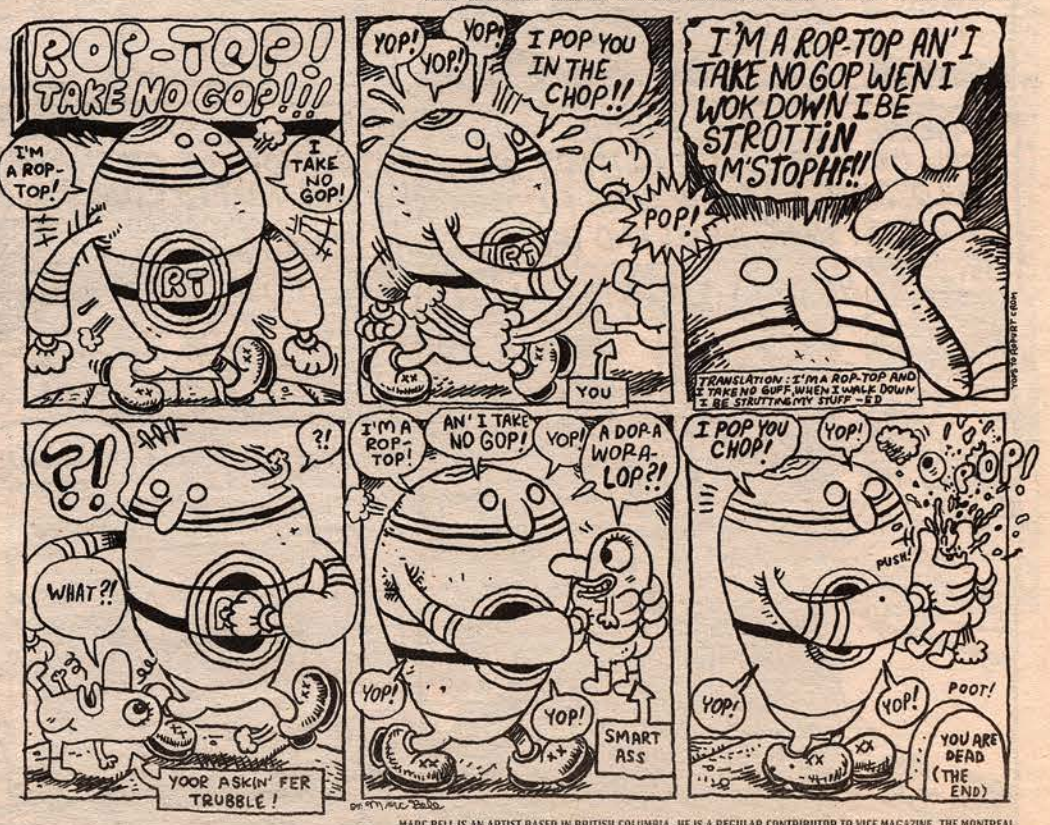
Ricky Rasura, harpist
1: The F Word, a dictionary of every recorded version of "fuck."
2: An old college roommate told the TPS manager about me, and I auditioned for the gig.
3: To become president of Antarctica

Jennifer Jobe, "Lead Female Tambourine Player"
1: *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, Judy Blume
2: Tim came to me in a dream and said, "Hey, ya wanna be in a band?"
3: To have my own secretary who does the interviews for me.

Bryan Wakeland, "Drum Pounder"
1: *The Artist's Way*, Julia Childs
2: Old timey Friends
3: Keep on making great music.

Ryan Fitzgerald, "Guitarist and international luvmeister"
1: *The Giving Tree*, Shel Silverstein
2: Toby recruited me into the choir.
3: Rock stardom.

Christopher Todd Penn, Robemaster/Den Mother
1. *Shakey*, Neil Young's Biography, Jimmy McDonough. This book has a lot of merit. Initially for me it was finding out where Neil's head was at when he made some of the most influential albums of all time. Neil Young can write THE saddest songs. I dare you to listen to "Birds" off *After the Goldrush* and not get teary eyed. What wound up being the most appealing about the book was the interaction between Neil and his manager for life Elliot Roberts. They have a very interesting relationship to say the least.
2. I worked with Tim in Tripping Daisy playing various roles. I started out as a fan, did merchandise, tour managed, and did jack of all trades type jobs. I am not afraid to get my hands dirty or stay up late when needed. Red Bull is my friend. After Tripping Daisy disbanded Tim when through a bit of a funk, understandably. I booked him (without even one member of the band) with Grandaddy and Bright Eyes in the opening slot in Dallas. He had a few songs written and got together 13 or 14 people in the week before pretty much. Tim and Julie basically told me I was going to manage this monstrosity. Since then Julie has stepped forward to help out and we have brought other people on as we have grown. The rest as they say is history. The wonderful snowball rolls down the hill picking up speed.
3. My ultimate ambition... picture me scratching my head right now to such a question. I don't think I specifically know that right now but I think before I know it that my ultimate ambition will be right in front of me. Opportunity presents itself; you do have to have vision but you also have to make the "right" decisions. Sometimes I feel like Lloyd Dobler in every way. @



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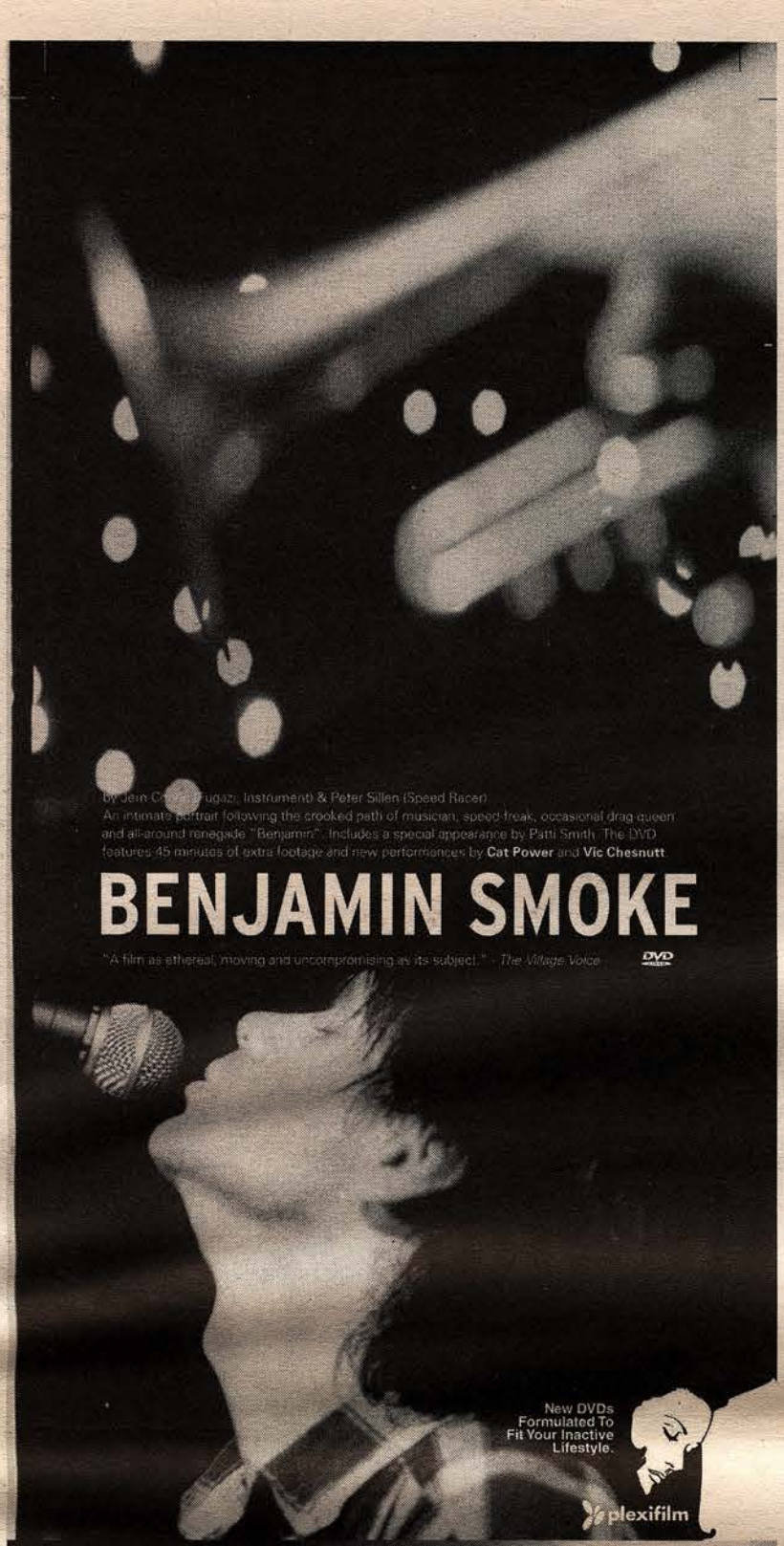
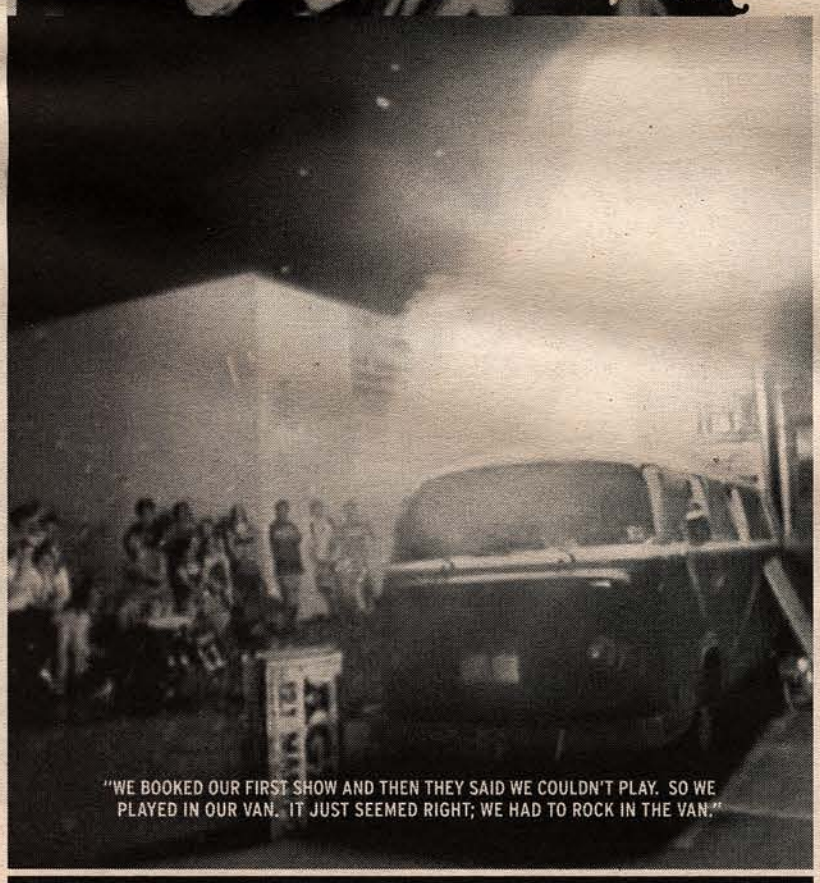




A Man That Mattered

JOE STRUMMER was a spectacular, inspirational human being.

by Kristine McKenna

Ann Summa

When the Clash first burst on the scene in 1977 I dismissed them for the same reason I've always hated U2. Their music struck me as humorless, self-important political blather that wasn't remotely sexy or fun. Definitely not for me. Nonetheless, being a dedicated punk I had to check them out when they made their Los Angeles debut at the Santa Monica Civic on February 9th, 1979, and what I saw that night changed my mind—just a little, though. As expected, Mick Jones came off as a typical rock fop who clearly spent far too much time thinking about neckerchiefs and trousers. Joe Strummer, however, was something else. With the exception of Jerry Lee Lewis, I'd never seen anyone that furiously alive on stage. Legs pumping, racing back and forth across the stage, singing with a frantic desperation that was simultaneously fascinating and puzzling, he was an incredibly electric presence.

At the press conference following the show that night, L.A.'s ranking punk scribe, Claude Bessy, jumped up and snarled, "This isn't a press conference—this is a depressing conference!" (Jeez, tempers always ran so high during that first incarnation of the punk scene—who knows why the hell our panties were in such a twist!) I remember that Strummer looked genuinely hurt by the comment. Mind you, he was a working class Brit so he wasn't about to start sniffling in his sleeve, but he didn't cop an attitude either. I was touched by how unguarded and open he was—and I was certainly impressed by the man's vigor. [*Slash magazine's report on that press conference is reprinted on page 26.—Completist Ed.*] I wasn't surprised when I subsequently learned that Strummer ran three marathons without having trained at all. His preparation? "Drink ten pints of beer the night before the race and don't run a single step for at least four weeks before the race."

That first show at the Santa Monica Civic didn't transform me into a Clash fan but Strummer interested me, so when the band showed up in 1981 in Manhattan, where I was living at the time, I decided to see what he was up to. The Clash had booked a nine show engagement at Bond's, an old department store on Times Square in Manhattan, and this turned out to be not a good idea. The place wasn't designed to handle the crowds the band drew, and the engagement turned into a nine day stand-off between the band and the fire marshals. I attended three nights in a row and can't recall them ever actually making it to the stage and performing. But then, that was business as usual during the glory days of punk, when gigs were forever being shut down, aborted, abruptly canceled. This was political theater, not just music, and nobody embodied that idea more dramatically than the Clash.

Cut to June 14 of the following year and I finally saw the Clash succeed in completing a full set at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles. By then, I'd finally begun to appreciate the breadth and fearlessly experimental nature of the Clash's music, and Strummer was at the peak of his powers as a showman at that point. The huge hall was packed, and it was as if Strummer was a maestro conducting this undulating mass of sweaty people, with the mysterious power to raise or lower the pitch at will. Boots, beer bottles and articles of clothing flew through the air, people leapt on stage, leapt back into the arms of their friends, Strummer stood at the microphone stoking the fire, and somehow managed to keep the proceedings just a hairsbreadth short of total chaos for two hours. It was a commanding display from a man who clearly knew his job and knew his audience.

Following the break-up of the Clash in 1985, Strummer charged head-on into a busy schedule of disparate projects. He acted in several independent films and composed six film soundtracks, including one—for Alex Cox's lousy 1988 film, *Walker*—that was remarkably beautiful. I wrote an admiring review of the score for Musician Magazine, and a few months after it was published Strummer was passing through L.A. and he invited me to lunch in appreciation for the supportive words. We were to meet at a Thai restaurant on Sunset Boulevard, and though I was nervous on the way there, he put me at ease the minute we met. Strummer was such a genuine person that it was impossible to feel uncomfortable around him—I know it sounds corny, but he truly was a man of the people. He was funny and generous in his assessments of people, but he didn't sugar coat things either—he had no trouble calling an asshole an asshole when it was called for. The thing that ultimately made Strummer such a spectacular human being, however, is so simple that it barely seems worth mentioning: he was interested in people. He wanted to hear your story and know what was going on in your neighborhood, he asked how you felt about things and was an empathetic listener—he paid attention! The other thing I immediately loved about him was that he was an enthusiast and a fan.

Just how big a fan he was became clear to me a few months later when he guest hosted a radio show I had at the time on KCRW. My show was at midnight on Saturday, and KCRW's office is hard to find, so our plan was to meet behind the Foster's Freeze at Pico and 14th at 11:00 P.M. He roared into the parking lot exactly on time in a car with four pals, and the lot of them tore into the record library at the station looking for the records on Strummer's playlist. His plan was to play all the records that shaped his musical taste as a teenager in the order that he discovered them, and the show he put together was equal parts history lesson and autobiography. Included in the far-flung set were

tracks by Sonny Boy Williamson, Lee Dorsey, Captain Beefheart, Bo Diddley, Hank Williams, and loads of fabulous, rare reggae and dub. His loving introduction to the Beach Boys' "Do It Again" brought tears to my eyes. Several fans crashed the studio when they heard him on the air and realized he was in town, and he welcomed them all. It was a wonderful night. He had fun too, and as he thanked me and said goodnight, he kissed me on the cheek and I blushed.

Strummer spent the next ten years struggling to re-start his career post-Clash and stumbling repeatedly. "The only thing that got me through was sheer bloody-mindedness—I just won't quit!," he told me when I interviewed him in October of 2001. We were talking on the occasion of the release of his second album with his five-man line-up, the Mescaleros, *Global A Go-Go*, which was rightfully hailed as the best work Strummer had done in years. He was happy with the record, and when I saw him perform at the Troubadour a few weeks after we spoke, he seemed happy in general.

"I've enjoyed my life because I've had to deal with all kinds of things, from failure to success to failure again," Strummer told a journalist from Penthouse Magazine in 2000. "I don't think there's any point in being famous if you lose that thing of being a human being."

That's something that was never a danger for Strummer. During that last interview (printed below, most of it never before published), I asked him what the great achievement of punk rock had been, and he replied, "it gave a lot of people something to do." I loved the complete lack of self-importance in that answer, however, this isn't to suggest that Strummer ever broke faith with punk. "Punk rock isn't something you grow out of," he told Penthouse. "Punk rock is like the Mafia, and once you're made, you're made. Punk rock is an attitude, and the essence of the attitude is 'give us some truth.'

"And, whatever happens next is going to be bland unless you and I nause everything up," he added. "This is our mission, to nause everything up! Get in there and nause it out, upset the apple cart, destroy the best-laid plans—we have to do this! Back on the street, I say. Turn everything off in the pad and get back on the street. As long as people are still here, rock-'n'roll can be great again."

Thank you Joe for bringing us the good news.

Ann Summa

Ann Summa

The following conversation with Strummer took place in October 2001, on the eve of his final U.S. tour during the winter of 2001-2002.

You say the great achievement of punk rock was that 'it gave a lot of people something to do.' What was its great failure?

That we didn't mobilize our forces when we had them and focus our energies in a way that could've brought about concrete social change—trying to get a repressive law repealed, for instance. We're stuck in a kind of horrible holding pattern now, and it seems to me that the only way to change it is if we get hipsters to stay in one place long enough to get elected. The problem is that no hipster wants to get elected.

