

MUSICIAN

APRIL 1990

One Wild Year with Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

I CO-WRITE
THE SONGS, I
CO-PRODUCE
THE ALBUMS,
I GET MY
OWN BUS.

I CAN
OUT-SING
ANY OF
THESE
JOKERS.

THEY'RE
A HAPPY
BAND.

IF THEY ASK
ME TO PLAY
SYNTH, I'M
GONE.

THIS GIG
IS JUST A
STEPPING
STONE TO
SAMMY
DAVIS.

ALSO
Lenny Kravitz
...
The Silos

Sibling
Rivalry, Family
Loyalty and
Full Moon
Fever

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ISSUE NO. 138





P h o t o g r a p h b y B o b S e b r e e



The Heartbreakers Highway

Four Seasons of Full Moon Fever

By Bill Flanagan

GILDA RADNER died today. The mood around "Saturday Night Live" is somber. Those who knew Gilda, the old-timers, are working along quietly. "SNL" bandleader G.E. Smith, her ex-husband, wears a black armband as he leads the house musicians through their charts. The new generation of actors and comedians who did not work with Radner run through their skits, maybe watching to see what they can read on the faces of producer Lorne Michaels and guest host Steve Martin. It's the last show of the 1988/89 season, so the atmosphere of subdued mourning is competing with a last-day-of-school giddiness. When they go on the air at 11:30 Steve Martin is close to tears. The dressing rooms, though, are filling up with celebrity guests for the big post-show end-of-season party. There's Paulina and Ric Ocasek, Bruce Willis, Anjelica Huston. And off by themselves, preparing for their first public performance in two-and-a-half years, are Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers.

There's a little tension with them, too. The Heartbreakers took a break at the end of their 1987 summer tour. They had been out for months, on their own and with Bob Dylan, and

they'd run themselves ragged. Still, they had not counted on their vacation stretching quite this long. While drummer Stan Lynch, keyboard player Benmont Tench, bassist Howie Epstein and guitarist

Petty shrugs, the Heartbreakers towel off, and Katie thinks hard about what to tell the bosses. "I got it!" she says. "We'll say you planned to do 'I Won't Back Down' but you had to do 'Free Fallin'' at the last minute—'cause it was Gilda's favorite song!"

The Heartbreakers look at each other, between shock and laughter. They exchange crooked little half smiles that you can read any way you want. They have their own way of talking.

Petty says later that part of the reason he's throwing himself into a Heartbreakers tour is to make sure the band does not feel threatened by his outside projects. "I wanted to remain *bonded with the boys*, you know," he says with the same crooked smile. "I wanted them to know I'm not leaving. But I don't want to suffocate myself either. I've been in this band 13 or 14 years and I'd like to be interested in it when I'm doing it. So just from time to time I'd like to do something else. They all have that privilege. They play with tons of people all the time, hang out with different bands. I never got to do that. I think we're all fairly at ease about it. I hope."

Petty started to make a solo album once before. 1985's *Southern Accents*, co-produced with Eurythmic Dave Stewart at Tom's home studio, began as a break from the Heartbreakers, but one by one Tom called each of them in to play this part or that part until it turned into a band project. *Full Moon Fever* started the same way—this time the British rock star producer was Jeff Lynne and this time the home studio was Mike Campbell's—and again Tom found himself using Mike. Then Ben came over to play

piano on one track, then Howie did some background vocals.... Then Tom yelled stop.

"I had to go, 'Wait now,'" he says. "The first sessions were done out of convenience; we had Phil Jones play the drums because Stan wasn't there. I just wanted to do something different. Then I was enjoying it too much to have it turn back into routine life. And we needed a break. So I wasn't real popular for a few weeks. I think they were sort of aggravated until they started doing other things and then they were okay about it. And I can dig that. Everybody wants to be busy."

The Heartbreakers got busy. Howie began producing an album for Carlene Carter. Benmont played on U2's *Rattle and Hum* and Elvis Costello's *Spike*. Mike, along with working on *Full Moon Fever*, produced and wrote a chunk of Roy Orbison's *Mystery Girl*, and contributed to Don Henley's *The End of the Innocence*. But Henley's album was most important to the Heartbreakers as where Stan Lynch went—Stan played drums and percussion with Henley, co-produced a bit and co-wrote "How Bad Do You Want It," "Gimme What You Got" and "The Last Worthless Evening."

"The secret of keeping the Heartbreakers happy is to keep Stan occupied," Tom says. "We want to thank Don Henley for keeping Stan busy all these years and keeping our band together. Thank you."

"Well, he's not using them," Don Henley laughs when asked about it. "All you've gotta do with Stan is have him around. Because the stuff that comes out of his mouth is priceless. He is a bottomless pit of one-liners. Stuff like the first line of 'How Bad Do You Want It?' ['You're

HOWIE, BENMONT, STAN AND MIKE CONSPIRE ON THEIR BUS TOUR.

Mike Campbell were otherwise engaged, Tom Petty made *The Traveling Wilburys Volume One* with a loose collection of rock star buddies and watched it become a huge hit. Petty also recorded a solo album in the home studio of Heartbreaker Campbell. Originally titled *Songs from the Garage*, TP's weekend project was supposed to have been wrapped up almost a year ago, but Petty kept fiddling with it, using Mike, Benmont and Howie here and there but determinedly keeping it a Tom Petty album—no & the Heartbreakers this time. Now, in May of 1989, Petty's solo album is finally being released. It has been given a more dignified name—*Full Moon Fever*—reflecting that it's more than the filler project it started out to be.

