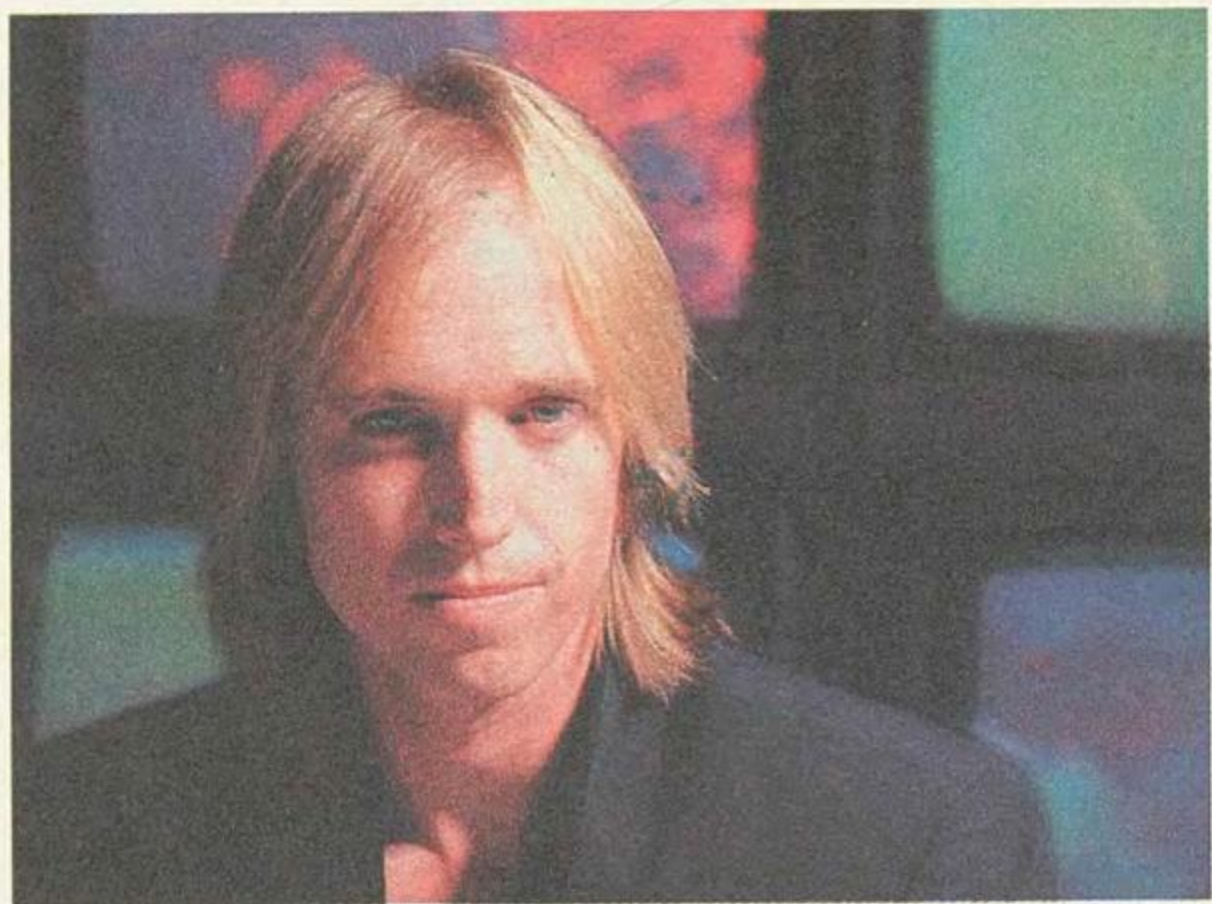


## Tom Petty's new LP: Back to basics

By Anthony DeCurtis



DENNIS NEELY

"IT'S KIND OF A MONGREL, THIS ALBUM," says Tom Petty about his new album, *Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)*. Petty and the Heartbreakers recorded the basic tracks for the eleven songs on the album during a five-week studio blowout last spring, while on a break from their tour with Bob Dylan. The band returned to the studio this fall to complete the album, working sporadically over the next few months. "The only rule of the sessions," Petty says, "was the tape had to roll from the time the first guy got there until the last guy was gone."

As a result, *Let Me Up* is a raucous

guitar-rock LP that represents a marked departure from the conceptual unity of *Southern Accents*, a record Petty describes as having been "very grueling" to make. "It is a departure, maybe even a relief from that," he says. "The number-one characteristic is that there are only the five Heartbreakers on this album. There are no outsiders on it whatsoever. . . . Most of it is just off-the-cuff stuff - I like the feel of it so much. I think you probably could find some sort of theme in it, but it's not a serious concept album. It's just really meant to be a good rock & roll album."