I saw the Clash several times during their U.S. tours of the late '70s and early '80s, and I remember the sense that something profoundly important was at stake at those shows, that they were about something much larger than pop trends. What was at stake?

In the rush of youth you assume too much—and so it should be—but we felt that the whole machine was teetering on the brink of collapse. Some amazing things went down in Britain during the '70s—the government decided they could disempower the unions by having a three day week, for instance. Can you imagine that? Monday morning you wake up, and suddenly there's only a three day week, from Monday to Wednesday. There were garbage strikes, train strikes, power strikes, the lights were going out—everything seemed on the brink, and looking through youthful, excitable eyes it seemed the very future of England was at stake. Obviously, that's very far from the feeling these days, when everything's pretty much smugly buttoned down.

Has England recovered from the Thatcherism that dominated the country during the years you were with the Clash?

It will never recover—and now we've got Blairism. We are so completely confused. If you think of England as a patient laying on the couch in a shrink's office I'd say it's time for the straitjacket. Imagine the party we had in England when Blair got into office after all those years of Thatcher. Everyone was cheering, 'this is the dawn of a new day,' but since then we've had no vision or justice. The Blair administration juts wants to get into bed with the richest corporations, and the very notion of labor has vanished into the mist. Obviously, the worse it gets, the better it gets for artists, so culturally, England is doing okay. But politically, it's total mixed-up confusion.

> "It's not a good idea to run away. You gotta smile, whistle, look self-assured, and try and fix things up a bit."

What's the proper course of action when everything around you is falling apart?

It's not a good idea to run away. You gotta smile, whistle, look self-assured, and try and fix things up a bit.

Given that the Clash's music grew out of a situation specific to England, did it strike you as odd that it was embraced in America?

No, because everybody feels the same on a certain level. The Zeitgeist is a real force of nature, and although we don't know how it's transmitted, it's like an invisible tidal wave.

How would you characterize the Zeitgeist now?

I think people are feeling a bit cheated and frustrated. They've come to realize that voting is basically useless because either side you vote for has no more than a shade of difference from the other side, and ultimately politics is about nothing but the mighty dollar. So okay, say the people, lets forget politics and get into drugs or skateboarding—anything that passes the time and gives you some sense of freedom. People want to feel free, and it's a hard feeling to come by in this world. People have a right to change their consciousness, too, and in the back of their minds they know they have that right. So people are gonna flout the laws established to prevent them from smoking marijuana or experimenting with Ecstasy, because they know that nobody—especially a politician half pissed on gin -has the right to tell you what goes on in your mind.

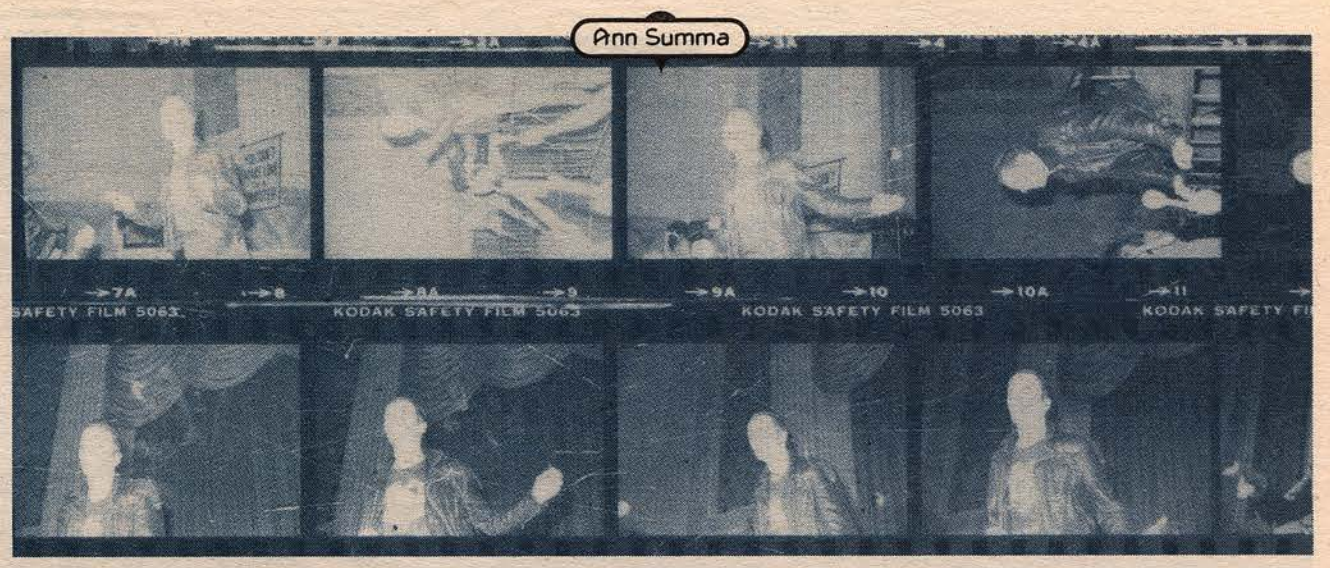
You say it's hard to experience the feeling of freedom: do you feel free?

No, I do not. If I invited nine friends over to my house right now and put on an acid house record, and we stood in the garden listening to it, we'd all be arrested and fined a thousand pounds each, because in the United Kingdom it's illegal for ten or more people to listen to repetitive beats—this is in the statute books, 'repetitive beats!' People in Britain are much less free than people in many other counties because we've got really repressive laws. All bars here must close at 11:00pm, for instance. As to why I continue to live here, I really think all British people have a streak of sado-masochism. I live in the middle of nowhere, so you'd think I could get away with playing a record, but such is not the case.

Why do you live in the middle of

Slash Magazine was launched in May of 1977 to cover L.A.'s nascent punk scene, and it played a hugely influential role in galvanizing the growth of L.A. punk, and shaping the direction it took. It was a central presence in this community for three years, then its authority began to wane in October of 1980. At that point founding editors Claude Bessy and Philomena Winstanley moved to England, where Bessy worked as a V.J. at the legendary Hacienda Club in Manchester (Bessy died of lung cancer in 1991); founding publishers Steve Samiof and Melanie Nissen moved on to other projects; and L.A.s original punk scene was corrupted by record company money and heroin. Today, Slash stands as an invaluable record of a fabulous episode of history. The excerpts from Slash Magazine presented here and on page 26 are reprinted with the generous permission of Steve Samiof.

—KRISTINE McKENNA



SPECIAL EXTRA: The Clash on stage in London (twice), Santa Monica (once), facts, opinions, and...still no interview.

December something, in London. The Clash are playing a "Sid Vicious Defense Fund" benefit at the Music Machine. No press passes, everyone must pay, it's for the cause. Naturally it is sold out before you have time to search your pockets for the dough. I have never seen the Clash before, I shift from fear to anticipation with every tube stop. Security galore at the door and around the entrances, I suppose benefits for criminals do deserve extra loving care. INside it looks just like them books about punk and how it used to be: scene time, the IN gig to be at tonight. Sid sure got lots of friends. First band on is the INNOCENTS, an almost all girl band (the exception is an ex-Electric Chair) that have been adopted by the Clash as their current opening band. They're all right with nothing special, it goes by without any impact, background noise to fill the void while waiting for something. They play a rather long set with virtually no response from the crowd. There are beers to score, friends to look for and strangers to be judged by their looks so no one has time to spare for the band. The music has become just one of the many elements of THE SCENE, an increasingly disturbing aspect of some gigs. Soon young bands may simply refuse to open those "special" shows once they realize it's the surest way to stay anonymous. After a long posing break some guys walked on, one of them Mick Jones on guitar, don't know and after a while didn't care who the others were. Innocuous America influenced music (even did a Dylan tune), maybe they were together for a laugh, Mick seemed to be having a good time being flash on the guitar, certainly a less demanding job playing with this bunch than being a fourth of the Clash, and a lot less imposing. The band disappeared but hardly anyone noticed.

After them the legendary Slits took over and good naturedly slobbered their own brand of everyday music all over the joint, Ari Up decked out for the night in her version of classical entertainment gear; tired tutu probably full of cigarette holes and fishwife hairdo miraculously grown overnight to jungle proportions, their songs came across with more punch and focuse one should expect from this type of stubbornly unconcerned assembly of misfits, after all Palmolive had been replaced by a genuine rock drummer so there must be hidden somewhere in this carefree parade a genuine thought or two about the future of the band, not that the Slits are yet on the verge of an EMI offer, or any kind of offer for that matter. They should be granted the honorary Los Angeles New Wave Spirit Medal for having lasted that long without any faint hint of a brighter future having materialized en rouse. Keep at it, girls (and boy), you must be doing something right!

The Clash stormed on, and until then it had been more waiting than live music, and most of THAT wasn't what you'd call memorable. Anyway here they were, just like in the pictures, Mick hair shorter than his L.A. visit, scarf and swagger and very very rock n roll (check early vintage pics for comparisons and private conclusions) Joe having no choice but to look like Joe and as real and likeable as I wanted him to be, Topper way back in sweat suit and sea of drums and Paul on the right minus his spike, serious and low key. They exploded into a series of songs off the "Rope" album, giving every tune that extra raw franticness that the record lacks and not losing any of the melodic sophistication in the process. Like erasing the Sandy Pearlman gloss and being blasted by a breath of fresh air. And here I was, liking them quite a lot in other ways than I had expected, getting adjusted to the fact that they were a hell of a unique rock/punk band with potential for being THE essential street band of the next dacade, and with flaws, weaknesses and an occasional lack of scope in their own self-limitations that made you wonder how they ever got that far on such shaky ground. That night Strummer's vocals came close to critical depths, once he offhandedly acknowledged the fact that it wasn't up to standards and gratingly yowled the opening lines to the next tune (could have been Police and Thieves, the worst possible live version of this seemingly undemanding tune, a butcher job that effectively proved that nothing is as easy as it sounds on record, especially them slower tunes that show the gaps in the seams and the studio bluffs behind the cracks.) Yet "Stay Free," a tune that I can happily skip over on vinyl, was honest and straightforward. Mick Jones gave Joe a breather on vocals and although he has none (and does not try for) of the manic I-mean-it-man edge of Strummer he handled that particular song with class and style. Later thru the set they brought in the old classics of the first album, and it was reassuring to see that the newer cuts had been accepted as enthusiastically by the fans as the standards, and in most cases performed with much more challenge and audacity. There is always trouble brewing when a band, no matter how good and clever they can be, have to rely on the older stuff to get the place jumping. Thank god the Clash audience is still right there with them, with fans and band nicely progressing along to being the best band and the best audience of rock history. And if you think we've moved away from strictly punk matters by getting into this rock history business, you're quite right. The Clash have a lot going for them, some of it in the right direction as defined by this paper's particular stand and some of it toward various shiny shortcuts to mass acceptance and commercial relevance, with the negligible price of image shifting and asethetic streamlining (Sandy Pearlman in complete control of next album would be a way to get there fast) to pay for the material bonuses that would fall like rain on our ex-culture guerrillas. Do you know how much one of the big commercial enterprises would pay for a really good, modern, challenging and exciting but ultimately SAFE new band? Why do you think they're spending millions on the Cars and their like? The way they see it, they're bound to score one of these days with the new Beatles/Rolling Stones, the catalyst of the 80's, the big prize in the sweepstakes to the future. If only the Clash would agree on being just a bit .... easier to hug and dream about. Will they, won't they???

Part two. later in the same month, at the Lyceum.

This was a genuine tour gig (the 'sort it out" tour that preceded the American "Pearl Harbor 79" tour that swiftly got renamed—who chickened out and who agreed to soften the image??the "Give 'em Enough Rope" tour — creative labelling that one, must originate from record company think tank) with two dates at the worn-out Lyceum (a third one was added due to public demand) featuring the Innocents, the Slits and the old boys. The Innocents continued to be real troupers and played their hearts out to mild gobbing and can throwing, the Slits played the Slits again with many real fans giving them the roots support they must treasure since nothing else has come from the sky above as it did for almost every other odd assortment of misfits with stolen instruments. Yet I kept thinking ugle stuff like them being the Clash's gutter credibility token, the Wild Man Fischers to the Frank Zappas, the naive fools in the court of the king. Maybe they're just good friends and I am a paranoid twisted hair-splitter. That's what happens when a section of our flesh like the Clash gets accepted and coveted by the other side: everyone left behind in our day to day insecurities and rages hopes for the best and keeps expecting the worst. Upward mobility can be a bitch on relationships. I know: back to music. Okay. The Clash. The stage. The audience. Mix the three, shake well, pour. It was pretty much the same set as the benefit, but this time I felt the power, I saw the myth in action. You guessed it, they were HOT. Strummer effortlessly carried the tunes to the very end, the rest felt more secure and willing to relax (which in the Clash handbook has never meant mellowing out) and every moment felt true and right. The few weak lapses were immediately erased by the next explosion, the Clash and their music were everything they should be, which is a lot. Honorable mention to Topper Headon, the invisible heartbeat, the long distance runner behind the 50 yard dash experts. Second honorable mention to the audience, so beautifully necessary to the show (try to find thousands of paying customers that know the lyrics to every song YOUR band has ever done, and sing them and dance them and will not drop until you do!), so energized by the music the meaning behind the music and each other that even skeptics and mutterers gawk and envy (an impossible task to achieve during a wham bam american tour in front of brand new customers with curiosity as their main motive for being there). The Clash are not the REAL Clash without their audience, and so what we all saw in America was like a sketch that hasn't been filled in, and without imagination the fuss about these four guys might have seemed a bit exaggerated. It wasn't, we're just in the wrong place, as usual.◉

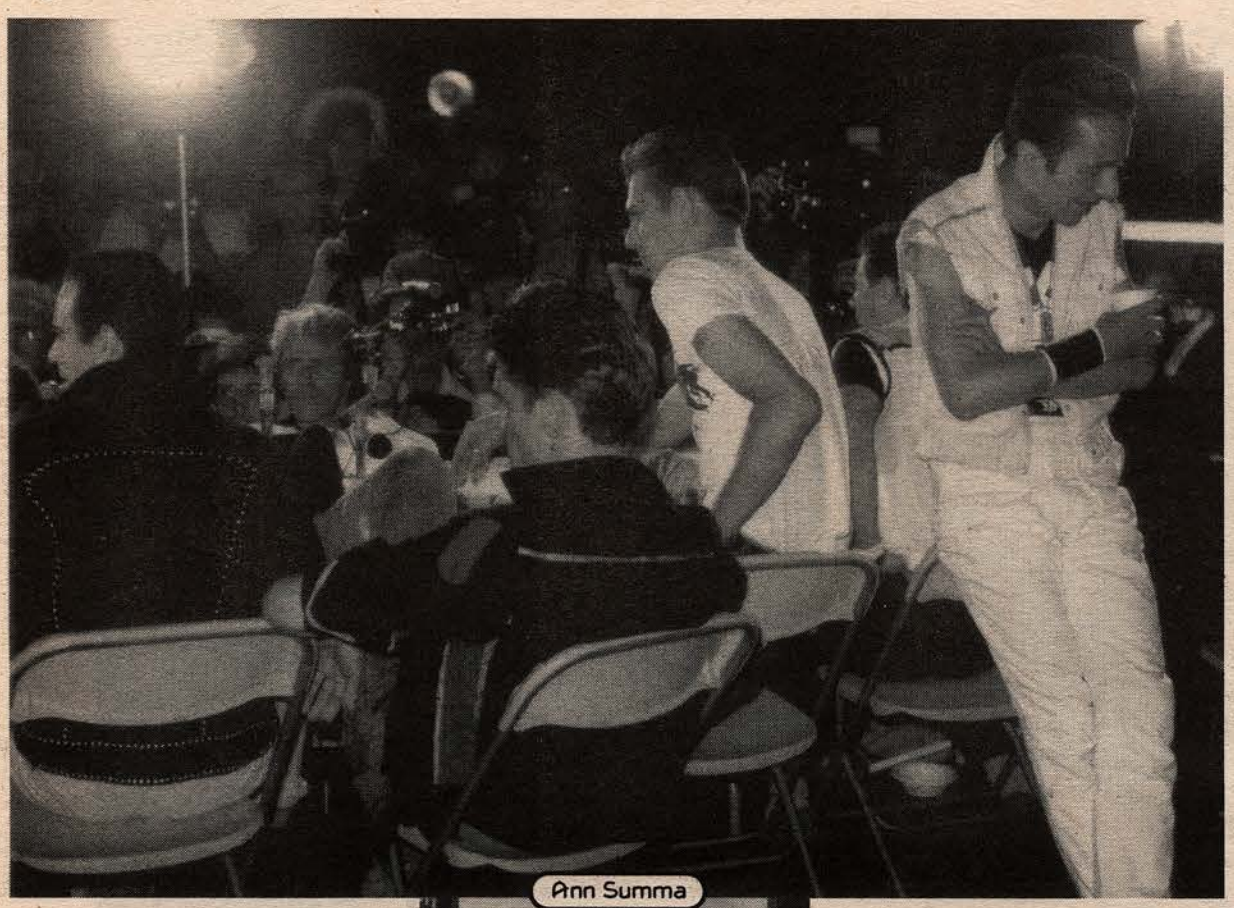
THE CLASH, BO DIDDLEY, THE DILS
Feb. 9, Santa Monica Civic

The Dils said they'd be on at 8:30 but at the last minute Avalon Productions had other ideas and 8:00 was the real starting point. So I missed them. People I talked to reported they played well, though a little tensely. As I was soon to find out, they weren't the only ones supercharged from the pressurized atmosphere. Somebody . . . record company people? Clash people? individual crooks? sold silk-screen T-shirts and buttons in the lobby at the customary ripoff prices. For lack of business, they quickly folded their tents and disappeared into the stampeding horde.