Tonight on "Saturday Night Live" Petty and his band are scheduled to play songs from the solo album, and the Heartbreakers are going to prove they are a lot more than a backup group. The first single, "I Won't Back Down," has just been shipped to radio, and MCA Records expects Petty to use this national exposure to push that song. But when the TV lights come on the band plays two album tracks: "Running Down a Dream"—the Heartbreakers kicking out a tougher version than the record—and a majestic new ballad called "Free Fallin'." Two songs, two great performances. Whatever butterflies the Heartbreakers felt have been blown away by the ease with which they matched the studio versions of Tom's solo songs.

As "SNL" cuts to a commercial, the band cuts to their dressing room, where Katie Valk, MCA's legendary PR wildwoman, is waiting to compliment their performance and warn them that there'll be hell to pay when the MCA bosses on the West Coast find out they didn't play the single. "Ah," Petty mumbles, more in sorrow than anger, "we tried it at soundcheck and it just didn't feel right. The band was more comfortable playing the other songs."

"I know, I know," Katie agrees. "But in three hours the phones are gonna light up."

"Tom is the leader of the group but there's some friction. We're all pretty stubborn and don't like being told what to do."

leavin' tongue marks on the carpet...'] just fell out of Stan's mouth. He's hysterical. Some nights we'd be so depressed and tired of recording we'd ask Stan to come down just to have him around. But he and I did sit down a couple of times and bang heads with legal pads and the tape recorder. Stan's coming into his own, he just needs a little encouragement to be a real good songwriter."

Whatever feathers were ruffled, Tom has no doubts that *Full Moon Fever* was worth it. "I lived with that album for a year before I put it out and I was just crazy about it!" Petty laughs at his immodesty. "It was *embarrassing* how excited I was! If it failed I think I wouldn't want to do it anymore. I was so sure about 'Free Fallin',' I never got tired of hearing it."



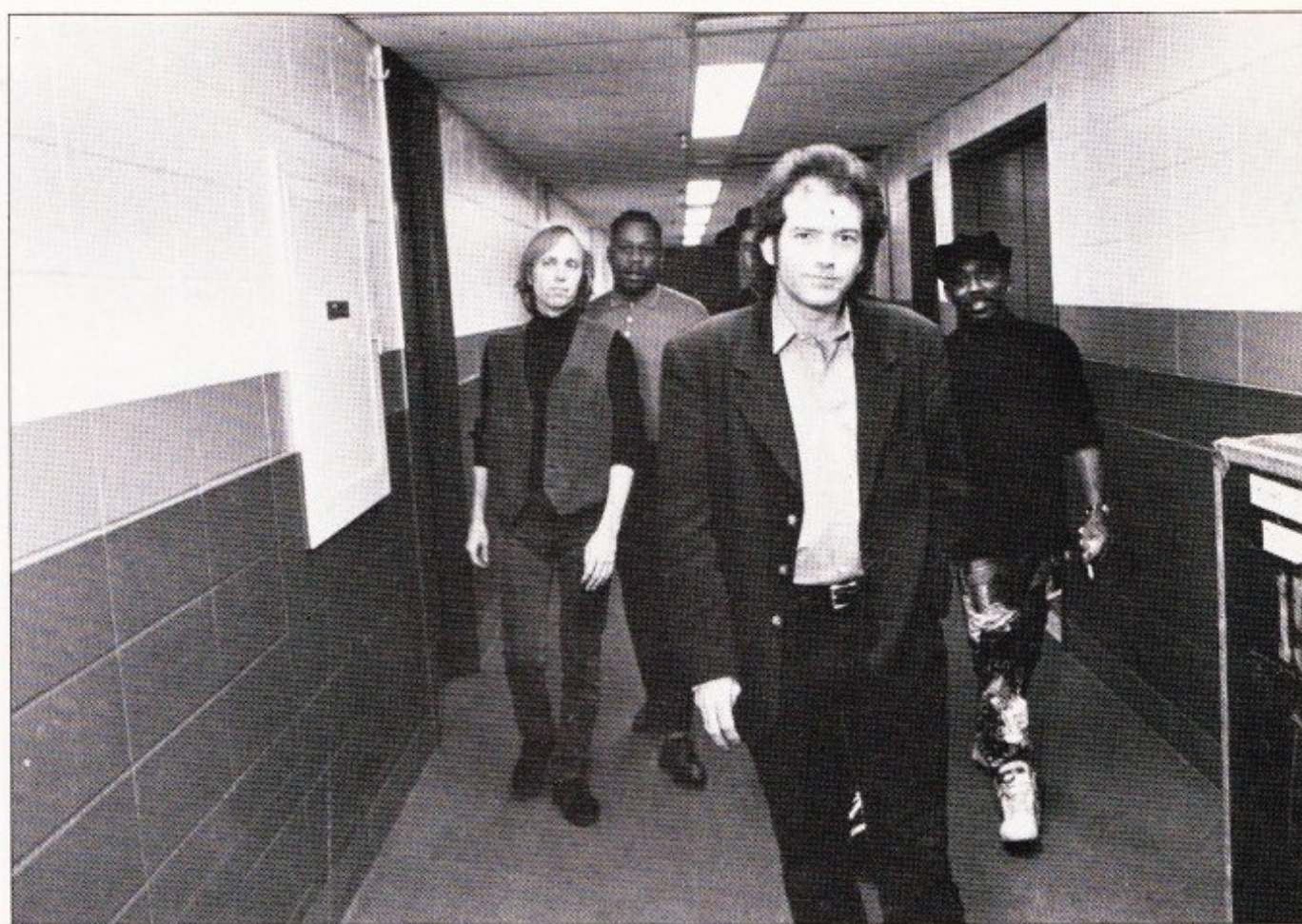
AXL ROSE loves that song, too. A couple of months after "Saturday Night Live" the Guns N' Roses singer calls Petty and asks if he can sing "Free Fallin'" with them on another live broadcast, the MTV awards. Tom explains, "Axl said, 'I know this girl, man, and that is her song, that's her story. And I'd really like to sing the song.' I thought, 'Yeah, there's a concept—to have him sing it's gotta go right to the heart of the matter.'"