Petty and Heartbreakers guitarist

Mike Campbell initially went into the studio to record a couple of songs, but then momentum started to build. "We wound up staying there," says Petty. "I hadn't even thought about an album when we started making this one. The word 'record' wasn't even brought up much - it really wasn't talked about." Petty and the band had such a good time that they came up with much more material than they needed. "We just played sets," says Petty, describing how the band worked in the studio. "I'd write a song and then try it right there. . . . There could've been two records if I'd been inclined to spend another two months sorting it out. It's something that's never happened to me before, where I wrote quite that quickly." Petty says that some of the extra tracks will be used as B sides.

The first single from the album, "Jammin' Me," was written in a Hollywood hotel room by Petty and Dylan, with Campbell helping out later. Petty says that working with Dylan on the song's lyrics - which mockingly protest media information overload - was easy: "One guy would start the line, and the other guy would finish it." As for the celebrities skewered in the song ("Take back Vanessa Redgrave/Take back Joe Piscopo/Take back Eddie Murphy/Give 'em all some place to go"), Petty says, laughing, "We were just taking names from the entertainment section. I hope no one is offended by it. I'm a big fan of Eddie Murphy's."

The themes of media assault and damaged relationships appear with some regularity on *Let Me Up*. "It wasn't the best period of my life," Petty says about the time that he spent working on the

album. "I don't think it's really autobiographical, though. There is a black side, but not much of one." Petty hesitates, then laughs. "Some days, you get a little pissed off. . . . You know, I tried to shut the news out for a long time, then I say, 'Well, this is ridiculous, I've got to watch this.' They want to present this picture of mass hysteria, but they don't want you to be hysterical! It's not worth ranting and raving about - I just got it out of my system with the record."

Petty wrote six of the LP's ten other tracks by himself ("The Damage You've Done," "It'll All Work Out," "Think About Me," "A Self-Made Man," "Ain't Love Strange" and "How Many More Days") and four with Campbell ("Runaway Trains," "My Life/Your World," "All Mixed Up" and the title track). But Petty credits the efforts of the entire band. "This was very much a group album," he says. "The five of us worked really hard on it; everyone was pretty involved all the time in the arranging of the songs. It was the culmination of doing so much playing since the *Southern Accents* tour began. It was a good time for us to clear our minds and just play."

Petty and the Heartbreakers - Campbell, keyboardist Benmont Tench, bassist Howie Epstein and drummer Stan Lynch - will begin touring at the end of May and will be out on their own until August, when they will join Bob Dylan for two weeks of North American dates. The Heartbreakers will then support Dylan on an extensive European tour.

"We're pretty much planning to play well into the fall, which for us is a long one," Petty says. "So, here we go again." ■

## THOMAS DOLBY SETTLES SUIT OVER NAME

DOLBY LABORATORIES HAS SETTLED ITS trademark-infringement suit against Thomas Dolby out of court. But the British singer, producer and musician, best known for his 1983 hit "She Blinded Me with Science," remains upset by the California-based firm's attempts to legally bar him from using his stage name. "I can't imagine that the Monroe shock-absorber company sued Marilyn Monroe," he says.

Thomas Dolby - whose actual family name is Robertson - says, "I've been called Dolby since 1972; it was my nickname." But Dolby Labs felt that the musician's recent activities (including scoring *Howard the Duck* and endorsing

professional audio equipment) were encroaching on its turf. "We had to step in and put a stop to it," says Bill Jasper, president of Dolby Labs. The firm was named for its founder, Dr. Ray Dolby, who invented the Dolby Noise Reduction System for tapes in 1965.

"When he was performing back in the early Eighties," says Jasper, "a pop singer strictly in England without too much of a following, we said, 'Fine, we'll let it ride.' Once he came to the States and was affiliated with *Howard the Duck* and endorsed a console made by an audio manufacturer . . . it was too close to home, and we needed to protect our trademark." So Dolby Labs filed suit

against the musician in August 1986. The company also applied for a preliminary injunction to limit his use of the name in the meantime.

Thomas Dolby himself filed a six-figure counterclaim against Dolby Labs, saying that it had reneged on a 1980 agreement that allowed him to use the name; he also said that the negative publicity of the trial would cost him work. After the preliminary hearings on the case, Thomas Dolby, Ray Dolby and Bill Jasper - and their lawyers - met and settled the matter. According to a press release issued by Dolby Labs, "Robertson and Dolby have entered into a license agreement, under which

Robertson may use the trademark 'Dolby' in a limited way - only with the forename 'Thomas.'

Thomas Dolby describes the company's statement as "condescending." "The press release was typical of the very aggressive and underhanded manner in which they played out this whole affair," he says. "Some of the evidence that came up in court was given by a private detective who posed as a journalist and asked me questions which were then presented as evidence in court." Jasper refused to comment on that charge, saying, "I don't want to go into anything that may have happened in the past." - Mark Coleman