The less said about Bo Diddley the better. Lay it at the feet of his pudgy, hippie back-up musicians and you'll have pretty much hit the nail on the head. The show, by this time, was moving along at a break-neck pace; it was only 9:30, Bo was off and the Clash were only moments away. Meanwhile, the British DJ played "New Wave" hits that were better than the standard hardrock/MOR fare usually found at concerts this size but still proved little more than background static. It's a sad comment that the only American record played (that I heard) was the abysmal single by the unfunny, out-crowd swingers, the Rotters. No other local bands received any airplay period. It's heavy praise that the Clash, taking the stage, immediately vanquished the uncomfortably slimy shiver that was slowly working its way up my spine. I've only had this feeling of expectation fulfilled a few times: Bowie (the first Ziggy tour), the Stooges at the Whisky, the Sex Pistols, X . . . They were all a little nervous, Joe especially, sublimating the tension into a quaking, shaking fury, every song in fast, epileptic motion. I could swear that "White Man in Hammersmith Palais" came in under two minutes. And through the mud wall of sound Joe made the translation. You couldn't comprehend a fucking, deafening word, but he made himself understood. Veins popped and the blood was ready to burst from his eye sockets. He trembled, swayed, and rambled on with an undeniable authority, moving into a kind of Old Testament place, the realm of the possessed. A simple description can't do him justice. He brought down the wrath of the gods on everyone's heads, while Mick and Paul jumped splaying their legs, rending their instruments in two with what Lee Perry has described as playing "with an iron fist." Nicky was the coal stoking fire. Then they were gone and back again, Kickboy joining them onstage for an encore of "London's Burning." Joe seemed simultaneously delighted/terrified at seeing him. Two bars and the honeymoon was over. Football bouncers descended on Kickboy like a swarm of hungry locusts and, once backstage, proceeded to beat the living shit out of him under the eye of a merciless Caroline Coon. And suddenly you could understand the apprehension in Joe's eyes . . .here was evidence of something monstrous and sick afoot in the house of Dread, something that Joe had very little control over. More of this evidence came to light in the following backstage press conference. One got the feeling of gunpoint coercion on the Clash to force them to face these guardians of the "people's voice." And once you heard and saw the, mostly, idiotic representatives of the press, you understood the Clash's hesitancy to indulge what could turn out to be just more of the same lame, image-making and out-of-context publicity. A barely repressed hostility hung in the air, detectable somewhere in between the odor of Heineken and eau de cologne. When the Clash at last filed in, they looked tired and on edge. When they spoke, they were sullen, yet totally unafraid in letting their true feelings be known, no matter what the "professional cost."

Chris D.

Ann Summa



Ann Summa

nowhere?

I've got no idea! If you wanted to be harsh you could describe the area where I live as nothing but an agribusiness abattoir—all you see is people wearing masks, riding tractors and spraying god knows what onto the ground. I'm a townie, and I don't know what I'm doing out here, although it is nice being able to see all the stars in the heavens at night.

As a rule, people tend to resist change; why is this so?

Because they're afraid of the new and the unknown, and familiarity is comforting. For instance, when you live out in the middle of nowhere as I do, you really appreciate small things, and one of the things I'd come to appreciate was this small bar not far from where I live. The guy who ran it was cool, he kept the lights low, and there would always be interesting jazz playing when you popped in there. In the middle of nowhere, that's like a gold mine. I popped in the other day and the music was gone, it was brightly lit, and a smiling woman chirped, 'can I help you?' The bar had been sold, so the place I knew no longer exists. Arthur Rimbaud said 'some destructions are necessary,' and that's a lesson I'm really trying to learn.

"Somebody [powerful] must've seen the Clash as some kind of threat because we were constantly being arrested. They'd pull over our cars, search us, shake down our motel rooms—it was all very petty."

An overriding theme in all of your music is personal and political conflict. Why can't people get along?

I think fear is the corrupting agent, and I don't know how we can eliminate that. Of course, there's no way to eliminate the most terrifying reality—that we all have to die—but at least the sun shines, and we've got a bit of time, so it's not all sniveling. Maybe if every child in the world was shown a really good time, a new breed of human beings would appear. On the other hand, I believe some people are just born bad—I've met a few of them, too. Whether they were born bad, what happened to them was bad, or it was a combination of the two, by the time they're teenagers you can see they're gonna flip. No matter who loves them or what happens to them, they're gonna smash up the room.

Do you believe in karma, or do some people get away with smashing up the room?

Surely karma must be one of the few things we can believe in. Even if it were proved to me that it wasn't in play here on earth, I'd still hope that in another dimension, in the spirit world, it does exist. I do think it operates in this world.

What forces played a role in shaping your sense of morality?

My mother was Scottish, and a no-nonsense kind of woman, and maybe I got some vibes from her.

What's been the most difficult year of your life?

I took a long breather after the Clash broke up, and I had a really hard time about half way through that. I needed a rest, so I was kind of grateful for the break, but at a certain point I became overwhelmed by a sense of self-doubt. In the music business, an 11-year layoff is like a hundred and eleven years, and felt like I'd blown it and would never get up there again. The only thing that got me through was sheer bloody-mindedness—I just won't quit! Every time I think 'you've had your lot, now just shut up,' a larger part of me says, 'no, there are things you can say better than anyone, and you must say them.' The other thing that carried me through that period was the fact that I had a lot of responsibilities—I'd managed to have children, and both my parents died during those years, as well.

How were you affected by the death of your parents?

I wasn't close to them, because when I was eight years old I was sent to a boarding school, where I spent nine years. I saw my father once a year between the ages of nine and twelve, then twice a year from then on. As to whether I felt cheated by his absence, I didn't bother with that, because I was in a hard place. You know Tom Browne's 'Schooldays'? Imagine being in a second-rate boarding school in South London in 1961. You had to punch or be punched, so I became hard and ceased being a mama's boy pretty quickly.

You've been referred to in the press on several occasions as 'the son of a diplomat who dropped out of art school to be a bohemian.' Is that an accurate description?

No. In my first-ever interview in the Melody Maker, when I was suddenly regarded as 'somebody,' I said that my father was a diplomat simply because I wanted to give him his due for one time in his life. My father was an excellent eccentric who liked nothing better than dressing up for a

CLASH Press Conference

The following are rough quotes from the CLASH press conference held in a conventioneer room following the concert. Due tc overzealous security, SLASH was allowed only 2 representatives and, as last minute substitutes we didn't have tape recorder or camera. These remarks were scribbled in ballpoint pen on the back of the CBS Epic CLASH Fact Sheet which gave such useful information as the population of England and the correct spellings of the band members' names.

The following remarks are not verbatim. . .

+AREN'T PRESS CONFERENCES SAD?
(Jones) You mean depressed conferences?

+HOW DO YOU LIKE AMERICA?
Lovely...we don't like tellyvision...but there seems to be a healthy scene everywhere we've been. We're coming back in June.

+WHO WILL PRODUCE YOUR NEXT ALBUM?
We are.

+DID PATTI SMITH GIVE YOU MONEY TO GET STARTED?
(Simonon) 3 quid to get me shoes repaired.

+ARE YOU PLANNING TO FILL THE GAP LEFT BY THE SEX PISTOLS?
What gap?

+HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING STARS?
We can still walk the streets in London. We avoid the big pop star bit. We'd never play in big stadiums ... garage band ...we still stand by all that stuff . . . we periodically feel just as suicidal.

+DO YOU WANT SUCCESS?
We want to be the best band in the world.

+HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR RECORD COMPANY?
I wish they'd fucking leave us alone. They don't know what we're about. I wish they'd stop putting out ads for us with the Statue of Liberty all bundled up in bits of rope.

+WHAT'S YOUR NEXT SINGLE GOING TO BE?
A cover of "I Fought the Law" by the Bobby Fuller Four.

+WHAT DO THINK OF THE CRITICISM THAT PEOPLE CAN'T HEAR THE WORDS IN YOUR RECORDS?
(Strummer) Well, you know 'The medium is the message'? We like to SLOBBER the message.

+WHAT KIND OF POLITICS ARE YOU INTO?
Personal politics.

+WHEN'S YOUR NEXT GIG FOR ROCK AGAINST RACISM?
Never. The shows are not together, bad sound, bad organization.

+ARE AMERICAN FANS VICTIMS OF THE SAME REPRESSION AS ENGLISH FANS?
There are lots of angry people here in America.

+WHAT ENGLISH BANDS DO YOU LIKE?
The Slits, Subway Sect.

+WHAT DO YOU THINK OF PEOPLE WHO REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE NEW MUSIC?
(Jones) They're prematurely senile. Maybe they think Kiss, Foreigner and all that are what they want. After all, they've already got a Mick Jones . . and when we're blown out, you'll have somebody else.

+WHAT ABOUT REGGAE MUSIC?
It's a big thing in England. In Jamaica, it's turning into disco.

+WHY DID YOU HAVE BO DIDDLEY ON THE BILL? SHOULDN'T YOU GIVE A CHANCE TO THE LOCAL BANDS IN AREAS YOU PLAY IN?
We like Bo Diddley's music . . . but sure, we think local bands deserve a chance, that's why we had the Dils. Others deserve it too, like the GERMS . . (Much applause here as Lorna Doom had just been allowed into the press conference after totally disrupting it by banging on the windows outside)

+CAN'T YOU BETTER CONTROL SECURITY, SOUND, ETC?
In England we've got our own security, our own sound man. We brought along our own lighting man and our own DJ. We like to put together a good show.
(Referring to the incident of a SLASH editor getting beaten up by security)
Strummer: We never said it was going to be a utopia. Rock and roll is played on enemy ground. You can go on about getting the shit kicked out of you, you can talk about the bloke who got murdered by security guards in England, but we've stopped much more (violence) than you can imagine.
(Referring to the incident at the Azteca Club in North Hollywood when the Dils played and the LAPD riot squad jumped on stage to try to stop the show because they thought the pogoers were fighting)
Jones: That was one of the stories I took home. I said, you ain't seen nothing until you've seen the guys on stage with the machine guns.

+DO YOU THINK WE'RE LOSING THE BATTLE?
(Strummer) Sometimes I do. But sometimes you've got to wake up in the morning and think, we're gonna WIN the bloody battle.

- JB

party, and he was great fun, but he was basically a low-level worker in the hierarchy of the British embassy, and we actually had fuck all. A four-room bungalow in Croyton was all he managed to accrue during his life, and Croyton is not much of a salubrious suburb.

When you were 20 years old, your older brother, David, committed suicide. How did that mark you?

I was deeply affected by it, and I don't know if I've come to terms with it yet, because it's a mysterious thing to try and understand. We were only separated by 18 months, but we were opposites: whereas I was the loudmouth ringleader who was always getting everybody into trouble, he was quiet and never said much. When we were teenagers in the '60s, there was a load of shouting about Rhodesia, and that led to his becoming a member of the National Front in 1968. At the time, I was too busy listening to Jimi Hendrix to really understand what he was going on with him, but I don't think his politics had anything to do with his suicide. I think it had more to do with his shyness.

What's the most valuable thing you could teach your children?

I don't think I've taught them anything, and don't feel like I've been a very good father. My first marriage split up after fourteen years when my two daughters were still relatively young, and you feel guilty about that forever. They get born, and suddenly the thing they were born into is pulled apart. It eats away at my mind, particularly since my parents stayed together.

You married again in 1995; what's the secret of a successful marriage?

You have to love your partner more than you love yourself—and I do.

What's the most widely-held misconception about you?

That I'm some kind of political thinker. I definitely am not. I think about politics all the time, but it's become increasingly difficult to know what's going on in the world. I grew up hearing my parents go on about World War II, which was an episode of history that seemed very clear: Hitler=bad, everyone else=good. People are basically lazy and we want to see a good guy and a bad guy. Obviously, nothing is black or white, yet we yearn for that beautiful clarity, but I'm finding it more and more difficult to come to those kinds of conclusions—possibly because we're getting more information and we have to sift through it. I used to believe it was possible to learn what was going on in the world by reading the newspaper, but that began to change around the time that the Balkans thing kicked off. Either the newspapers aren't up to snuff or I'm losing my mind, but I found it very difficult to get a grasp on what was going on there.

Do you believe music has a responsibility to address social and political issues?

I do, but I would add that the climate of the times dictates the way people write.

How are you evolving as a songwriter?

Oh god, backwards man! I'm trying to be less idiotic. Every writer likes to feel that when he sits down to write he's gonna zoom off into a new field he didn't even know existed, but the truth is that writing is basically a process of blundering in the dark, and there's a lot of luck that comes into play.

Are there specific issues that are

Ann Summa

When the Two Sevens Clashed

Joe Strummer and The Clash helped start the punky reggae party—and did more than anyone to keep it going. Jamaican reggae deejay/producer MIKEY DREAD was there.

by Carter Van Pelt

When Bob Marley sang his 1977 reggae-stepper "Punky Reggae Party," he called out "The Damned, The Jam, The Clash..." Marley may have overlooked the Pistols' reggae-loving Johnny Rotten, but few in the London punk movement were drawn to the party with the passion of The Clash's Joe Strummer, Paul Simonon and Mick Jones, and nobody did more to represent reggae to the punk rock scene.

Members of the Clash had grown up in close proximity to the Jamaican community that relocated to England in the post-WWII period. Paul Simonon's "Guns of Brixton" is a direct reflection of this experience, as is Strummer's "White Man in Hammersmith Palais." The latter documents Strummer's night in a Jamaican dancehall in West London, as he explained in 1991: "All over the world people are oppressed and in London there were the dreads and there were the punks, and we had an alliance. England is a very repressive country... Immigrants were treated badly... So these people had a sense of pride and dignity, and when we went into their concerts, where we should have had the grace to have left them alone... And they didn't jump us, they didn't stomp us, they didn't beat the seven shades of you-know-what out of us... They understood that maybe we needed a drop of this roots culture. And 'White Man in Hammersmith Palais' is a song that was going through my mind while I was standing in the middle of the Hammersmith Palais...in a sea of thousands of rastas and dreads and natty rebels. That song was trying to say something realistic."

Evidence of the group's interest in reggae could be seen before it was heard. The cover of the first single, "1977," strongly resembles the cover of Joe Gibbs and The Professionals' State of Emergency album — men lined up with their backs to the camera, hands on a wall, on the verge of arrest. On the "1977" cover, this was augmented by the Jamaican political slogans on Strummer's clothes—"Heavy Manners" and "Heavy Duty Discipline." These ideas were likely gleaned from Prince Far I's *Under Heavy Manners* album, an oft-cited Clash favorite. Later visual references to the group's cultural interests include the cover of *Black Market Clash*, which features a picture of a lone Rasta in defiance of riot police at the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival. Strummer's and Jones' experiences at Notting Hill in 1976 were the inspiration for the song "White Riot."

The Clash's first attempt to work with reggae musicians was a short alliance in 1977 with the Rasputin of reggae, Lee Perry. The result, "Complete Control," was less than inspired, but the group kept at it, achieving intercultural consanguinity in 1980 when they brought Jamaican deejay/producer Mikey Dread to the controls. Their collaboration on "Bank Robber" and "Robber Dub" (off *Black Market Clash*) was followed by the "Train In Vain" b-side "Rockers Galore-UK Tour" and the tracks "Junco Partner," "Living In Fame," "One More Time," "One More Dub," "If Music Could Talk," and "Shepherd's Delight" on the massive *Sandinista* album. Mikey's voice can be heard on "Living in Fame," "One More Time" and "If Music Could Talk."

While Mikey is still in contention today with The Clash's management over alleged unpaid publishing and lack of recognition for the album sales garnered by *Sandinista*, his respect for Strummer's and Simonon's "reggae mission" remains.

"I see Joe Strummer as a leader in the rock world who never got the recognition that he deserved for his upfrontness, addressing issues that other people were reluctant to address — 'White Riot' and all dem tings deh," he told ARTHUR, on the phone from his home in Florida. "When I met them, I was surprised that these people were supporting reggae, buying reggae every week, and up-to-date with what's going on...

> "Joe Strummer is the one who was like, 'Go get them Mikey, don't let them tell you what to do!'"

"One thing I can say about the Clash, they were no racists. There were a lot of times I been to places where skinheads and punks wanted to kick my butt, as a black man, and [the Clash] would warn me, 'Tomorrow don't go out alone, have one of us follow you.' They start to wear their Doctor Martin shoes, and they buy me a pair as well so they know we're on the war path. Anybody come, we just mess them up."

Mikey Dread's live performances with The Clash involved taking the stage alone to sing over recordings of his own "Dread At The Controls" rhythm productions and later joining The Clash for encores. This Jamaican dancehall style performance was understood and received enthusiastically in Europe, but Mikey ran into problems at his first US appearance.

"I wasn't supposed to be on tour with them, but they asked me to come along. They wanted to introduce me to their crowd, but I got a bad reception in LA. I'll never forget Los Angeles. We played all over the world and when we came to Los Angeles, all the punkers tried to boo me off stage. The punks got really mad, and I'm looking at like 20,000 people and wondering what the hell is gonna go on. I told the guys, 'I'm not playing tonight, cause they don't want to see a black man out there.' We had one black bouncer and me. That is it for blacks. And it was pure white man out there, some bad punks! They wanted to eat me alive! Joe Strummer is the one who was like 'Go get them Mikey, don't let them tell you what to do!' And me just go out there and get serious and say, 'You know I'm coming to the United States I was thinking I was going to be meeting a lot of intelligent people, people who are open-minded, people who are cosmopolitan, people who are not prejudiced and racist, people who want the world to live in unity.' I give them a speech and chastise them for their rude behavior. And trust me mon, the crowd went quiet like you could hear a pin drop. Then I said, 'I know you're here to see the Clash, but I'm going to introduce you to some reggae music, from the roots! Are you ready,?' And they say, 'yea!!' And we just start lick some tune and that was it. We broke the ice."

Not only did The Clash cover reggae tracks like Willi Williams' "Armagideon Time," Jr. Murvin's "Police and Thieves," and The Maytals' "Pressure Drop," they name-dropped and referenced their reggae heroes in their lyrics — Prince Far I in "Clash City Rockers," Dr. Alimantado in "Rudy Can't Fail," The Abyssinians' "Sattamassaga" in "Jimmy Jazz," and Dillinger, Leroy Smart, Ken Boothe, and Delroy Wilson in "White Man In Hammersmith Palais." Strummer even documented his and Jones' chaotic jaunt to Kingston in "Safe European Home." (Curiously, Simonon—arguably the band's biggest reggae head—was left behind in England, a major slight that he talks about with obvious residual bitterness in Don Letts' Clash doc, *Westway to the World*.)