"Axl called me the other day and asked me, 'Where did you get that line in "Free Fallin'" about the vampires in the valley?' When I'm driving I sometimes see these shadowy-looking people just off the sidewalks, around the post office. I always thought of them as vampires for some reason. I wrote it real fast. I started it off on a keyboard. Bugs, who's a roadie who's been with us since the day we started, bought me this Yamaha keyboard. I said, 'Man, why'd you buy that? It's expensive!' He said, 'If you write one song on it it'll pay for itself.' So he charged it to me and left it there. Jeff Lynne was over one night and I started playing with it. I played," Petty hums the opening chords of "Free Fallin'"—plus five others, a busy pattern. "Jeff goes, 'Wait! What was that? Just play the first part over and over.' Okay. I did and Jeff's just sitting there smiling and he says, 'Go on, sing something.' So just to make Jeff smile I sang, 'She's a good girl, loves her mama.' And from there I wrote the first and second verse completely spontaneously. We were smart enough to have a cassette on. So I sang the first couple of verses and Jeff says, 'Go up on the chorus, take your voice up a whole octave—what'll that sound like?' I sang, 'I'm freeeee...' He said, 'Wo! There's power in that, that's good!' I wrote the third verse after he left and brought it in and showed it to him the next day. It all fit together and we were really excited." Tom laughs. "We went running over to Mike's with the song. Mike hardly knew Jeff, we just showed up and said, 'Hey! We gotta do a record right now! We gotta get this song down!' Mike said sure, and we did it."

Told that it was generous to give Lynne co-writing credit for the

song, Tom shrugs and says, "But if Jeff hadn't been there the song wouldn't have been written."

The Heartbreakers cancel several tour dates to go home to L.A. for

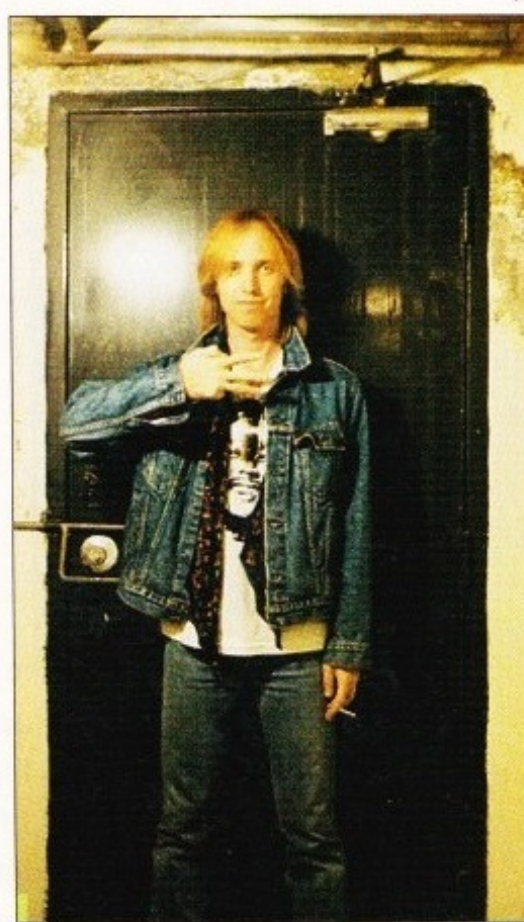


BELOW: TP AT ELVIS' DOOR. RIGHT: BEN HEADS TO THE STAGE.

the TV show. Axl and bandmate Izzy Stradlin join them on the MTV set to rehearse "Free Fallin'" and to work up a version of "Heartbreak Hotel." Their run-through keeps a fuming Cher waiting in the wings. When the show is broadcast, some viewers think Tom looks angry with Axl for taking over the song; others think he just looks bemused. The truth is, Petty gets a kick out of Axl's scene-stealing, though the other Heartbreakers don't.

As the TV credits roll and the Guns N' Heartbreakers come offstage, Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil charges out of the dark and punches Izzy—then runs for his car. It's revenge for an alleged slight by the Gunners to Neil's wife.

"Well, you know us," Petty sighs. "We manage to get into shit somehow. I don't dig blindsiding somebody, if that's what happened. I didn't see it. I just saw Vince Neil go storming by and a guy running behind him with a walkie talkie going, 'Vince? Vince!' I heard a commotion but I didn't know what it was. I just kept going. I said, 'Is that any of our guys?' And they said, 'No, it's on the stage.' Stan was there, [Heartbreakers lighting designer] Jim Lenahan threw a couple of punches at Vince Neil. Lenahan's great. He's like, 'He's with us—at least for right now.'"



IN SEPTEMBER the Heartbreakers land in Hampton Beach, Virginia. The tour is almost over. When they arrive at their hotel they are told that their rooms are not ready. One of the crew plants himself in the middle of the lobby with his boom box blasting George Clinton at full volume. The hotel management suddenly finds empty rooms.