Strummer's love of Jamaican music continued in his solo career. The lyrics on "Techno D-Day" from the Mescaleros' *Rock Art & The X-Ray Style* describe "using the headphones for a mike, for Tenor Saw's delight, I sang another new sound is dying," a reference to Tenor Saw's "Ring The Alarm." Strummer also recorded a cover of Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder They come" with deejay Tippa Irie and The Long Beach Dub Allstars on the *Free The Memphis 3* benefit album, and co-wrote the disquieting title track for Horace Andy's *Living in the Flood album*, released on Massive Attack's Melankolic label.

Over the last 20 years, the Clash's embrace of Jamaican music has continued to inspire like-minded efforts by musicians like Bad Brains, Massive Attack, 311, Rancid, Sublime, Long Beach Dub Allstars and No Doubt. The punky reggae party that started so improbably way back in '77 has never really stopped.

Thanks to Jim Dooley and Stanley Whyte for the fact assists.

Strummer

particularly well suited to being addressed in music?

Love—because with music, you have the extra dimension of melody to communicate things that are beyond language.

Name a song that never fails to make you cry.

Hoagy Carmichael's 'Georgia.' It has a quality of yearning and reminiscence that are incredibly moving to me.

What was the last record you bought?

'The Call,' by Alan Skidmore, who was a be-bop saxophone player who could probably be described as washed-up, not to be too rude. He went to South Africa and hooked up with a group called Amampondo, and they made this record together that's basically a bunch of crazed drumming with a be-bop guy free-falling all over it. It's not bad, but when I put it on everyone else leaves.

What's your favorite Clash song?

I really like the song, 'If Music Could Talk,' which is on side 21 of *Sandinista!* [laughs] I like it because it's quite weird, and it shows we were willing to try stupid things all the time.

What do you miss about being in the Clash?

That was so long ago that it's all faded, and I'm never on the nostalgia tit, but we did have a very good camaraderie and an extremely acute sense of humor. It was fun being in the Clash.

Was there ever a time when you believed the myth of the Clash?

No, and that's why I managed to survive. They say you should never read your press, and that comes in handy when they're saying you suck.

Does the adversarial nature of the music press help keep musicians honest, or does it simply undermine them?

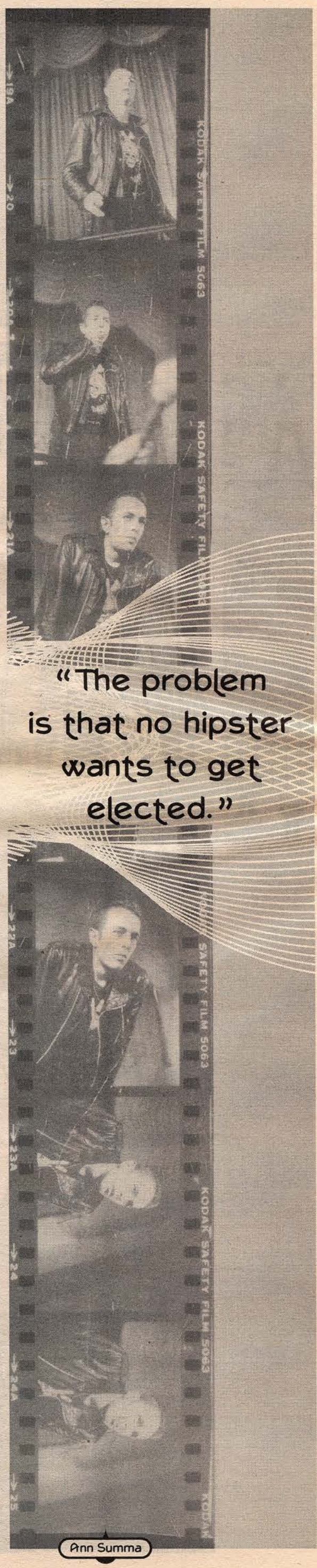
On several occasions it's definitely knocked me for six, but then I'd grudgingly get up and dust my clothes off, and say better that than the other way. The press is harsher in England than it is other places, but I think it's a good thing because it keeps you on your toes and prevents you from getting too pretentious. Yes-men tend to collect around famous people, so the conditions are really conducive to becoming pretentious. So you might as well get the mean guys in to flay you alive.

How has fame been of use to you?

It obviously has its uses, but it's really more of a liability than an asset to anyone interested in writing. If you want to write, the first thing is, you've got to experience life like everyone else experiences it. Secondly, you need room to think. If you're incredibly famous, all you can think about is, 'Oh my god, has that person over there recognized me, and did I bring enough bodyguards to the supermarket with me.' By accident I managed this quite well, because the Clash never went on television in Britain. If you wanted to see the Clash you had to actually get up and go out to one of the shows. Consequently, I'm able to move about Britain without being recognized. for the most part.

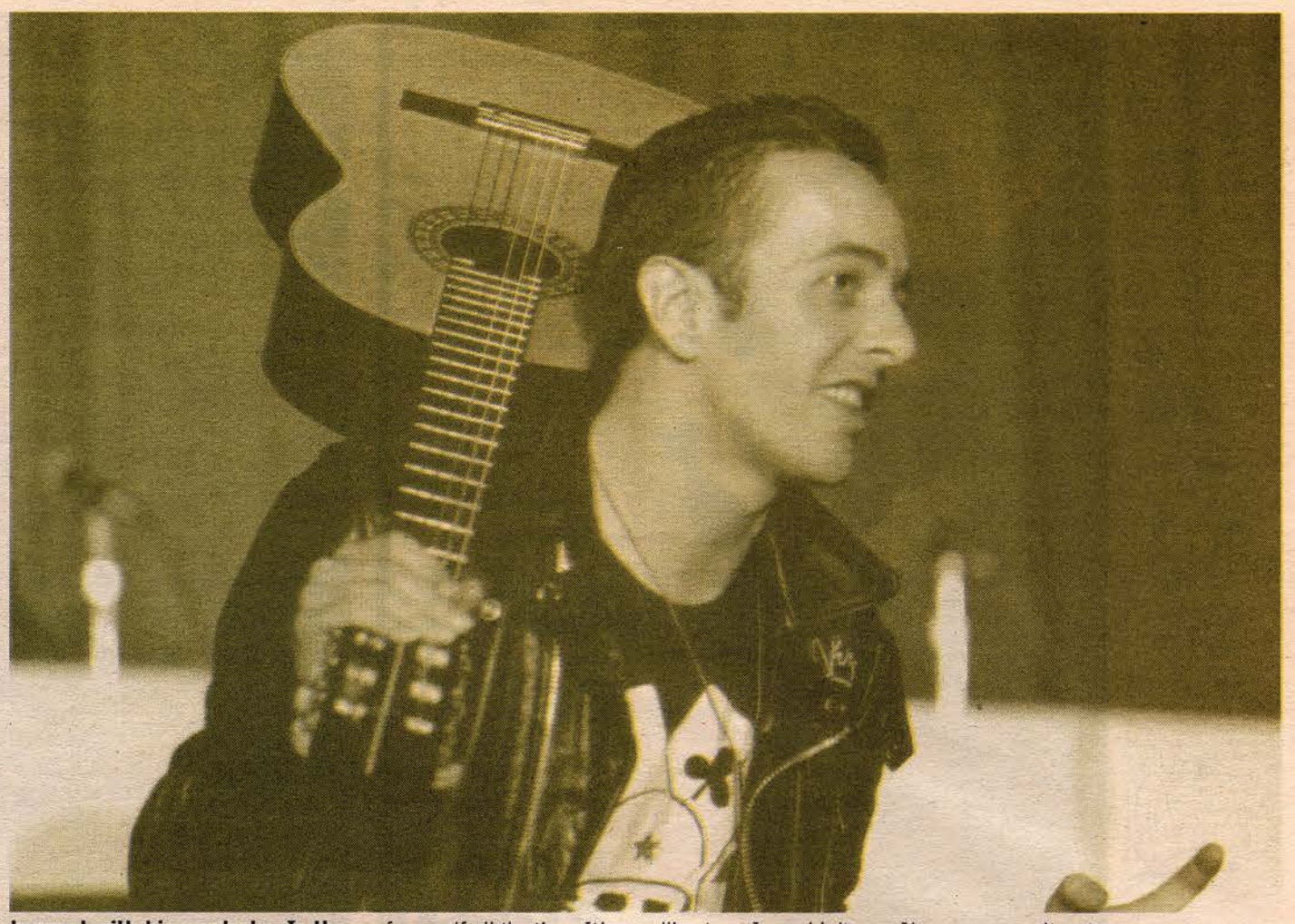
Are fame and money invariably corrupting?

Definitely. The Clash never had to struggle with the latter of those two things, however, because we never got any money. The music business is a bad racket, and the people on the first crest of a wave never get paid. I don't like to moan on about money, but you have to realize that although you might've heard of the Clash, we didn't sell any records.



Ann Summa

JOHNNY RYAN IS THE CARTOONIST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SERIES "ANGRY YOUTH COMICS" PUBLISHED BY FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS (FANTAGRAPHICS.COM). HIS WORK HAS GRACED PUBLICATIONS AS DIVERSE AS NICKELODEON AND HUSTLER. HE LIVES IN LOS ANGELES. HIS WEBSITE IS WWW.JOHNNYR.COM



Nobody sends me five pounds every time somebody's heard of the group. We never had any real power, either, other than in an abstract, poetic way. What I wrote on a piece of paper might influence someone somewhere down the line, and that's something I still take great care with. Not writing things that are stupid, or easily misconstrued is something I keep onboard at all times. But it would've been nice to have the power to say, '50,000 people down to the Houses of Parliament now!' We might've been able to get 1,500 people at the height of our power, but ultimately, it's the big money men who have the power. Then again, I suppose somebody must've seen us as some kind of threat back in the day, because we were constantly being arrested for petty shit. We'd go to play small towns in the North of England and you could almost hear them thinking, 'here they come, those punk rockers from London—we're not having any of that!' So they'd pull over our cars, search us, shake down our motel rooms—it was all very petty.

Does the legacy of the Clash continue to get in your way?

Not anymore, because enough time has passed, but certainly, for ten years after the group broke up, I found it difficult to deal with. But I managed to chill long enough that it's allowable for me to come back and knock in a few good albums. It's not pissing anybody off.

You've traveled quite a bit as a touring musician; what's the scariest place you've ever been?

Mozambique. There was a war going on there, and I was only there for a day, but the entire time I was there I was nervous about who might be lurking in the bushes along the roadside. It was also a little unnerving playing Ireland with the Clash, but you have to laugh. You fly in there, you check into the Europa Hotel in Belfast, and the clerk cheerfully informs you that this is the most bombed hotel in Europe. 28 bombings so far! Then you go up to your room where you ask yourself; should I crawl under the bed? Do I dare stand at the window? We were quite pragmatic and decided to just get on with things, because we couldn't see how either side could gain anything politically by blowing up a rock'n'roll show. It wasn't as if the whole world was saying, 'oh wow, the Clash are in Belfast.' The only people who cared that we were there were the other scrawny punk rockers walking around Belfast.

In *A Riot of Our Own*, the 1999 book about the Clash written by Johnny Green and Garry Barker, everyone in the band comes off well, with the exception of Mick Jones, who's depicted as being ridiculously obsessed with his wardrobe. Is the book accurate?

Yes it is, but you need some of that in a rock'n'roll band! If Paul Simonon hadn't been in the Clash I doubt that we would've been as successful as we were, because you need to look stylish. People don't think of Bob Dylan as a glamorous guy, but he was actually pretty good looking. When you think of his Cuban heel phase, with the curly head, the Carnaby Street clothes, the polka-dot tab collars, the tight jeans, the boots—he was pretty styling.

Rumor has it that Bob's had a face-lift.

That's probably a good idea. You have to remember, this is show biz, and it's not as if Bob's a merchant banker or a film critic or something. If he wants to go out on the road for another 20 or 30 years, he's gonna want to tuck it up a bit. It's not as if we're novelists who can hide in our studies like J.D. Salinger and never have our photos taken. It's easy for those people to say what the heck. You don't know what it's like having photos taken of yourself all the time. It's appalling to regularly see the destruction of age marked out sharply on your face in photos, videos, and on television. This is a visual thing we do. Johnny Cash dyes his hair, and I think it's only right that we try and scruff up a shambling face.

At what point did you become an adult?

Are you kidding?! I'm nowhere near becoming an adult.

What do you think you represent to the people who admire you?

Maybe they see a good soul.

Tell me about someone who inspires you.

Bo Diddley is inspiring. When he was a young musician starting out he needed some maracas, so he went to the local scrap yard, got some of those floating balls that sit in the tank of a toilet, filled them with black-eyed peas, then used them to invent a whole new kind of music. That's heroic and inspiring.

What's the biggest obstacle you've overcome in your life?

I wouldn't say I've overcome it yet, but it's my sheer laziness. I'd rather sit and watch 'Popeye' cartoons than do anything. Nowadays I'm into 'The Simpsons,' 'Southpark,' and 'SpongeBob Square-Pants.'

The second album by your current band, the Mescaleros, is dedicated to the late Joey Ramone. What was the nature of his genius?

A sharp intelligence. People think of spirit when they think of the Ramones, but the more I listen to those records the more I'm struck by how smart they are.

Where do you think Joey is now?

He's in heaven.

Do you believe in heaven?

Maybe not for me, but certainly for Joey Ramone.

What's the most one can hope for in life?

The sense of having accomplished something—and I don't have that feeling yet. Being in the line of work I'm in, you hold yourself up against the real greats like Dylan, Ray Davies, Jagger & Richards, Paul Simon, Lennon & McCartney, and John Fogerty. I'm not in that pantheon yet, but I'm gonna get there.

> "There's no way to eliminate the most terrifying reality—that we all have to die—but at least the sun shines, and we've got a bit of time, so it's not all sniveling."

Kristine McKenna is a Los Angeles-based writer and curator. She is presently organizing "Semina Culture: Wallace Berman & His Circle," an exhibition that will begin a national tour of four museums beginning in September, 2004. A second volume of her collected interviews will be published later this year by Fantagraphics, and her biography of Wallace Berman will be out in 2005.

A Radical Puts Down Roots

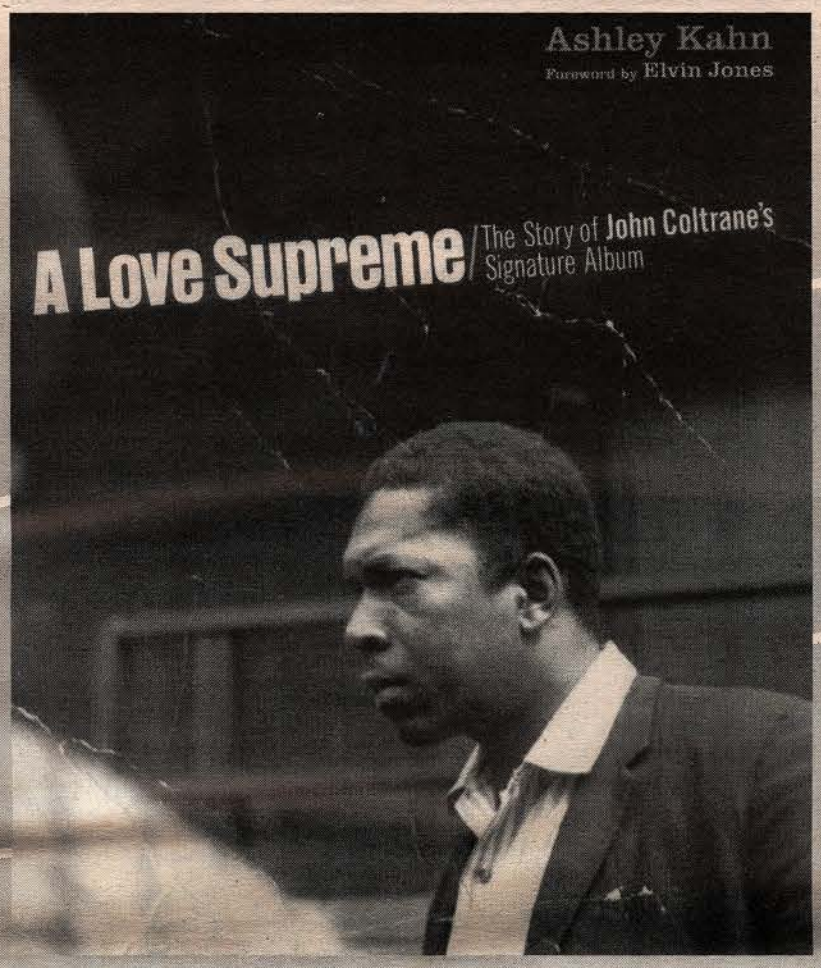
It was Joe's inspiration and energy backstage at Glastonbury 1996 was the spark that got Future Forests going. Joe said "Bands must be contributing to global warming by their buses, equipment trucks and the diesel used to power the stages. Can you imagine how much carbon dioxide the pressing and the distribution of a CD creates? What shall we do about it?" Dan Morrell's response: Plant trees to re-absorb the CO2. Joe then decided that he would have his own forest planted to offset the emissions from his CDs and became the world's first carbon-neutral artist. He then put Future Forests in touch with many other people in the industry. With Joe's credibility, blessings and contacts, Future Forests has attracted support from Pink Floyd, Pulp, Beth Orton, Foo Fighters and Massive Attack.

Joe's Forest is hidden away on the shores of Loch Bracadale, North West Skye. This beautiful site is being recreated into a forest of native broadleaves. Interspersed within the greenery are areas of archaeological interest, mainly ancient crafting infrastructures, which the forest will help to protect from the elements. Overshadowed by the majestic Macleod's Table, Orbost Forest will provide a home to hundreds of species of wildlife, including otters, red deer, foxes, and a haven to the increasingly threatened nesting sea-eagle. A popular local walk travels the scenic route from Orbost to the nearby sea stacks known as McCloud's Maidens. As a community woodland, planting at Orbost has generated a huge amount of local enthusiasm and will be carried out by the Orbost Trust, comprised of residents of the local area. Species planted here will be predominantly birch, oak, rowan, alder and willow, with some woody shrubs in-between.

To plant a tree in Joe's memory log onto www.futureforests.com

Avant-Garde, a Force for Good

At the peak of his popularity, JOHN COLTRANE went for something deeper.



Author Ashley Kahn's *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album* is an in-depth, book-length chronicle of the making of *Love Supreme.* But what happened in the period between the recording of that album in late 1963 and Coltrane's death in July, 1967? Where, in short, did Coltrane go next? In the exclusive chapter excerpted here in full, Kahn recounts Coltrane's extraordinary next phase, in which he continued his exploration of spiritual themes while embracing both the younger players and the "style" of radical jazz's much-maligned New Thing. This was no solipsistic, withdraw-from-the-world journey: there was a real connection between John's artistic decisions, his progression "toward higher spiritual realization, higher spiritual development" (as his wife--and genius musician in her own right--Alice put it), and his direct involvement in the day-to-day affairs of black America...

Perhaps it was a four-year itch.

Not that Coltrane planned his career turns with any exactitude, but the timeline of his most creative period does imply a certain regularity: one year bursting with diverse activity and unsettled exploration—1957, 1961—followed by three of relatively focused progress. By that schedule, 1965 promised another creative eruption.

On cue—while the sound of *A Love Supreme* threaded its way into the cultural tapestry—Coltrane again accelerated his experimental drive in contexts large and small, in the process testing the bonds that held his core group together. Before the year was out, the reign of the Classic Quartet would come to a close, and Coltrane would front a new band and a new sound.

The signs of his future direction were already present in the *Love Supreme* sessions. Coltrane's measured key-hopping on "Acknowledgement" presaged a harmonic approach in his playing bordering on—and soon embracing—a passionate atonality. His penchant for chanting would resurface on recordings like "Om"; his love of poetry on the album cover of *Kulu Se Mama.* His explicitly hymnlike titles became an unbroken theme among the many tracks recorded in 1965—"Dear Lord," "Welcome," "The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost"—and their meditative sonority a looser reflection of that on *A Love Supreme.*

A Love Supreme also left its trace in the extended, suitelike compositions Coltrane brought into the studio throughout 1965. He even chose the title "Suite" for a five-part work with sectional names again suggesting spiritual focus—"Prayer and Meditation: Day," "Peace and After," "Affirmation." The album *Meditations* (and the later release *First Meditations,* among the final sessions with the Classic Quartet) furthered Coltrane's trend to multisectioned constructions presented in continuous performance. *Meditations* also elicited questions as to whether he was consciously following in his own footsteps. Coltrane's response leaned more to the spiritual than the musical, as he saw his current efforts as points along the same continuum:

Once you become aware of this force for unity in life, you can't ever forget it. It becomes part of everything you do. In that respect, [*Meditations*] is an extension of *A Love Supreme*, since my conception of that force keeps changing shape. My goal of meditating on this through music, however, remains the same. And that is to uplift people, as much as I can. To inspire them to realize more and more of their capacities for living meaningful lives.

As Alice noted, "From *A Love Supreme* onward, we were seeing a progression toward higher spiritual realization, higher spiritual development."

Notwithstanding the unreleased quartet-plus-two experiment of December 10, 1964, Coltrane seemed taken by a need to augment his forces. In February, he revisited the two-bass idea at a session again matching Garrison with Art Davis, which yielded two deeply hypnotic takes of "Nature Boy." The tenor-on-tenor concept inspired Coltrane to consider recruiting another tenorist into his group. By that spring, the bandleader was frequenting various Manhattan clubs, and began following a young tenor player from Little Rock, Arkansas, whose unfettered style was clearly in the Coltrane mold. "This was before I was working in clubs nightly," Farrell "Pharoah" Sanders recollects:

I was playing at this place called Slugs on a Saturday, and I think it was seven-ish. It was only for about an hour and a half before the regular bands came out. I didn't even know he was in the room—I looked up and he was at the bar. I was into a more modal kind of thing and he heard me play some of those tunes I wrote—"Upper and Lower Egypt"—that was before I recorded it. He came up, and we talked very briefly. He said that he enjoyed the music.

Sanders, like Dolphy, would soon become the second horn in Coltrane's band, his presence having an undermining effect on the tight solidarity of the quartet. But the most striking example of Coltrane's expansive drive took place in early June, in his first big-band effort since Africa/Brass, and arguably his most daring effort since "Chasin' the Trane."

Take a roomful of players of varying experience and abilities and, sans rehearsal, allow them to improvise simultaneously over a loose series of themes and modal frames. Turn on the tape machine, and let it roll for forty-odd minutes. Coltrane called on no fewer than seven horn players (trumpeters Freddie Hubbard and Dewey Johnson, alto saxists Marion Brown and John Tchicai, and tenors Shepp, Sanders, and himself), plus Art Davis again, to supplement his quartet. Short of finding a few swing-era stalwarts friendly to the avant-garde cause, Coltrane could not have picked a more disparate group, from those with conservatory training (Davis, Tchicai), to those with a strong bebop background (Tyner, Garrison, Hubbard), to "New Thing" newcomers (Shepp, Sanders, Johnson).

The fact that the session threw together players of unequal experience and different temperaments both excited and daunted Coltrane. "He was just very quiet and concentrated...very much occupied in his mind with what he wanted to do," Tchicai remembers. Coltrane seemed to demand from the

group the same unspoken dialogue his quartet had achieved, giving "small directions, he didn't say a lot—'OK, we have this little theme here, and then at a certain point you come together in the piece and play this theme, and then you take a solo, and then after you it's...Freddie Hubbard.'" Coltrane himself recalled being happier with the results than with the session itself:

I was so doggone busy; I was worried to death. I couldn't really enjoy the date. If it hadn't been a date, then I would have really enjoyed it. You know, I was trying to get the time and everything, and I was busy...to hear the record I enjoyed it; I enjoyed all the individual contributions.

It had been an adventurous effort, and would have been even more so had Coltrane realized his wish to have two drummers on the recording. He had originally asked a Philadelphian he met, Rashied Ali, who had managed, through youthful persistence, to sit in for Jones on a few nights at the Half Note. With incredulity, Ali recalls turning down Coltrane's invitation:

I had an ego bigger than this building at that point...I was young, I was ridiculous, and I said "Yeah, I would like to play. Who else is gonna play?"..."Well, I don't think I wanna play with two drummers." He said, "Oh, you don't?"...so I blew the date on *Ascension*!

Nonetheless, Coltrane continued to pursue the idea of multiple percussionists, along with his other additions. Upon returning from his European tour, he peppered live and studio dates with unlikely combinations of instruments. He invited Archie Shepp to a Down Beat Jazz Festival appearance in Chicago. A subsequent West Coast tour found him working with Pharoah Sanders, flutist Joe Brazil, two bassists, and someone playing a thumb piano in Seattle. Upon reaching Los Angeles, he doubled every instrument save piano—including bass clarinetist/bassist Donald Garrett and percussionist Juno Lewis—and recorded the African-flavored, chant-heavy "Kulu Se Mama."

Upon his return to New York, Coltrane was determined to honor the past and yet face the future—to maintain the quartet, but augment to it at will, as he described the following year:

I figured I could do two things: I could have a band that played like the way we used to play, and a band that was going in the direction that the one I have now is going in—I could combine these two, with these two concepts going. And it could have been done.

Alas, given personality clashes (Jones and Ali never saw eye-to-eye) and divergent musical paths (Tyner especially was not in accord with Coltrane's more atonal experiments), it was not to be. One night in November, Coltrane walked onto the stage at the Village Gate carrying his soprano, tenor, a bass clarinet, percussion instruments, and even a bagpipe—accompanied by Sanders, Ali, alto saxist Carlos Ward, and the quartet. It was one of the last times he would play with Tyner and Jones. As 1965 drew to a close, the strain on the senior members was proving too much, and in short order, Tyner left, to be replaced by Coltrane's wife, Alice; Jones soon followed, leaving Ali alone in the drum position. Only Garrison remained from the groundbreaking quartet. Years later, the Tyner and Jones explained their respective departures matter-of-factly:

Q: What prompted you to leave...?
Tyner: I felt if I was going to go any further musically, I would have to leave the group, and when John hired a second drummer, it became a physical necessity. I couldn't hear myself.
Q: Do you think you [and Ali] were compatible as drummers?
Jones: I think that I was. I don't think he was...I didn't think my leaving would have any debilitating effect on the group.

> With a wave of his hand, Coltrane had legitimized the angry, discordant sounds of the New Thing, forcing serious attention to be paid to a subgenre that might otherwise have been dismissed.

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The winter of 1965-66 delivered the full windfall of *A Love Supreme*. Of the public citations crowning Coltrane's artistic and commercial achievements over the years, none matched the awards and attention this album engendered in the few weeks that came exactly a year after its recording and release. A popular poll conducted by Down Beat, the country's leading jazz publication at the time, resulted in Coltrane's being inducted into the magazine's Hall of Fame (a first for a living musician) and receiving awards for Tenor Saxophonist of the Year and Album of the Year. The music industry took notice as well, nominating A Love Supreme for two Grammys. And though ABC-Paramount never officially secured the gold-record distinction for the album, Impulse's parent company had a gold replica of Coltrane's best-selling disc made, and hung it proudly in their New York corporate offices. "Gold before it went gold," laughs Archie Shepp. "It's a good marketing technique." He explains:

Jimmy Garrison told me a really strange story of how on the ninth floor of ABC was the jazz office and they had the glass cage there with gold records, and he used to see A Love Supreme beside the all the others. He couldn't believe it, and finally went to Bob Thiele and Bob acknowledged that it was in fact a gold record.

Not since the heady success of "My Favorite Things" in 1961 had Coltrane enjoyed such a wide and warm embrace as he did at the close of 1965; yet not since the harsh critical reaction of 1962 had he faced as dramatic a reversal of support as he did following the changes he effected in his lineup. But unlike the "anti-jazz" storm, this one was neither headline-grabbing nor loud. Tyner and Jones left with little fanfare (their departures eclipsed by Coltrane's far-ranging explorations of later 1965); and a flock of fans and fellow musicians began to slip away.

"That was really cataclysmic to me," submits Dave Liebman. "Seeing Coltrane starting to use two drummers, then Elvin not there anymore, and one tune for an hour and a half with three or four guys playing at the same time. I'm used to 'Impressions' and that certain vibe that Elvin and McCoy had, and here he was breaking that." Coltrane's music became more challenging than ever:

It was disturbing, but fascinating—like a bunch of maniacs just screaming at the top of their lungs. This doubled the ante because the energy level and intensity of the free stuff live was beyond description. It was hard to believe it was Coltrane.

Liebman recalls one gig in particular. In February, at the Philharmonic Hall (now Avery Fisher Hall) in New York's prestigious Lincoln Center, a night devoted to the tenor saxophone was scheduled. Coltrane joined a lineup featuring Coleman Hawkins, Zoot Sims, Sonny Rollins, and others playing with their own bands. His slot would be the final one of the evening:

I recall the last part of the first half was Sonny Rollins—he was in one of his not-really-into-it moods, walking around the stage playing in the corner. He only played about fifteen minutes and then he got on the microphone to say "I'll be back later with John Coltrane." Everybody went crazy, you know. Then there was a break and after, Coltrane walks on the stage holding Alice's hand—[with] about ten cats who look like they're off the street, holding shopping bags with bells, shakers, and tambourines. It was [drummer] J. C. Moses and Rashied [Ali], and [trumpeter] Don Ayler and Albert Ayler, [and Sanders, Garrison, and Carlos Ward]. And people are very excited. Coltrane gets on the microphone and he starts chanting "Om Mani Padme Om," which [was]—by that time I knew a little bit about that stuff—a heavy Tibetan chant of the dead. Alice starts rolling into a tremolo, and the group starts shaking the tambourines and everything, and people start to look at each other weird. Then he goes into "My Favorite Things." He plays the melody over this rolling rubato and people applaud. But of course, after the melody there was nothing that was recognizable, and it went on for an hour and a quarter, or so it seemed [25 minutes, in fact]. I'm not exaggerating—at least half the audience got up and left. He had his head down and he was playing near the ground and in those days he was, he got very low and was kneeling, off mic. It was just a barrage of sound. I was there with a very good friend—we used to go together to see Coltrane a lot. We were just speechless. I couldn't talk for a couple of days.

Meanwhile, *Ascension* had been released in the final weeks of '65 and was gathering a momentum of its own. The collective tour de force culled a largely positive critical reaction ("massive and startling," the normally buttoned-down New York Times declared), and as Liebman recalls, "was the torch that lit the free-jazz thing. I mean, it really begins with Cecil [Taylor] and Ornette [Coleman] in '59, but *Ascension* was like the patron saint saying, 'It's OK—this is valid.' I think that even had much more of an effect on everybody than *A Love Supreme*." Yet it also had an effect as divisive and alienating as the Philharmonic Hall concert, according to Frank Foster:

The main complaint came after the album *Ascension*. That was the turning point for some musicians who had been Coltrane enthusiasts up to that time; after that they turned off. I thought it was a little extreme, but he was always my man. I agreed with some who said, "Coltrane's experimenting. He's

done just about everything that can be done with a tenor saxophone, so now he's trying to reach out for something else." It wasn't even about the tenor sax anymore, it was about exploration. It was more about finding oneself spiritually than trying to turn the tenor saxophone into something.

In 1966, Coltrane's saxophone "sound was changing dramatically," writes Lewis Porter, pointing to "a richer tone, with fuller vibrato...he also extended his altissimo range...didn't hesitate to produce squeals...[and] increased his control of multiphonics." Dissonance and atonality—freely hopping from one key to another—were the new hallmarks listeners came to expect from his horn.

The startling shift went beyond Coltrane's own sound and pervaded his band. Gone was the drama of Tyner's rich, hammered chords; Alice's facile sweeps along the keyboard provided a more diffuse rhythmic accompaniment. Sanders favored Coltrane at his most forceful and vocal-like: his unabated energy was both trying and exhilarating. Jones had always suggested a steady swing, even at his most polyrhythmic. Ali, whom Coltrane praised as "one of the great drummers...laying down multidirectional rhythms [that] allow the soloist maximum freedom," had substituted an intuitive, improvised drive for any sense of regular pattern.

To David S. Ware, who frequently traveled into Manhattan to catch Coltrane in 1966, the loss of that pulse, be it explicit or implied, was the reason for many of the empty seats he saw. "You can get almost as avant-garde as you want to be, as long as you keep that steady pulse, but Coltrane lost a lot of people when he broke that time, and went into that other world and started messing with that multidirectional time."

It certainly was not about jazz—not in the commonly accepted definition of the term in 1966. Coltrane still spoke of his group's music in terms of specific melodic and harmonic structure, but began to refer to more general sonic qualities ("the right colors, the right textures...the sound of chords") and more abstract characteristics ("human foundations of music"..."integrity"..."essences").

Various writers, committed to keeping abreast of Coltrane, strove to find a vocabulary to describe his new, adventurous leap. Some opted for a confessional route. "This music...opens up a part of myself that normally is tightly closed, and seldom recognized feelings, emotions, thoughts well up from the opened door and sear my consciousness," wrote Don DeMicheal in a Down Beat review. Others, like A. B. Spellman and Nat Hentoff, offered disclaimer and instruction. "A caveat for the casual listener. Be advised that this record cannot be loved or understood in one sitting...it's like Wagner—it begins on a plane at which most performances end and builds to a higher plane than the average listener considers comfortable," wrote the former on *Ascension*. "Listening to Coltrane work through his own challenge may well stimulate self-confrontation in the rest of us," Hentoff noted on *Kulu Se Mama*, adding that "each listener, of course, will himself be challenged in a different way."

As Coltrane's 1965 recordings were released (in a fashion mixing quartet and augmented sessions), what most fans and musicians noticed was that his sound and stance became those of the avant-garde. No longer the reluctant leader aware of, but not involved with, the new improvisers showing off his influence, he began to actively champion the younger players he came to know. He took advantage of his stature at Impulse, playing an A&R role, urging Thiele to consider signing many of the newer artists. "It was certainly through Coltrane that I became aware of Archie Shepp and many of the younger players," recalled Thiele. "I think that if we signed everyone that John recommended we'd have four hundred musicians on the label." Most noticeably, whereas Coltrane had in the past sporadically used younger players, his albums and live gigs now started to rely on them. With his new quintet—Sanders, Garrison, Ali, Alice—he performed through 1966, intermittently adding African percussionists and a second bassist to the mix.

With a wave of his hand, Coltrane had legitimized the angry, discordant sounds of the New Thing, forcing serious attention to be paid to a subgenre that might otherwise have been dismissed. Critics scrupulously explained their terms ("free," "avant-garde," "New Thing") and cited precedents (Coleman, Dolphy, Ra), and, certifying their acceptance, began to distinguish various players—Ayler, Shepp, Sanders, Brown—as deserving particular consideration and praise. "Let me make the necessary observation that it is impossible to talk of the new jazz as if it were a homogenous movement," argued Hentoff. "On the contrary, there has never before been a time of new jazz directions during which so many different routes are being taken by so many implacable individualists." "I must say that you can't put them all in the same bag," agreed Cannonball Adderley. "They are playing what they believe in and what they hear, what they feel."

Another sign of arrival, as Shepp recalls, was that even among the brotherhood of the New Thing, a standard of ability had developed: "The term 'free' was often a euphemism for, in my estimation, people who were total novices in some cases. There were certainly levels of this music, and a player like Coltrane was the consummate horn player within that African-American improvising tradition."

In addition, Coltrane's duty as standard-bearer helped affix his own brand of spirituality and well-being on the larger group. Not that the disposition did not preexist with many avant-gardists; "I think you'll find that the spirituality of the music during the '60s wasn't something exotic. It was coming directly out of the church, especially the Holiness church," commented Marion Brown. But Coltrane did stand out as more than a musical role model, as Don Cherry recollects:

It changed the whole scene because of him being a vegetarian and meditating and everything. And everyone became aware of health and balance and life...he was one of the main persons to really set an example. He didn't speak about [it], he just set an example.

> "At a time when people were talking black, it seemed like Trane was saying more with the music than the cats were saying with the words."

By December 1966, such was the collective weight of the new jazz rebels that the mainstream magazine Newsweek devoted a six-page study to the phenomenon, an article which served as a serious defense of the new guard, interviewing Taylor, Ayler, Ra, Shepp, Coleman, Coltrane, Marion Brown, and writer Nat Hentoff, who emphasized the social consciousness intrinsic to this "jazz revolution." "It believes in soul and law and freedom. There's almost a touching belief in music as a cleansing, purifying, liberating force, as if jazzmen were the unacknowledged legislators of the world. They all want to change the social system through their music." As if to still any fears caused by the word "revolution" (examples of strong black nationalism were in the headlines by the close of 1966; the rise of the Black Panthers was only a few months away), Hentoff added that "the jazz revolution is not a programmatic black-power movement."