Full Moon Fever has turned into Petty's biggest album in years. It will probably eventually pass 1979's *Damn the Torpedoes* to become

his biggest ever. The Heartbreakers want to stay on the road, strike while the iron is hot, but Petty has decided not to extend the tour. Tom wants to take a break to write. The original plan was for the band to

ugly bolted metal door down by the tuning room isn't just a door. It's *Elvis'* door. It seems that the King of Rock 'n' Roll played this very same facility once, and refused to enter through the general backstage area. So the arena had a special door cut from the dressing room into the parking lot, so that Elvis could step right in from his bus. Tom gets Linda to snap some photos of him in front of the Elvis Door. He sneers like young Elvis. He sticks his belly out like old Elvis. One of the Heartbreakers suggests they demand a door only knee high, "The Irving Azoff Door."

TOM PETTY NO LONGER takes life so seriously. Tom's house caught fire in 1987. He and his wife and children got out, but most of their belongings were lost. It's led to a long period of temporary quarters for the family while their new home's being built. To make it worse, the fire may have been arson. While that experience would shake anyone, Tom is fairly philosophical about it. All the more remarkable because he was once known for his combustibility—he made news by engaging in a long legal battle to get out of an unfair record deal before *Damn the Torpedoes*. Then he refused to release his next album, *Hard Promises*, if MCA raised its price a dollar above standard. Then, during the making of *Southern Accents*, he punched a wall, broke his hand, and for a while it

looked like his guitar playing days were over. So anyone might have expected that losing his home and possessions would have sent Tom completely around the bend, but instead he devoted himself to keeping his family's spirits up, and made—with the Wilburys and *Full Moon Fever*—the loosest, happiest music of his career.

"It's very unusual," Tom says of his new optimism. "The fire was such a vast thing that it scares me when I start thinking about it. But your life is not like what comes out in the press. They only get the really tragic or really great things. They don't get all the middle stuff. But I'll tell ya," he laughs, "it's been pretty wild."

"I know 'Free Fallin'' was influenced by driving up and down Mulholland Drive, where I was living for a while. I did a lot of

driving, and a lot of the album came to me on those drives. We were moving all around town, going from house to house, staying in hotels. It was a funny lifestyle, but in the end it was good creatively. I think that was a way of working out all that stuff with the fire so I wouldn't build up a lot of aggression and anger about it. I think looking back—this could be total bullshit—I completely adopted another stance for the album: 'Look, let's just be happy and try to get something over with a positive vibe and some credibility.' Most of the things out there that are positive don't have much credibility; it's easy to go over the line.

"It was just my mood at the time, and also not having to shoulder the Heartbreakers responsibility. Jeff Lynne really worked wonders with me and Michael. He had us doing stuff we'd never do. We would write a song and record it and write another one the next day."

Tom now thinks taking the creation of rock 'n' roll too seriously is a big mistake. "It's not good, y'know. Not that you can't write about a serious subject—everything can't be a goof—but I think you just get



MIKE & TP: AFTER 20 YEARS THEY'RE NATURALLY IN TUNE.

record a new album from late '89 to early '90, leaving Tom the spring of '90 to work on a second Wilburys project. But no one expected *Full Moon Fever* to be such a smash. Now the Heartbreakers want to keep working, but Tom sees no reason to push it. Things are great—why get nervous? The underlying fear among the Heartbreakers is that if they quit touring now, Tom will get caught up with the Wilburys again, which will lead God-knows-where for God-knows-how-long, and another year will be lost.

It's a couple of hours before showtime at the local civic center and the band is lolling around the concrete dressing room, sleepy-eyed. A buffet of fruit and lunch meat sits untouched. A roadie comes in and shouts, "Hey, guys! Wake up!"

Petty says sleepily, "Inside I'm a coiled spring."

Stan Lynch, sprawled on a couch, mumbles, "The rattlesnake knows just how much poison is required."

Mike Campbell saunters in from the tuning room and pops a tape into a boom box. Boogie-woogie piano fills the room. Mike walks away and Petty raises his eyes. "Is that Benmont?" he asks. He gets no answer. Everyone listens. "Sounds like Benmont, don't it?" Someone goes over and checks. "No, it's Pete Johnson."

Just then Ben Tench enters the room. "Hey, Benmont," Petty says, "Mike's playing a Pete Johnson tape and we thought it was you."

"Yeah! Right!" Ben snaps. "I sound *nothing* like Pete Johnson!" and he continues through the room and out the other door. Petty makes an amused *well, I never* face. Linda Burcher, the wardrobe woman, says, "We could take that two ways...."

The door opens again and Benmont returns with an announcement: "Pete Johnson was only the greatest piano player I ever heard!" He stops and listens to the music. "God, that depresses me." He listens some more and then says, "Why did he have to die?"

Petty says softly, "Great football player, too."

Linda drifts off and comes back with some local news. That big

"I lived with Full Moon Fever a year before I put it out. If it had failed, I wouldn't have wanted to do it anymore."

it a little easier if you don't get all puffed up. Especially when you've written a hundred songs. It's better to go at it casually, and you'll find the best stuff and remember it. I believe that."

Tonight's show continues the loosening of the Heartbreakers sets that began during their tenure with Dylan. In the late '70s and early '80s their shows were so tight that at times they felt a bit constricted. No one could complain about hearing note-for-note recreations of records as great as "Breakdown," "Refugee" and "Don't Do Me Like That," but if you went to see Tom Petty concerts two nights in a row, you might be disappointed at how regimented it all was. When Stan Lynch was told this at the time he said, "When we're playing 'Refugee,' that's no time for fooling around—it's fast balls, right over the plate."