And yet the political connection was there, to at least one young African-American. "You couldn't help but pick up on it, being a black kid in America and being in the generation I was in," Frank Lowe points out. "It was already written that I would be interested in cats like Malcolm X, and right after that came the Panthers." Lowe recalls an indelible impression left on him while he was a university student in California that tied together the music, movement, and mood of the time.

It was a documentary on this cat named Fred Hampton, who was a big leader of the Chicago Black Panthers, who organized breakfast for the kids [*The Murder of Fred Hampton*, 1969]. He was ambushed one night in his bed—the police shot through the walls, assassinated him right through the walls. As the camera was panning the room that was shot up, under the bed there were some records. Right on top, man, covered with blood, was Dolphy's Out to Lunch! That showed me right then that what these cats were saying and what we were listening to were all of the same mind—it was in the body, in the walk, in the air.

The jazz avant-garde certainly did not speak for black America in general. One had to look no further, Hentoff pointed out in his own article on the New Thing, than the dearth of black clubs booking the new jazz generation. "Their predecessors, at the start of their [bebop] revolution, at least were able to work in urban Negro neighborhoods...but the current avant-garde, also predominately Negro, has stirred minimal interest in the Negro night clubs. Thus the present revolutionaries have even fewer places in which to play than did Monk and Parker."

On at least one occasion, Coltrane himself fell into the gap. Lewis Porter writes of a Newark, New Jersey, club engagement in late 1966—also witnessed by saxophonists Byard Lancaster and Leo Johnson—where "the audience and manager became hostile and insisted that he play some of his old standards...the gig was actually cancelled after the first night."

Coltrane, in Hentoff's terms, was both a patriarch and a revolutionary. Notwithstanding the negative reaction in some live situations, his cross-generational appeal to the black community transcended considerations of style—and even the music itself. Like Miles Davis, as Ben Sidran has noted, Coltrane had become an iconic figure:

Davis and Coltrane became giants in the black culture specifically because they represented the elder statesmen, black men who had gone through the mill and survived, not empty-handed, but with peculiarly black solutions to peculiarly white problems. Their triumph and their acceptance by the black culture at a time when some of

the jazz "avant-garde" were undergoing openly hostile treatment, lay in the fact that they had "paid their dues" in the old school and emerged with their individuality intact.

In what would be the last year of his life, Coltrane stood as an enduring force in a series of ever-widening circles: from the tight, avant-garde brotherhood to the larger jazz scene to black America in general. In the black community, it's a safe bet that few forty- to fifty-year-olds picked up Ascension, just as younger fans may have bypassed Coltrane's earliest Prestige recordings. But the one album that could be found among them all would have been A Love Supreme.

"It was like, boom! Knocking the doors down—like a revelation," maintains Frank Lowe. "It was the sixties and A Love Supreme seemed to express a lot of blackness. At a time when people were talking black, it seemed like Trane was saying more with the music than the cats were saying with the words." Lowe adds:

Sure, it was black music, but it was almost beyond that. It took on a universality that could embrace these other things and still keep its blackness. In other words, it's not like us against the world. It's like all these things are included and we all are the world.

In the spring of 1966, if one crossed the Brooklyn Bridge from Manhattan and followed Flatbush Avenue for about ten minutes (fifteen if traffic was heavy), one would have located the center of Crown Heights, a Brooklyn neighborhood rife with New York City jazz players, a stone's throw from Prospect Park, a mere half-hour's drive to most of New York's jazz clubs and even less by subway.

"I lived on Sterling Place, Calvin Massey lived right around the corner on Brooklyn Avenue," says baritone saxophonist Cecil Payne, then one of the senior members of the community and a veteran of Dizzy Gillespie's big band in the forties. "[Pianist] Cedar Walton lived on the same block. Bobby Timmons, Freddie Hubbard—they were on the next corner, and [alto saxophonist] Jimmy Spaulding. They were all there."

Curtis Fuller, a Manhattan resident, recalls the same collective drawing him to Brooklyn. One of his favorite haunts was the home of Cal Massey. "I was at the house all the time with Charlotte, his wife, and the kids. I'd be over there on the porch, sitting around, right across the street from that church."

St. Gregory the Great, a Catholic church, convent, and school centered on the corner of St. John Place and Brooklyn Avenue, functioned as the religious and social heart of the community. Neighboring residents sent their children there, and some, like local television executive Earl Toliver, also volunteered their time and services.

"In 1965-66, I was president of the PTA and an officer in the parish council," recalls Toliver, who had lived in the neighborhood since 1951. "When I moved there, St. John Place and all the blocks around there were maybe ten percent black, ninety percent white. That was true of the whole neighborhood." The sixties, however, brought a radical racial shift:

When the change came, it came overnight almost. The flight from that parish was unbelievable. By the mid-sixties, it was eighty percent black. Shirley Chisholm [soon to become the country's first black congresswoman] was our state assembly representative.

Toliver remembers that the tenor of the time—a more militant black awareness, increased activism—was felt even in the confines of the church:

There was a lot of turmoil in the church. I remember [in early '66] there was a sit-in at the rectory, a group of young people who wanted to take over the church, that kind of resistance to traditional kind of organization and structure.

> Zane Massey:
> "They played for so long that there were puddles of sweat. Where they were standing—John, Jimmy, Elvin—there was literally water there on the floor."

Despite misgivings from Father Thomas Haggerty, St. Gregory's more traditionally minded pastor, Cal Massey had coordinated a number of Sunday afternoon jazz performances in the school's small auditorium. In April 1966, with the weather turning warmer, Massey was inspired to hold a concert with a very specific purpose, as his son, Zane, then eight years old, remembers:

My father wanted to build a playground—not only for his kids, but all the kids in the neighborhood. There was only one park nearby, but it had been taken over by gangs, so it was kind of dangerous. His idea was to build a playground at St. Gregory's, and since we lived right across the street, he could keep his eye on us. Father Dobson became involved.

Father James Dobson, then a young priest who would later leave the clergy, confirms that the old convent on the church property had recently been torn down, leaving a hole in the ground. He and a fellow priest proceeded to help Massey plan the event, but as Toliver recalls, the church was reluctant at best. Plans nonetheless moved forward for a daylong event on April 24. The auditorium—already in use for a theatrical presentation—was booked. The schoolchildren created musical notes from construction paper to hang on the wall. Flyers and word of mouth filtered out as the day of the event approached. Toliver:

It was not really publicized. In fact, I think I only knew the week before that Coltrane would be performing there. Massey was really in charge of that: getting Coltrane and the other people.

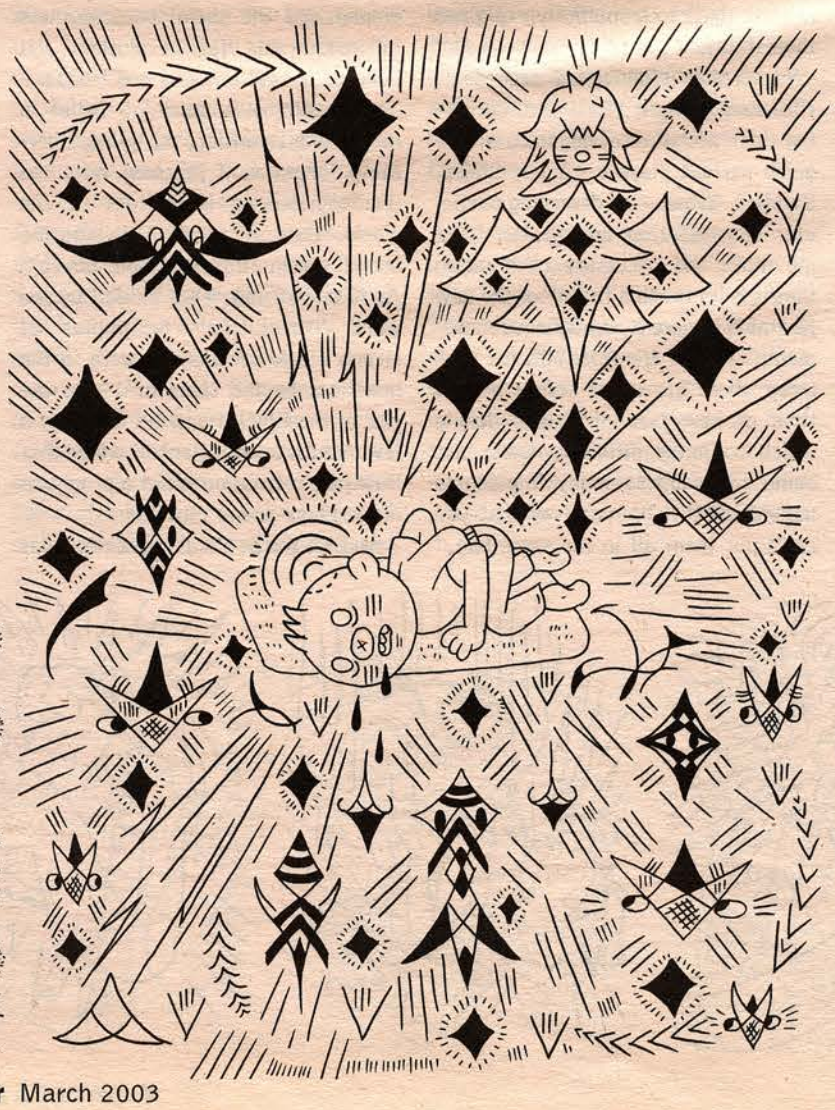
The flyer promised a concert with a "Religious Theme," featuring the "Top Names of the Jazz World." It was an impressive array for a neighborhood event: saxophonist/flutist Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Cedar Walton, Cecil Payne, McCoy Tyner (leading his own group), Elvin Jones (playing with Kirk), Jimmy Garrison (with Coltrane), saxophonist Charles Tolliver, bassist John Ore, drummer Andrew Cyrille (misspelled "Surelle"), and—positioned first on the flyer—John Coltrane. Many of Massey's neighbors would be playing in Massey's own band; Coltrane's lineup was expected to include his wife, Alice, along with Sanders, Garrison, and Ali.

April 24 turned out to be a beautiful day. "I remember it was pleasant weather, people interacted in a positive way with each other and with the musicians," says Dobson. An entrance fee of $2.50 was collected at the door, and food and drinks, most supplied by the parishioners themselves, were on sale. By midafternoon the music began, and a crowd soon filled the small auditorium.

"The hall contained room for at least 300 people with standing room," notes Alice Coltrane, who had driven in with her husband and children from Long Island. The well-attended affair brought a mixed crowd, reflecting the generational shifts of the day. Toliver notes that the dress ran from formal to Afrocentric. "It was a hot day, I remember shirts and ties, dashikis, and no polo shirts or anything like that. It was respectable."

To many—performers and audience alike—the most impressive aspect of the day was witnessing the effect of the music on many of the younger attendees, who were more familiar with the then-ubiquitous sounds of James Brown and Stevie Wonder. "I think this was the introduction for many of the young people in the audience to jazz," remarks Toliver. Zane Massey confirms his memory. "It was a whole afternoon of jazz. They did some incredible stuff. I was very young, but I remember Rahsaan [Roland Kirk] played. I had never seen anyone play flute through his nose."

There were no journalists present, save for three French jazz fans—Daniel Berger, Alain Corneau, and Natasha Arnoldi, whom drummer Sunny Murray had brought. "We were the only whites there," Berger notes. "It was mostly families in a non-show business, non-jazz concert atmosphere—quite casual." "They were just regular people from the neighborhood that came—they weren't like jazz fans going out to



hear jazz," adds Payne. "And they really enjoyed it, because it was something they would never think of going to see or to hear."

The idea of reaching new listeners, of performing in a location where ticket prices and age limits would not hinder attendance, was a primary concern for Coltrane in his last year. "His goal, shortly before he died, was to get a loft in [Greenwich] Village," explained Bob Thiele:

He wanted to set up a place where people could come in, listen to his music...in other words, people could attend rehearsals, no admission, just the price of a Coca-Cola, ten cents if you wanted anything to drink, but this was definitely an ambition of his.

Though Coltrane never found the time to create his dream venue, he did help out a friend, Babatunde Olatunji, performing in spring 1967 at the Nigerian percussionist's Center of African Culture on 125th Street, a performance space based on the same ideals of access and learning. Cal Massey's benefit at St. Gregory's offered a similarly rare opportunity to a jazz star whose schedule was normally overwhelmed by tour commitments, studio dates, and family time. For the event, Coltrane chose a neat, dark suit, and prepared a set list that included a tune appropriate to the setting. "John made his own decision to perform 'Acknowledgement' from *A Love Supreme*...and to recite the poem during the program," Alice remembers.

The afternoon had been long. Zane Massey had managed to grab one of the seats near the stage. "I was very close to the front with my brother. Coltrane was the last perfor-mance, right after Rahsaan, actually." When Coltrane set up to perform, it was with a quartet; Sanders was not present. And according to various witnesses, a slightly injured Jones sat in on drums.

"When Trane came on, Elvin had a cast on his foot—I think he had just been in a fire not too long before—and Jimmy Garrison and Alice," Massey maintains. Alice sat behind a "spinet in good condition," as she recollects, obviously provided by the church. Massey:

I remember they just got up there and played. It was so intense. I was very young, but I was very touched by that music. It was a very long performance—Trane played for over an hour. They played for so long that there were puddles of sweat. Where they were standing—John, Jimmy, Elvin—there was literally water there on the floor.

Whatever the complete selection of tunes Coltrane chose to perform may never be known, but as Massey recalls,

I remember at one point after he played for maybe a half-hour, he went in his pocket and he read the prayer, the whole *A Love Supreme* prayer. He actually read it—"Thank you God," you know—while the band was playing. Then everybody was chanting [sings], "a love supreme, a love supreme" while he was reading the prayer.

Photographs confirm Coltrane having a piece of paper in his pocket, as Massey, as well as other attendees, claims. "Coltrane was indeed reading a piece of paper," states Berger. Though he played only "Acknowledgement" (Alice: "John did not perform the entire suite"), his performance was enough to touch a communal nerve. The chant from the well-known album—a year old by that point—had certainly become part of the lingua franca of the jazz circle, disseminating as well into the larger black community. Massey adds:

The band was playing, and he was reading the prayer. And I remember in the back of the room it was all musicians and they were chanting his name, "John, John, John." Rahsaan was actually crying, and I couldn't understand. I was in shock, because I hadn't ever seen anything like that before.

To those who knew Coltrane's repertoire, his performance elicited surprise, Corneau recalling "a soft accompaniment by Alice, Jimmy, and Elvin," and Arnoldi noting:

After having heard Ascension and seen him at the Village Gate when he was exploring his new voice, the concert in Brooklyn was far more subdued...it seemed to me like a step backwards to a certain extent.

Even those who, like Toliver, were unfamiliar with Coltrane's music report that the performance was not what they expected:

It was sort of melodic, just a little different. It wasn't hard jazz—the Gillespie kind of jazz. I was thinking that maybe it was tempered because of the church. His stuff was very...it was almost symphonic. I understand now, having listened to some of his music, that that was his jazz.

A warm reception followed the concert. "John spoke highly of all the musicians' performances," Alice comments, while Dobson, who got a chance to thank Coltrane for his participation, remarks, "I had to meet him and thank him for coming. He said he was just happy to be there." Berger states, "I remember after the performance, the mood was quite emotional. Sunny Murray went to shake hands around, but we three had a rather reserved attitude in the middle of such a meditative and religious atmosphere."

Zane Massey recalls the festivities then moved across the street:

After the concert, everybody came to our house. My mother cooked, and they all came over and ate dinner. I remember being in my father's room and Elvin, Jimmy, and Trane were all sitting on the bed. They were eating, and Trane's saxophone was out—I actually tried to blow in it. My father stopped me—"No! Get away from the horn!" And they were all laughing, "Let him blow, let him blow!" I got a little sound.

In many respects, Cal Massey's event was a success. "The pastor [Thomas Haggerty] was overjoyed, man," recollects Payne. "They were amazed to see that something that good came to them." Zane Massey says proudly, "The playground was built in part because of that concert. Children still use that very same yard behind the school."

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"I want to be a force for real good," Coltrane stated in 1966. In another interview he expanded on his socially conscious aim:

I want to discover a method so that if I want it to rain, it will start immediately to rain. If one of my friends is ill, I'd like to play a certain song and he'll be cured. When he'd be broke, I'd bring out a different song, and immediately he'd get all the money he needed. But what these pieces are, and what is the road to attain the knowledge of them, that I don't know. The true powers of music are still unknown. To be able to control them must be, I believe, the goal of every musician.

When asked why Coltrane did not perform his suite more often, Alice shrugs. "To speculate on why A Love Supreme was rarely performed opens up many variables." Why that evening in a Brooklyn church? "I believe the sacredness of the event may be a reason."

The next time Coltrane's poem would be read aloud, it would again be inside a church, but for a much more solemn occasion.

John Coltrane:
"I want to be a force for real good. I want to discover a method so that if I want it to rain, it will start immediately to rain. If one of my friends is ill, I'd like to play a certain song and he'll be cured."