Ten years later, the Heartbreakers are throwing sliders, curves and spitballs. The songs have been broken down and rebuilt, new instrumental passages have been added to some, others have been stripped of their Top 40 sheen and made acoustic. ("I wouldn't be even slightly interested in playing 'Listen to Her Heart' in the normal setup," Tom says. "But to play it acoustic gets at a whole different side of the song.") Benmont has a boogie piano number, and Mike Campbell, rock's most self-effacing guitar great, gets to play a long, Hendrix-like instrumental that evolves into "Don't Come Around Here No More." It's a better show than the old Heartbreakers concerts because things aren't so structured. And also because Petty is one of the few songwriters who has maintained a steady string of hits *and* a consistent standard of quality over more than a decade of activity. U2 and R.E.M. crowds get restless during the old songs and come alive for the newer ones. Stones and Who audiences go out for popcorn during the new numbers and go wild during the oldies. But the Heartbreakers' fans are equally excited by "American Girl" (1976) and "I Won't Back Down" (1989). Like Neil Young before him, Petty is an artist whose importance has become apparent not in a burst, but over a long haul. In the fifteenth year of his public career, it's starting to dawn on the rock audience that Tom Petty never lets them down.

"We're doing a runner tonight," the tour manager says. "Make sure you're at the side of the stage during 'Jammin' Me'—the band are going to come right off, onto the buses, and be gone before the lights come on." Sure enough, the crowd's still cheering as the musicians dive onto their tour buses. The garage doors fly up and we're on the road. For most of the summer there have been three buses—one for Tom and his family, one for Mike Campbell and his family, and one for Benmont, Stan and Howie. Summer and the tour are ending now, and the families have gone home to start school. So tonight Mike's riding with the other Heartbreakers. Tom is following on his own bus. Like all rock stars since time began, the first thing the Heartbreakers think about as they peel off their stage clothes and settle in for the long ride to the next state is—what's for dinner. They are aghast to open the cupboards and find that some dirty rat on the other bus has

replaced their wheat bread and high-fiber cereal with Chocolate Pinwheels, Little Debbie cakes, Malomars and Oreos—horrible junk food that is bad for them, that is repulsive to them, and that they know



BUSINESSMAN HOWIE SELLS STAN TICKETS TO THE MAIN EVENT.

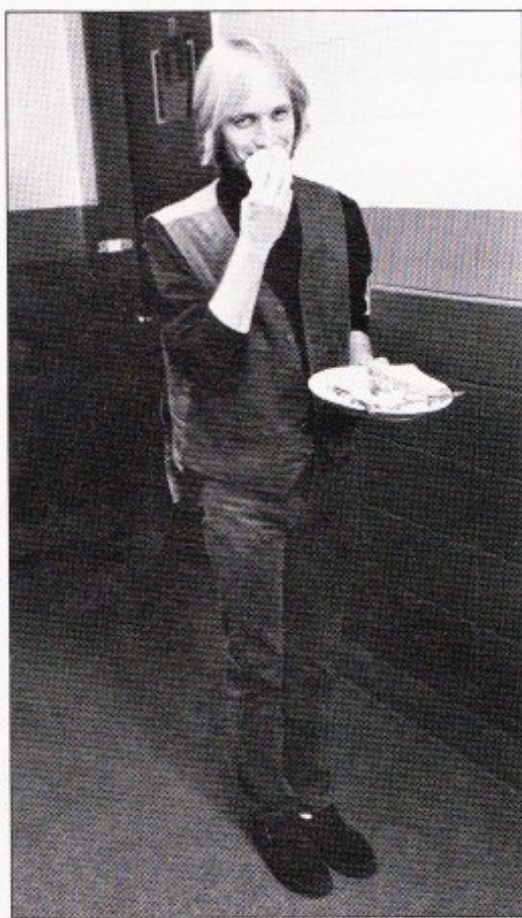
they will not be able to resist eating before the night is over.

As the bus rolls through Virginia toward North Carolina, Stan starts talking with excitement about his hero—Sammy Davis, Jr. How Sammy is the epitome of real show biz, how Sammy . . . "Oh no,"

Benmont mumbles, "he's onto Sammy again." Howie, Mike and Ben get up and move toward the rear cabin to play tapes while Stan waves his arms and goes on: "I'm not bullshittin', man! I've read *Yes I Can*, I own a first printing edition of *Hollywood in a Suitcase*. In about '83 I heard he was playing, so I raced to Vegas, got a suite, brought all my Sammy memorabilia. I call and leave some champagne for him at his hotel. And he shines me! So I go to two shows, I pay the 50 dollars, I get in the front row and I'm screamin', 'Candyman!' at the top of my lungs. I'm goin' crazy. And he looks down at me and says, 'Hey, man, here's one that's about as modern as I'm going to get.' And he did 'Ghostbusters' for me. That was a peak moment for me. When he said, 'I told you before, I ain't afraid of no ghost,' he pointed right at me. And I kind of went wild. If you can imagine Sammy doing 'Ghostbusters' right after 'Mister Bojangles.' I thought I was gonna blow a headgasket. I was so deluded, I was in my prime as a *rock dude* and I was hoping that maybe he'll want to

know me and I can even, like, get next to the guy. I stalked him. I ran after him to the limo saying, 'Sammy! Tremendous show! Tremendous show!' And he looked at me in all seriousness and said, 'I know where you're coming from, man.' And he walked off. I think he thought I was a Mark Chapman or something. But I think the man is the consummate entertainer. Have you seen Sammy hoof, man? Okay, you've got your Madonnas and your Princes and your Bobby Browns, but let's get real."