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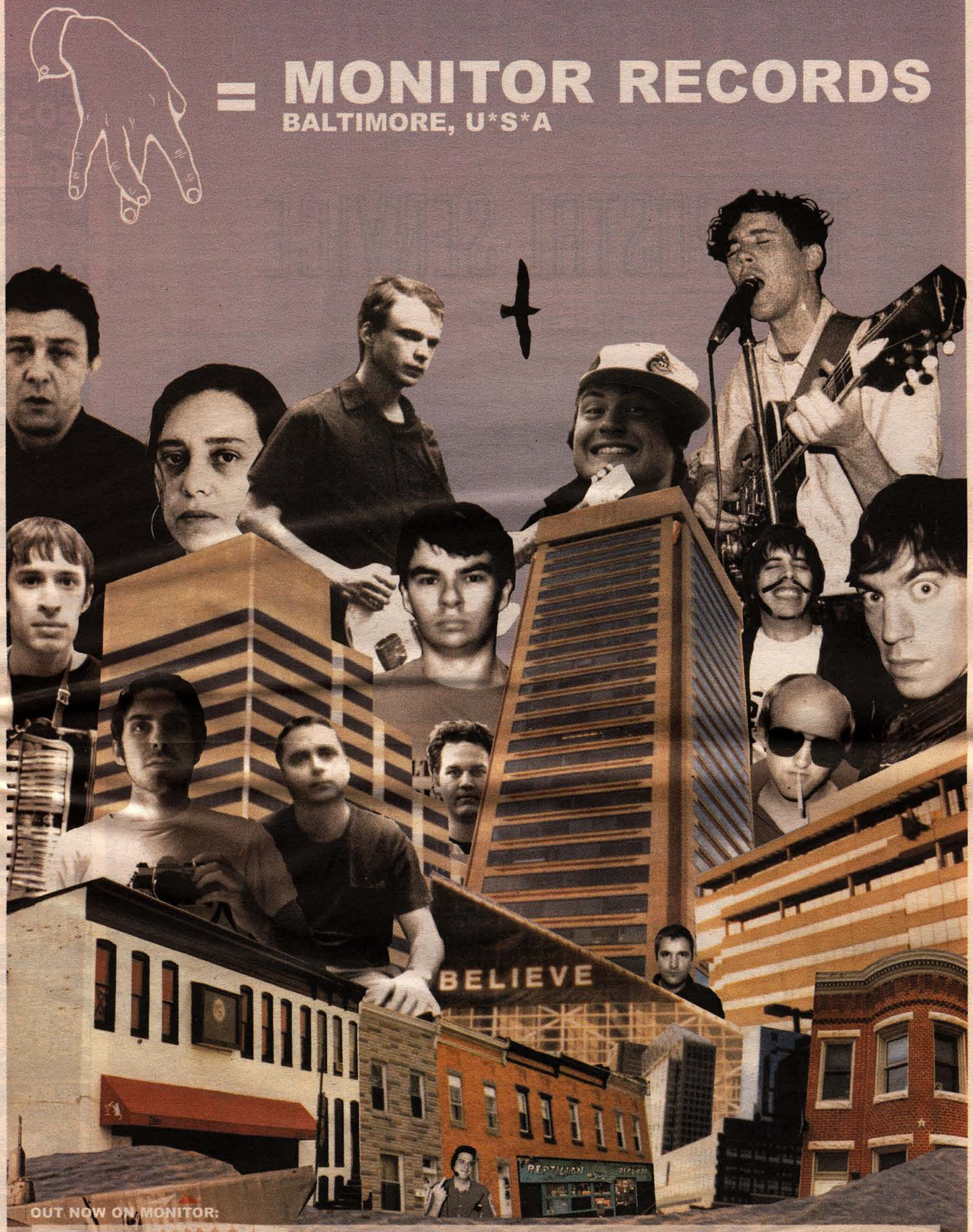

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Cass McCombs - *Not the Way* (cd)

9/10. Like Crazy Horse through a cloud of hiss and in slow motion. - Vice Magazine

Recorded perfectly for his early-morning, foggy sound, *Not the Way* is totally stunning. - The Stranger

Bellini - *Snowing Sun* (cd)

So what happens when the best part of **Don Caballero** is added to the best parts of **UZEDA**? Obvious answer. Expect not just to be floored, but to be trampled. - Fakejazz.com

OXES - *OXXXES* (banned lp/ cd)

See God does listen. Or at least the OXES do. Perhaps you should reevaluate the direction of your prayers. Hand over your moulah, as this is gratuitous instrumental rock overkill at its finest - and a record that ll hurdle over most of your collection after one lethal listen. - Splendidezine

This is amazing - make no mistake! Truly amazing. Not only is their name wrong, but their music is so wrong it HAS to be right...what can I say? This is perhaps the most post-modern rock n roll music that s ever been made. - BBC Radio

INK - *Reagent Specs* (cd)

8/10. The liner notes proudly attest that *Reagent Specs* was "written and recorded simultaneously at ACR, Baltimore, MD." In other words, they just booked ACR and waited for something cool to happen. Sounds crazy, eh? Right, well, maybe it sounds that way on paper, but the results are fantastic. - Pitchfork

Per Mission - *A Ritual Loop* (cd)

...the brainchild of **Jason Noble** (**Rachel's**), and features members of Rachel's, **Shipping News** and other such seminal/weird acts ... this is the first time it's been let loose in a full-length style. And it's surprisingly good. Bassy, quasi-electronica weirdness is the future, and these guys know it. Hell, they are it. - Splendidezine

MONITOR SXSW Showcase Friday, March 14th at Emos. www.monitorrecords.com | po box 2361, Baltimore, Md., 21203, USA.

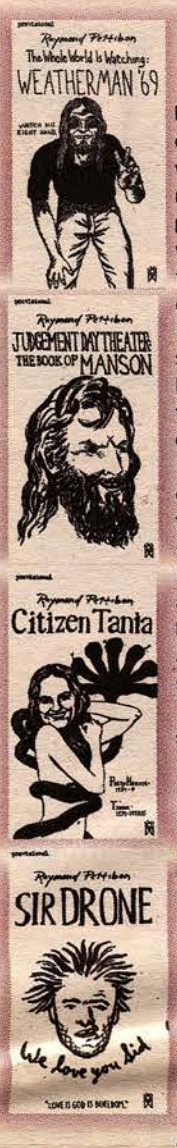
A map of retailers. These are nice good stores.

SAM HENDERSON, A WRITER OF THE "SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS" TELEVISION SHOW, DOES THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED COMIC "MAGIC WHISTLE" (PUBLISHED BY ALTERNATIVE COMICS), OF WHICH, THE LATEST ISSUE HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED. CHECK OUT: WWW.INDYWORLD.COM/ALTCOMICS

Bull Tongue

Exploring the Voids of All Known Undergrounds

by Byron Coley + Thurston Moore



Surely, **RAYMOND PETTIBON** is best known as a painter and illustrator (the lines between which can be especially blurry in his case). But one can only suspect that it is a case of public tunnel vision that has consigned him to such a narrow role. Pettibon has made significant public contributions to other fields as well: writing, music, performance, publishing and film. It would, indeed, be well within anyone's grasp to make a solid case for Pettibon as Southern California's renaissance man of the *fin de siecle* period (and beyond). But that is not our assignment today. Right now, right here, we are interested in celebrating Pettibon the filmmaker.

Pettibon's graspable extant film canon consists of four videos that are all available through Joe Carducci's Provisional Films (PO Box 757 Laramie, WY 82073-0757). Recently, Raymond has been working on another one, *Red Tide Rising*, reported to be a saga of the Doors starring Mike Watt as Jim Morrison. There is also a lost film, shot in the early '90s, entitled *The Holes You Fill*, purportedly telling the Beatles' story the way you've always wanted to see it. Carducci reports that these two titles may see the light of day at some point, beyond that there's little info. But that still leaves a rich tetralogy of films, all of which deal with the transmutation of '60s "revolutionary" culture into something commodified and directed by the hands of the media.

Pettibon's graphic sensibilities are not lush. Just as his art has often been wrought in the most stark visual terms imaginable, so his films are raw, and almost hermetic in terms of their visual vocabulary. The milieus are often defined as much by the actions that take place within them as they are by specific visuals. At times one almost has the sense of watching one of John Cassavetes' opuses being redone by the Kuchar Brothers, so simultaneously surreal and gritty is their look. And as with much of Pettibon's art, the visuals are highlighted, annotated and driven by a rich layering of text. As visually compelling as it might be to see the late Joe Cole wearing an insanely huge walrus moustache to round out his role, we are rarely left to quietly ponder the implicit meaning in the images. Pettibon's writing and visual direction in these films are indivisible. They virtually drip with dialogue. It's true that you can follow and "get" the basic plots if you watch these vids with the sound off, but the scripts–even when read off wall cards in the most perfunctory manner possible (as they are at times)–add layers of irony, honesty, humor and cutting insight that are entirely separate from the scenes-as-viewed.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS WATCHING: WEATHERMAN '69 (122 mins., 1989) is a kind of homage to Emile de Antonio's *Underground*, which was a documentary about members of the Weather Underground who were living on the lam in the U.S. Pettibon takes this idea and turns it on its side. For his version, the documentary is being funded by CBS, and the Weathermen exist almost exclusively as a media organization, measuring themselves constantly against other revolutionary groups, and attempting to make their own actions the cultural equivalent of rock concerts. Bernadine Dohrn is portrayed (by Kim Gordon) as a woman whose primary motivation is to use revolutionary zeal as a means to overtake the movie career of Jane Fonda. The rest of the left-wing cabal is played by Mike Watt, Joe Cole, *Bull Tongue's* own Thurston Moore and various other tangential members of the SST gang, circa 1989. The story here is less linear than it is horizontally episodic. Although Dohrn's trajectory is forward, the bulk of the movie sprawls in all directions.

There are visits by counter-culture luminaries (Allen Ginsberg, John Lennon, Tome Hayden & Jane Fonda), there are fantastic self-critique sessions (the one in which they judge the revolutionary qualities of their record collection is a stone classic), and there's tons of great Pettibon dialogue. The text sends up some of the ideas of the era in hilarious fashion (the equation of Communism and sexual satisfaction is particularly great). Pettibon's turn as the CBC cameraman gives him a certain ability to knock down the fourth wall, but he doesn't overplay it. In all, it's a very bodacious place for Raymond to have begun his retelling of underground history.

JUDGEMENT DAY THEATER: THE BOOK OF MANSON (118 mins. 1989) deals with one of the most frequently-present iconic figures in Pettibon's early artwork, Charles Manson. Like *Weatherman '69*, it is also an ensemble piece, but the textual movement in this film is largely carried by Robert Hecker (from the band, Redd Kross), whose portrayal of Manson is riveting. Hecker either actually memorized his lines (something about which Pettibon the director seems ambivalent) or the way he wore his costume allowed him to read the scripts in a way that was very non-obvious. Whatever the truth, Hecker delivers his Manson raps with Castro-like length and strength. It seems at many times as though he's just rapping off the top of his head, jumping between images with the shaky logical of a master conman, building in Biblical and Beatles references where called for. It's really a bravura performance, and the heat that Hecker generates coaxes some excellent performances out of others as well.

Joe Cole returns, this time as a memorable Tex Watson—football star turned confused thrill killer—and Shannon Smith is quite amazing as Sexy Sadie. Sadie is the orgone center of the film, and she plays the role with gusto. There are some good cameos as well; Pat Smear (of the Germs) as Hendrix and Pettibon as Roman Polanski are particularly interesting (if fanciful). The violence of the group has a cartoonish quality that some may find a bit repugnant, but it is somewhat mitigated by the way Pettibon constantly drives home the point that violence was both an extension of sex to the group, and also a way for them to generate media attention. Throughout *Judgement Day* they speak of themselves as creations and prisoners of the media, yearning for rock star status, but unable to understand the actual process by which it could be achieved. The underlying message is that Manson's group would have never committed any of the acts it did without the existence of a media stage. Whether or not that's true is certainly open to debate, but it's an interesting question to ask. And has the weird ring of truth.

CITIZEN TANYA (87 mins., 1989) deals with the saga of another of Pettibon's most frequently referenced cultural images: Patty Hearst, and the Tanya persona she assumed after her kidnapping at the hands of the Symbionese Liberation Army. Again, Pettibon paints the core group as media junkies. Field Marshall Cinque (Pat Smear), Tenko (Dave Markey) and Tanya (Shannon Smith) are the main characters, but everyone is cooped up for the bulk of

the vid, and it is a constant grovel through sex-as-politics, media-as-sex-as-power, class-war-as-power-as-sex and all the implied variations on those themes. Fuelled by plum wine (which tastes as sweet coming up as going down), Cinque creates a completely cock-eyed, scam-centered revolutionary philosophy that seems to suck the others in solely by playing on their racial guilt. Smear is great, as are Smith and Markey. Due to its shorter length, the scenes seem a but more focused than they did on previous go-rounds, with some of the vignettes – Patty's soliloquy about the communal toothbrush, for instance–being as funny as anything I've seen in a while. My personal favorite touch is the enormous (I mean ENORMOUS) moustache that Joe Cole wears as Patty's former boyfriend, Steven Weed, but that's a personal bias. I'm sure you'll formulate your own.

The final part of the extant series is **SIR DRONE** (57 mins., 1989), Pettibon's take on the early L.A. punk scene and, for me, his magnum opus. Because of his closeness to the actual history (Raymond was, after all, the one who gave Black Flag's Greg Ginn his first guitar), the details here are absolutely right and they cut to the fucking bone. The story follows two guys from San Pedro, Duane (Mike Watt) and Jinx (artist/musician Mike Kelley), as they try to get a punk band started in Hollywood, in the days of the Masque. It's amazing. Watt and Kelley are both perfect as wahoos with a dream, constantly bemoaning hippies, poseurs, and anyone else who doesn't measure up to the rigid aesthetic criteria they are developing on the fly as they evolve. Unbelievably great, there are scenes of ritual razor cuts, hanging in front of the Masque, practice pogoing, and other stuff that will make you keel the hell over if you have any sense of the scene's history at all. Jinx's girlfriend, Goo, and the band's singer, Scooter (nee Gun), will also prove interesting characters to those schooled in Sonic Youth hagiography. But whatever, *Sir Drone* is a must-see. And I can only hope that Raymond's other stuff sees the light. Having watched all of these back-to-back twice, I can attest that they are very much worth your while.

We will try to deal with the rest of the Provisional catalogue next time, as it has the most consistently interesting catalogue in the country. In the meantime, I can also suggest checking out **ARTHUR DOYLE ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC ENSEMBLE LIVE AT THE ANALOG SHOCK CLUB** video (QBICO). Shot in Buffalo NY, this documents that crazy Doyle band (with Leslie Q, Dave Cross and Ed Wilcox) that toured the Northeast last year. Anyone who had his or her interest piqued by Kim Gordon's description of this band in a recent issue of The Wire will get a well-deserved eyeful. Rock? Jazz? Free? Noise? Well, it is all those things and more. There really is no accurate shorthand description for what it is this band was doing on this tour, but it is frighteningly wonderful to watch and hear.

Chris Touchon's NJFM label released the coolest **DEERHOOF** 7" last year (The Shaggs cover "My Pal Foot Foot") and has now gone one step beyond with NJFM 019 an amazing 10 band split 7" with very short stabbing trax by **ERASE ERRATA, THE SISSIES, MISSING TOOTH, BEBE + SERGE, ZEEK SHECK, M.C. TRACHIOTOMY WITH XBXRX, TRACY + THE PLASTICS, PANTY RAID, CHROMATICS** and **PEACHES.** Each tune is a quick and delightfully deadly tongue dance. The label is promising a new **XBXRX** video (the first one they issued a couple years back is phenomenal garage noise insania), a final XBXRX 7" and a **QUIX*O*TIC/ORTHRELM** split 7". We're talking good times here folks. (NJFM, 4001 Leandro #8, Oakland, CA 94601-4053)

Out of Norway comes the most exciting noise LP I've heard to date. It's the pink vinyl *Sykubb fra HÊlvete* by **FE-MAIL** (TV5#2). The duo consists of Maja Solveig Kjelstrup & Hild Sofie Tajford. These two women romp thru stimulating noise compositions fresh and clean with a distinct Scandinavian frost. But there's always an undercurrent of warm embrace. Sweet and masterful. Maja may be familiar to some of the more in-depth Norwegian experimental music aficionados. She has won numerous kudos in her homeland, such as being the first Norwegian composer to win the Arne Nordheim Prize in 2001, and receiving the Second Prize at the Luigi Russolo competition for her piece "Sinus Seduction (moods two)" for saxophone and electronics, also in 2001. She is a singer/voice user, whistler, keyboard, violin and theremin player as well as a computer assistant and studio engineer; all this, mainly in connection with the contemporary improvisation ensemble **SPUNK** (Hild Sofie Tafjord is also from Spunk). Maja also plays with (x,y,z), an electronic improvisation trio with Risto Holopainen and Asbj¯rn Fl¯. And she is in a duo with accordion player Frode Haltli as well as a solo voice/electronics project with backing from the group Jazzkammer. She has also played with Oslo Industrial Ensemble, Norwegian Noise Orchestra, No Spaghetti Edition with Evan Parker and Rhodrie Davies, Paal Nilssen-Love, Masami Akita (Merzbow), Zbigniew Karkowski, Sachiko M, Gino Robair, Jaap Blonk, Oslo Sinfonietta and Lasse Marhaug. She has performed a chamber opera by Dagfinn Rosnes, especially written for her voice, among many other things such as Icelandic film music by Hjalmar Ragnarsson. She performed her own music for Ibsen's play *Ghosts* at Northlands festival in 1999. In 2000 she had two performances in Tokyo. So Maja is busy and I suggest you get busy digging her sounds. This LP is a surefire way to dig in head first.

The improbable and insane state of Texas has challenged music convention consistently through the ages. Not only in its roster artists, but by the craziness of the record labels themselves—from the world of International Artists in the 60s (13th Floor Elevators, Red Krayola, *et al*) to the wild academia of Innova (composer Jerry Hunt, David Dunn) to the ongoing experimentalism of the N D label (John Watermann, Voice of Eye). Idea Records out of San Antonio is one of the more recent entrepreneurs of quality soundworks. Nothing they've released is specifically Texas-bred, but it is music that has come to Texas from far regions of the globe, all of it outside any margins of easy assimilance. Some of the artists may be familiar to those interested in post-post-Throbbing Gristle form extensions (!), but heard from within the context of a deep-in-Texas label, the work begins to take on an indefatigable and uniquely blended spice. One such release is a new split 7" by **ANDREW CHALK AND CHRISTOPH HEEMAN** who work in typically blithe compliment to each other. Here they involve themselves in the sincere, simple exercise of remixing music from the Idea CD **CASIA FISTULA** by **BRENDAN WALLS**–itself a remarkable, out-of-nowhere (well, Sydney Australia actually) homemade machine sound collage mind-blower. Both sides of the 7" exist as ommotion morsels of drone beauty. What gives them especially spectral distinction is their gasping brevity in a field where slo-eyed expansion is the norm. I suggest perusing Idea's catalog.

IAN NAGOSKI has been an interesting presence on the eastern seaboard the last few years. Primarily a sound artist involved with

ARTHUR DOYLE ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC ENSEMBLE LIVE AT THE ANALOG SHOCK CLUB

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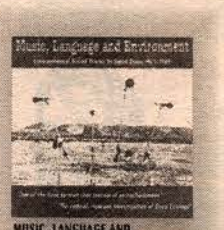

MUSIC, LANGUAGE AND ENVIRONMENT CD BY DAVID DUNN

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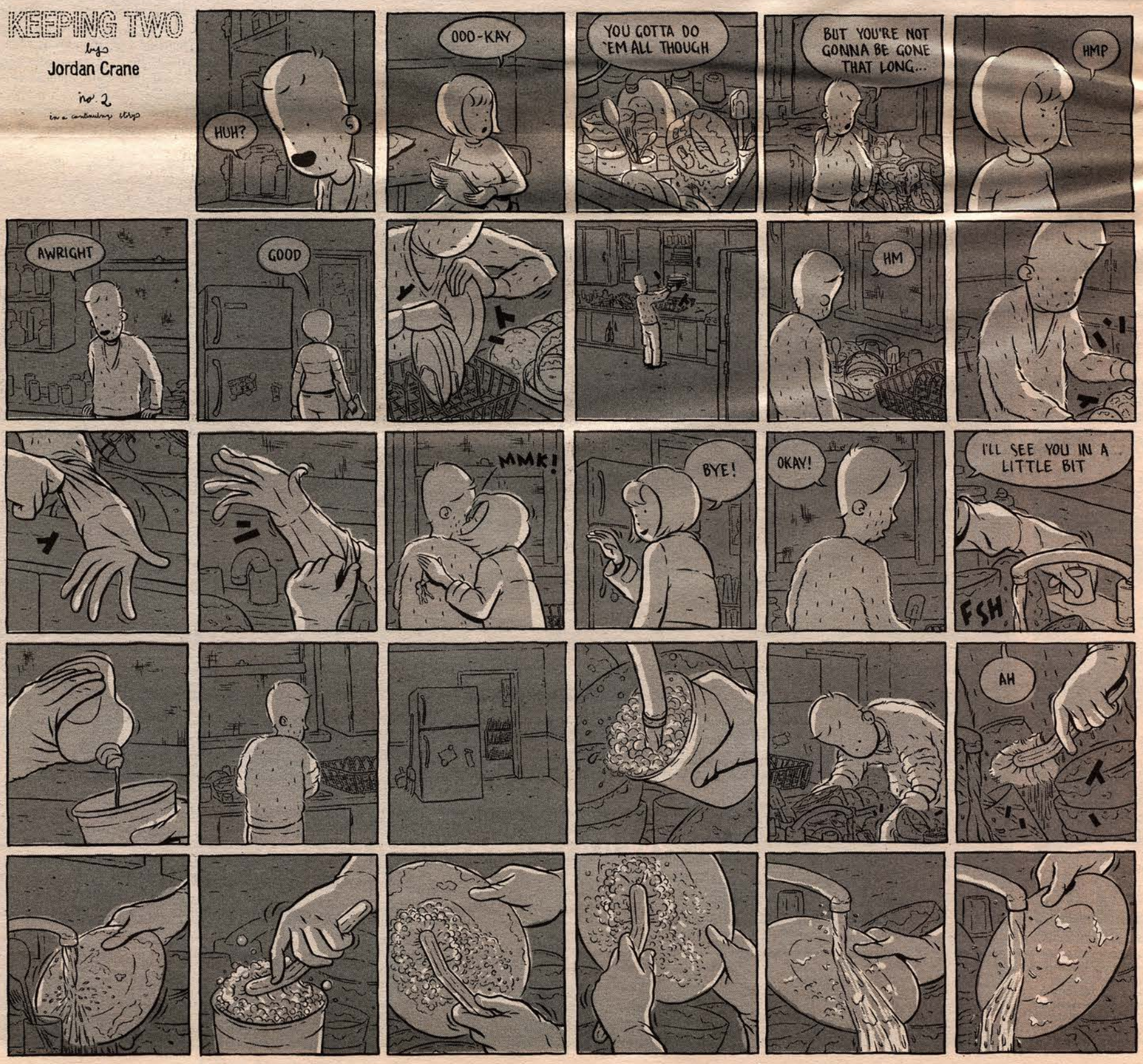

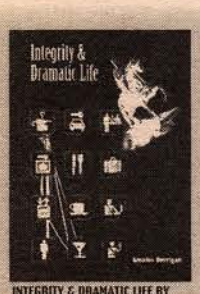

INTEGRITY & DRAMATIC LIFE BY ANSELM BERRIGAN

BROKEN FACE MAGAZINE

BB GUN MAGAZINE

NOTE:
FACE OBSCURED IN COMPLIANCE WITH ARTHUR'S "NO GALLO" POLICY.

maxim-drone evocations, he is one of those cats who spent almost every waking hour of his youth pummeling minimalist stooge chord rock art in various rec-rooms. Along with pal Chris Rice, who edits the pretty jake new music mag **HALANA** (fifth issue due this year), Ian let the heavy chording take him into the contemporary activity of unlimited beyond-genre improvising. It brought him to an exclusively solo performance situation, which has produced astounding experiences. From Philadelphia he's relocated to Baltimore where he's been active with the radical vibe-hang the Red Room and has been music writing for **HALANA** and **WIRE.** There've been a few CDs released (some in very limited editions as lathe-cut CDs), a video on Halana and just recently a one-sided Czech-pressed pic-disc LP called **VIOLETS FOR YOUR FURS** (edition...xxi). The LP is remarkable as it enters the time-space with a wonderfully slow emission of minute and hyper-layered sound. Gaze at Daniel Conrad's "rotating illusion" imprinted on the disc's face and you got yourself a pretty cool time.

The early/mid 1970s punk rock scene in NYC was a surreal miasma of slut trash glitter and starving art school inspiration. An elemental dose of its annunciation came from the underground poetry scene situated around the St. Mark's Poetry Project from whence Richard Hell, Tom Verlaine and Patti Smith had been sniffing. The specific swagger of such writers as Ted Berrigan, Alice Notley, Larry Fagin, Bernadette Mayer, Lewis Warsh, Ron Padgett and even (still) Allen Ginsberg duly informed the style of proto-punk. It is an actuality never lost by Hell, Verlaine and Smith to this day. And it has always been a distinctive thread through the intervening years at the Poetry Project even after the giant passings of Berrigan and Ginsberg. So it was an utter mindblowing amazement to see and hear the young poet **ANSELM BERRIGAN** (Ted's son) incinerate St. Marks Church recently with a wholly contempo continuance of the language and street rock vocabulary that punk rock walked out from, fists rubbing eyes. The take on generational experience both shared and personal and the laughs from the backroom were remarkably acute and loaded. And delightfully inspired in form. The cool thing is Anselm ain't alone here. I suggest Googling young Berrigan and fall into the lake of tongues you'll find. "I sit down calmly in someone else's recliner/Wearing someone else's shirt, pants, shoes and socks/Though I've torn my own holes into all of them."- Anselm Berrigan. A good troika of Berrigan's writing **(THEY BEAT ME OVER THE HEAD WITH A SACK, INTEGRITY & DRAMATIC LIFE, ZERO STAR HOTEL)** can be had from the Aerial/Edge.

Good mag action this time from a couple of rock 'zines that appear less often than perhaps they ought, but manage to pack in pounds of good reading. The first is issue #6 of Bob Bert's **BB GUN**, which has gone from being something like an excuse for Bob to print pics of his favorite garage rock gals, to something quite substantial. This one has juicy interviews with Michael Gira, Vinnie Gallo, Mick Collins, Rowland S. Howard, Jim O'Rourke, Mick Farren, James Chance and plenty more. The writing staff is fucking choice as well, so do yourself a favor. If you actually still like rock-*qua*-rock, pick the thing up. **THE BROKEN FACE** is pretty much a rock mag as well. Edited by the *other* Mats Gustafson, they just got out issue 15, and it's a hot compendium of psych & experimental underground whatsis, that operates almost as a codicile to *Ptolemaic Terrascope*. Included are pieces on Nagisa Ni Te, Parson Sound, Fursaxa, Arco Flute Foundation, and a truly useful review section, among other things. Either of these mags will make time spent on the toilet infinitely more rewarding, so give them a try. Then flush.

Another nice word batch is an anthology called **THE LONG MARCH OF CLEVELAND** (Green Panda Press, 14314 Superior Ave., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118). Edited by an Ohioan named Bree, this volume was assembled in honor of the visionary Cleveland poet, d.a. levy, who would have turned 60 last year, had he not blown his brains out in 1968. Levy was a fascinating guy, a wonderful poet and artist, and a prolific publisher and editor. There have been a few good books about him, and if you have any interest in underground culture of the post-WWII period, you'd be doing yourself a favor to do some reading up on him. That said, this anthology is pretty nice. Not sure that everything is exactly as related to levy as all that, and there's a distinct lack of CONCRETE, but there is plenty of good visual and written work, much of it indebted to Cleveland, the city that levy was connected to at both ends.

Let me end this subjective review scene with a letter re: last issue's Bull Tongue:

David Newgarden from Ocean Grove, NJ writes: "Hey—if Jean Francois Pauvros is "40-ish" than I'm 12-ish still listening to Chicago IX and Frampton Comes Alive. Also—Gilbert Artman was in Catalogue. It was Artman, not Pauvros, who was in Lard Free and in Urban Sax (a dozen parachuting saxophonists).

"Back somewhere in the '80s, while touring with Haitian voudou combo Boukman Eksperyans, I met blind Tex-Mex accordion recluse Steve "El Parche" Jordan on the streets of Rennes, dragged him to 'see' a Catalogue/Silverfish double-bill (Jac Berrocal and Lezley, I swear, had the exact same stage moves) and picked up non-english-speaking mini-skirted coeds in a biker bar and puked french fries/mayonnaise and red wine on the clean cobblestone streets of Brittany. At some point in the night, I think Esteban & I almost got into a fight with 'El Vez' but my memory is a little hazy.

"Following week, saw Rhys Chatham and 100 guitars in weird deserted Paris suburbs, got stranded by late nite bus schedule, and Pauvros hooked me up with a ride back to Pigalle—coincidentally I was staying in apt. building where Catalogue's manager lived. (somewhere, out of alphabetical order, in my rusting, overstuffed rolodex is a Jac B. business card, more treasured even than the one Charles Gayle handed me in Milford's back yard)."

Again: should you have anything interesting for us to see/review (especially LPs, books, mags, vids) please send two (2) copies to: Bull Tongue, PO Box 627, Northampton MA 01061.

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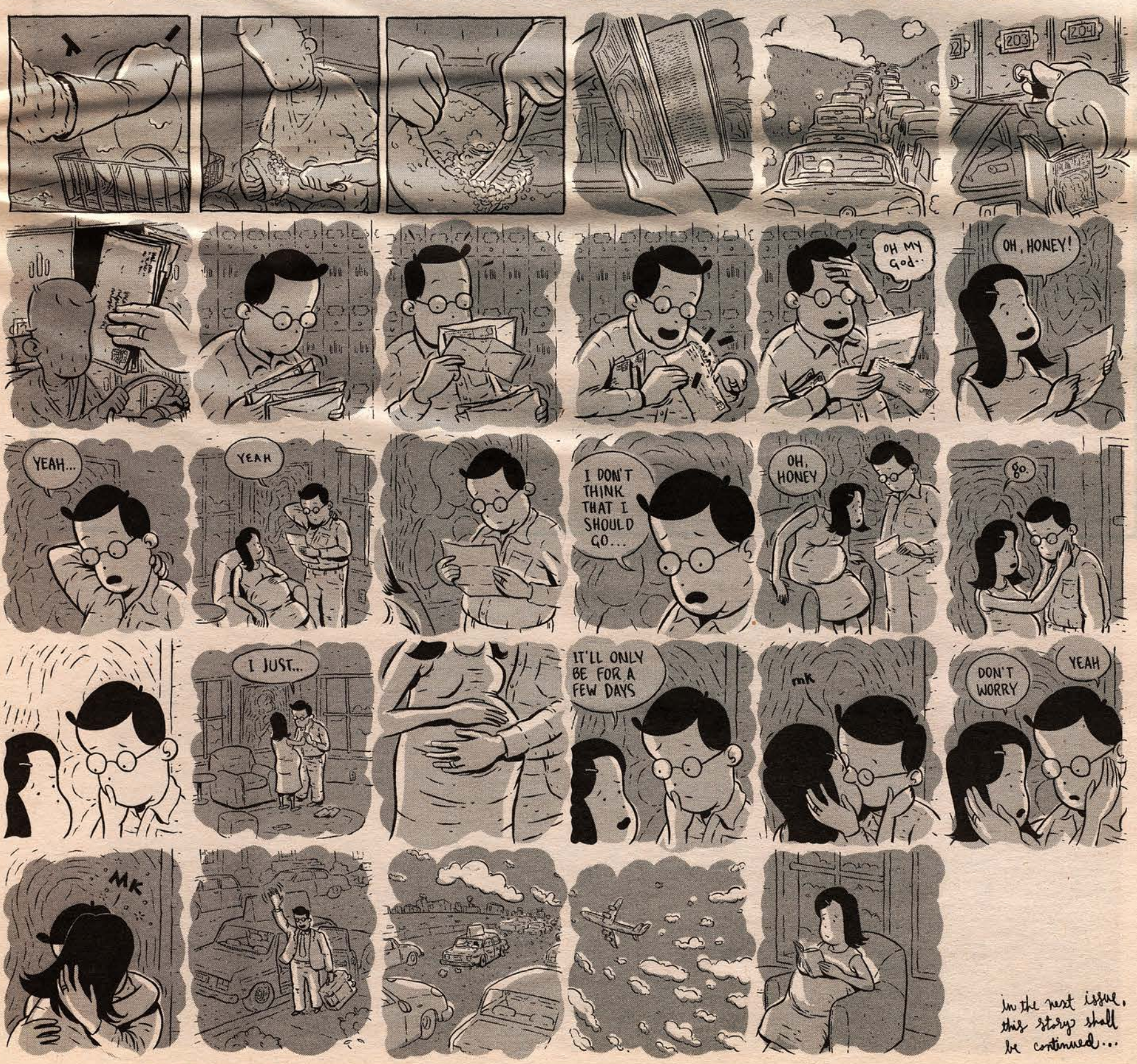

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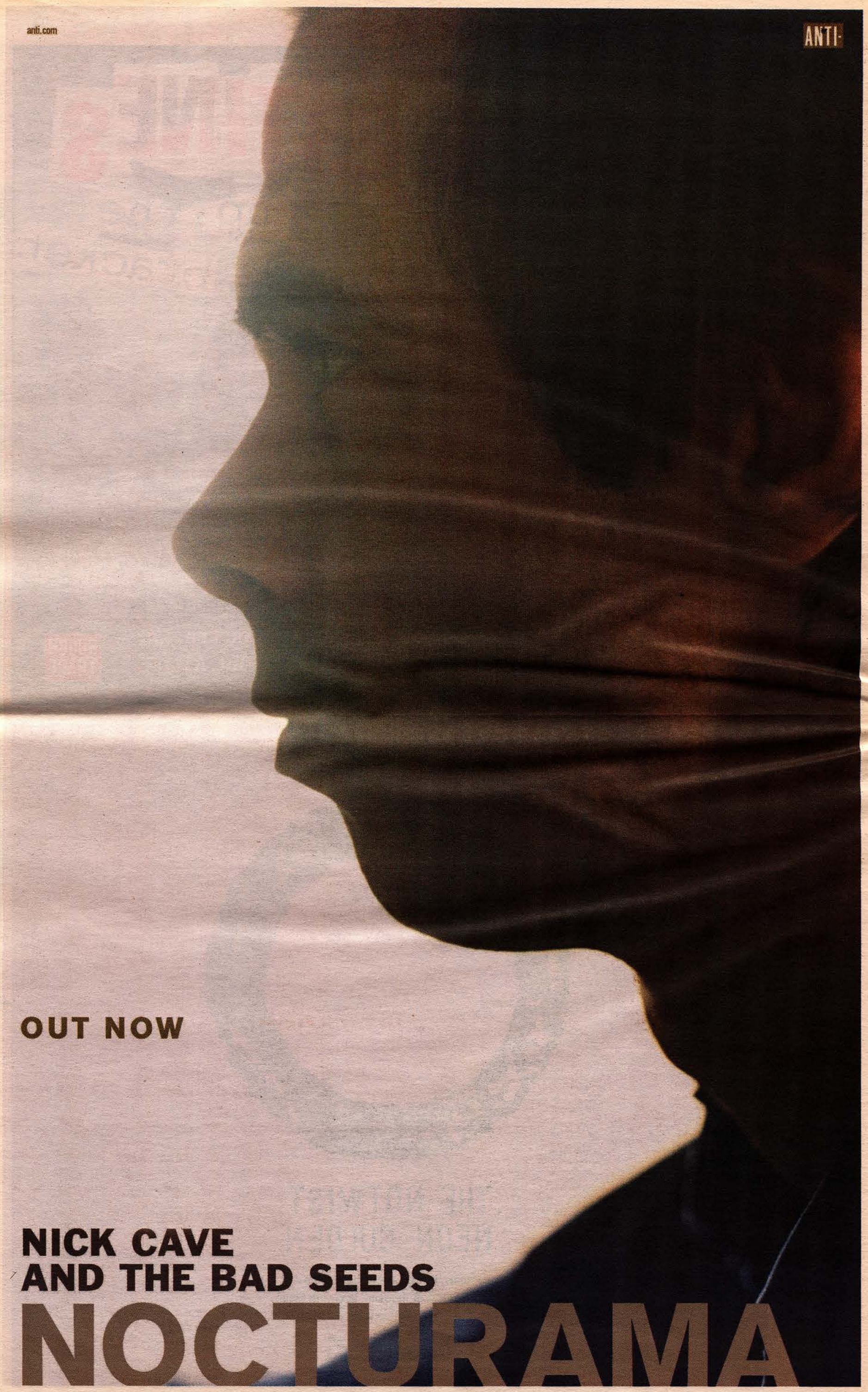

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