At 34 Stan is the youngest Heartbreaker, four years shy of Tom, Ben and Mike. He grew up in the band. Tom, Ben and Mike had already played together in a Florida band called Mudcrutch when Stan



hooked up with them. In the early days, when Stan and Petty were both wilder, their fights were legendary. Stan's expulsion from the band was once officially announced. But that was a long time ago. Now the same extravagant qualities that used to get Stan in hot water with the band have become a source of amusement to them. All of the Heartbreakers are smart guys, but the others have a Southern reserve—they are kind of tight-lipped. Even Howie Epstein, a non-Southerner who joined the band in 1982, is laconic. Not Stan. Stan is enthusiastic and he likes to talk. He is articulate and quick-witted. He's well over six feet tall, an avid sportsman, the son of a college professor, and a good-looking rock star. Stan Lynch knows he has it made.

"I took Dylan to see Sammy and Frank at the Greek Theatre," Stan announces. "My dream date with Bob. That's a true story. The first week of rehearsals for the Dylan tour, Dylan hadn't spoken to us all week. We were all playing and I said, 'Look, I gotta bug out early tonight.' And they go, 'Lynch, what's your crisis?' I go, 'I got tickets for Sammy and Frank at the Greek.' The whole band covers their eyes going, 'Oh geez, I can't believe he really said that.' And Dylan looked up at me in all seriousness and said, 'Sammy and Frank? I love those guys.' So Dylan and I went to the Greek. I really didn't know who to look at! I don't mind saying I was a little starstruck by the whole concept that I came from Gainesville to L.A., and now I'm sitting with Bob Dylan watching Sammy Davis and Frank Sinatra."

When the subject of Tom's solo album comes up, Stan declares that Tom's line about having used drummer Phil Jones because Stan was out of town is not true. "I wasn't asked to play on it," he announces with a wave. "I've heard I wasn't asked because I wasn't there, but that's bullshit. I flew back to L.A. to start the album! I think they were already working and they didn't want to hurt my feelings. I had a fight with Michael the year before and..."

Across the dark highway, Tom Petty looks out his window and sees that Stan's exposition is taking a serious turn. "Look at Stanley," Tom tells his driver. "He's doing his rap. He's taking this way too seriously." Stan is still talking when suddenly the boss' bus swings toward his window—with Tom Petty pressing the seat of his pants against the window, shouting something at Stan. Stan immediately leaps to his feet, unbuckles his belt and presses his own butt against his own glass, adopting a cracker accent to scream at Petty, "You don't have the balls! I mean that literally! You want some more? I'll give you some more, goddammit! Speed up, Chester, they're comin' by again! I'll give you some more!" The two buses play tag for a minute, the two musicians howling across the highway at one another. In the rear cabin of the band bus Mike, Ben and Howie look out, astonished to see Tom Petty engaging in such Stan-like behavior. Then the two buses swing apart again and Stan falls back into his seat roaring with laughter. His gripe with Tom is forgotten, at least for publication. Back on his own bus, Tom Petty has taken care

of business again.

"When it really comes down to it," Stan says, "I have nothing to beef about with Tom's solo record. I have to be confident that he'll see the



SMOKIN' IN THE BOYS' ROOM: EPSTEIN, TENCH, LYNCH, CAMPBELL, TP

value of what we are and bring something else to the trip. I did sessions, hell, I even toured with other people. Ben's done it, Mike's done a lot of things. Tom was the one who was incredibly loyal for over a decade. He didn't sleep around at all. I feel this is really positive if it stays together. If you use that as your excuse to break up, I think you're a fool. I don't think anybody wants to be remembered as the one who broke up Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers. 'Cause it's a cool band."

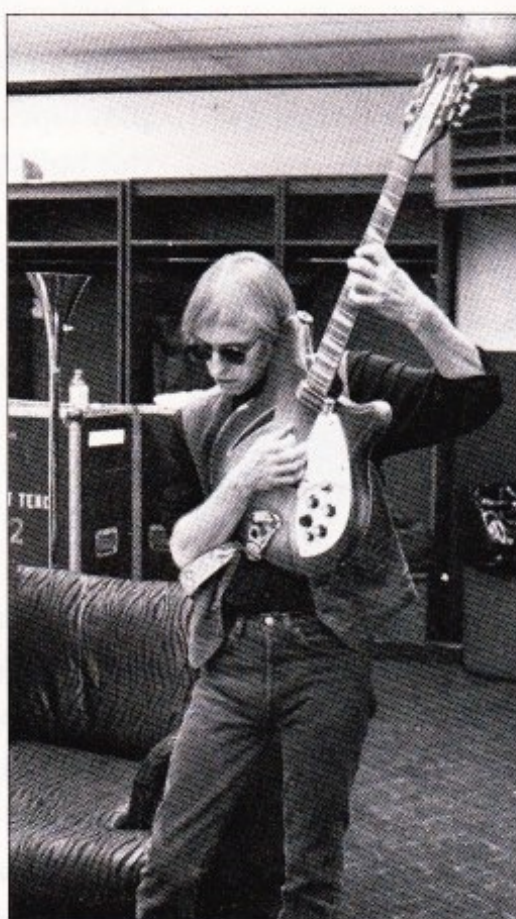
Mike and Ben return from the back of the bus and seat themselves across from Stan. "It's very hard in this band to get a word in edgewise," Stan says. "The drummer is like the center on a football team. Nobody gives a shit whether you can run. It's, 'Hey, hike the fuckin' ball!' I could sit there all day long and go, 'Well, you know, I'm not a half bad lyricist and I know how to arrange and, hell, I could do a couple of other tricks, too.' They're like, 'Hey! We need a center! You get down on all four and hike!'"

Benmont says, "Say you've got a family. The little brother goes off and makes a million dollars. When they come back for Thanksgiving dinner he's still the little brother. Our roles have developed, and no matter what we do with other people, when we all get together it's, 'Okay, Tom, sing one. We're here.'"

"And he's a good leader," Mike adds. "Most of the time. It's a good question, though. Tom is the leader of the group and there's a lot of friction. Because we all have a lot of ideas and we are pretty stubborn and we don't like being told what to do. So a lot of the time there's a lot of tension in the air. But I think that creates some of the excitement in the playing. We've been together a long time, and we can't just be buddy-buddy friends all the time."

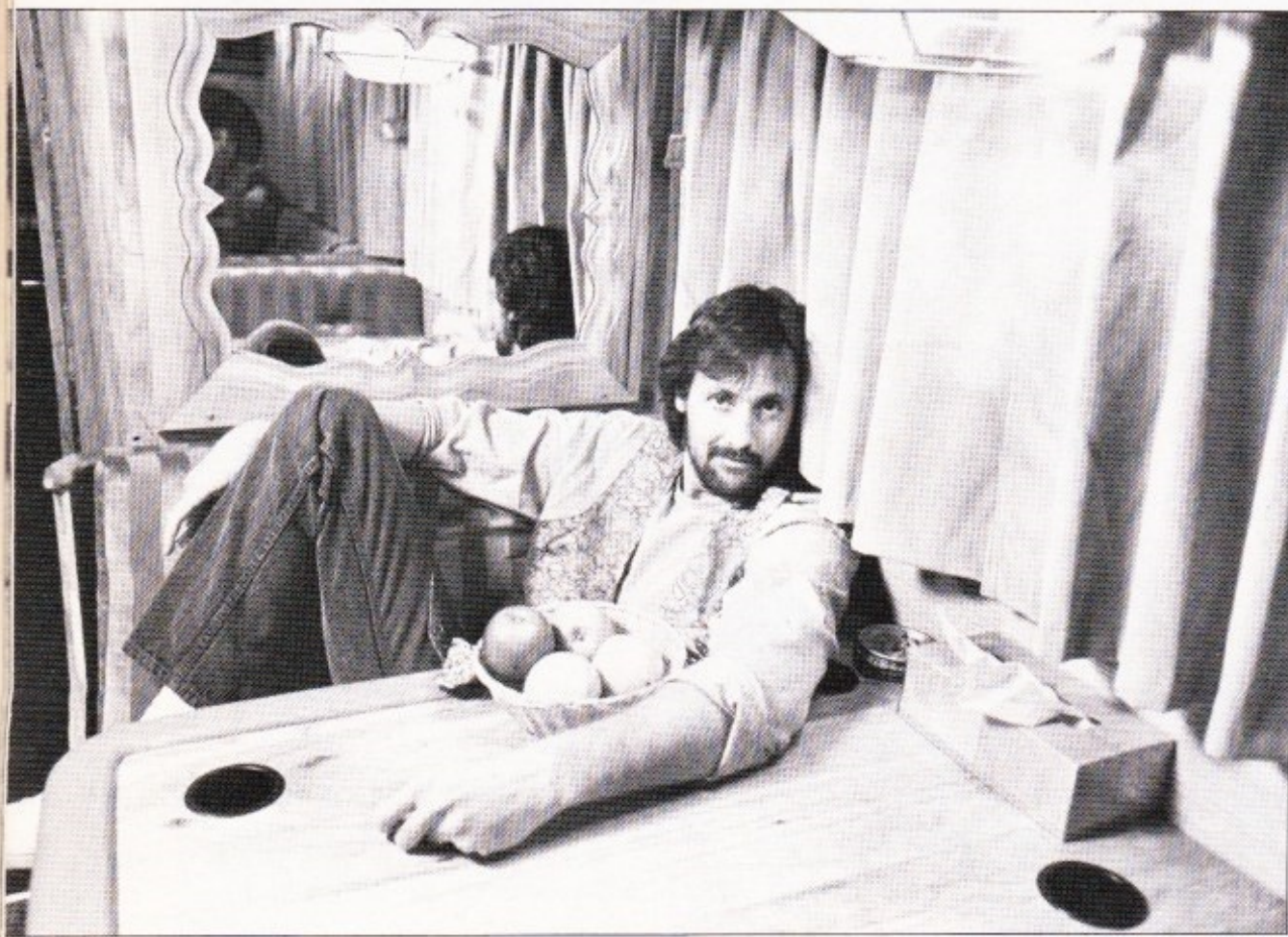
"Some of the best music," Ben concludes, "is made by people when they're mad at each other."

THE NEXT AFTERNOON in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the band bus



pulls up to the backstage of the Dean Smith Center where they will play that night. A pot-bellied security guard waves for the bus to halt, saunters over to the driver's window like Barney Fife and shouts, "Are

was going to be a hit, but I knew it was good. Sometimes you write something you think is not so great and that will be the one. Like 'Jammin' Me.'"



COME NEAR STAN WITH AN OREO; HE'LL HIT YOU WITH AN APPLE.

you the band?" Before the driver can answer Stan's voice bellows from the back, "No, ya jerk! We're just out toolin' around in a 60-foot tour bus!" The guard waves them through.

An hour later, Mike Campbell addresses Stan's complaint about being excluded from *Full Moon Fever*. Mike, dressed in rock star black, is sitting by the gym's indoor pool while collegiate swimmers walk past him dripping. "Stan probably won't believe this but it's true," Mike says. "A real good friend of ours named Phil Jones, who's been on a couple of tours with us as a percussionist, was over at my house fooling around in the studio. I played the tapes for Tom and he said, 'That's a great drummer, who is that?' That same week Jeff Lynne and Tom had this song they wanted to record. I said, 'Should I call the band?' Tom said, 'No, it's not that serious. Just get that drummer, he sounded pretty good.' He came over that day, then the next and the next. Pretty soon there were four songs done with Phil. Phil just happened to be there. And actually I do think Stan *was* in Florida. Just for the record. Then, at the point it became a solo record, there was a conscious attempt not to have too much band input. It's kind of weird, but it was either a band record or it wasn't. Nothing against anybody's ability. So there, Stan." Mike speaks so softly you have to lean forward to hear him. He is the Keith Richards of the Heartbreakers, the soul of the band. He co-produces the albums, he often co-writes the songs with Petty. He turns down most offers to compose with other people and rejects almost all of the production offers that come his way. His loyalty is to his band.

Mike's most famous non-Petty songwriting collaboration is probably Don Henley's "Boys of Summer." "I'd never met him," Mike says. "He was sitting at this big table like a judge, with a cassette player. I brought him three tracks and that was the first one. About halfway through it he said, 'Yeah, I could write something to that. I'll take that one.' He called me up the next day and said, 'I've written the best song I've written in two years.' When I heard it I didn't know if it

"Jammin' Me" was a Mike Campbell/Tom Petty/Bob Dylan collaboration. Mike says that Dylan once came over to his house to try writing with Mike alone. "I'm trying to be cool," Mike laughs, "and he wanted me to show him this drum machine. He said, 'You use this drum machine on 'Boys of Summer'?' 'Yeah.' 'That's a really good song.' Then he said, 'You got any words?' I knew I was in trouble. I felt like saying, 'I was kinda counting on you for some words!'"

Notorious for changing arrangements in mid-song (and changing song in mid-arrangement), Dylan is known to mess with the minds of his musicians onstage. Mike remembers, "He started pulling stuff like, he'd work out elaborate endings and want it just like that, and then you'd get up there and he'd sabotage you. There was one night when he just left me hanging and I knew he'd done it on purpose. And I left the stage. 'I'm going home, I don't care who this guy is.' But I realized, our band is used to the professional ethic of going out there and trying to lift the audience up and keep lifting them. His thing is anarchy. Once I accepted that, that it wouldn't be like we rehearsed it, I got into the groove of it and I dug it. But by the last tour we'd toured so much it was

getting a little stale. It didn't seem like he was really into it. In Europe he'd just show up with some sort of towel on his head and go through the motions. If the crowd was great and we'd get on a roll, our band would get into it, but he would say, like, 'Fuck it, you people sit down,'

"Music should be made by human beings—my heart doesn't beat in perfect rhythms. I don't want a jack-hammer."

and play something really bad and out of tune. He likes anarchy, he hates it when it's pat show biz. I kind of respect him for that. We learned a lot about spontaneity and loosening up. I love the guy, I'd work with him in a second."

Mike has known Tom Petty for 20 years. Back then—back in Gainesville, Florida—bass player Petty and his guitarist pal Tom Leadon (younger brother of Flying Burrito and later Eagle Bernie Leadon) were looking for a drummer to start a band they would call Mudcrutch. One drummer who answered their ad invited the two Toms out to his hippie house in the woods so they could jam. The trio sounded good, but Petty said he wished they had someone to play rhythm guitar. The drummer said that one of his housemates played guitar. Petty said go get him, and Mike Campbell appeared, carrying an ugly old Japanese guitar. Petty asked Mike if he could play "Johnny B. Goode." Mike said he thought he could handle it. At the end of the song Petty and Leadon looked at each other and said to Mike, "You're in our band!" Petty spent the night talking Mike out of going to college. They've been together ever since.

Mudcrutch played the music of Gram Parsons and the Flying Burrito Brothers, pretty obscure stuff in Florida in 1970, but—hey—the guitar player's brother was a Burrito! Benmont Tench, another local musician, was a regular at their gigs. Once Mudcrutch played a great song Ben had never heard and he asked what record it was from. "Petty wrote that," he was told. Ben couldn't believe it. "Petty wrote that song?" Not long after that Tom had to go to Benmont's

house to explain to Ben's father—Judge Tench—why it would be better for Ben to go on the road with Mudcrutch than to finish college. It is to the eternal credit of both Tom Petty and Benmont's father that the Judge allowed Ben to leave school for the band.

Tom Leadon was eventually fired for costing the band their gig at a topless bar when he mouthed off to the owner. For a while Mudcrutch had a lead singer named Jim Lenahan, who left the group to go to college to study scenic design. He is now the Heartbreakers' lighting designer (and the one who took a swing at Vince Neil at the MTV awards). Mudcrutch made it to Los Angeles, made one album that no one ever heard, and then the group fell apart amid arguments over who should be the main singer and songwriter. Petty worked on demos with Mike and Ben, as well as with big names like Jim Keltner and Leon Russell. "It never sounded right, it sounded really '70s—it was wimpy." Tom got a deal with Shelter Records at the same time the Heartbreakers was forming. Since he had the contract, he got his name up front.

"Anytime I work with the Heartbreakers I try to leave it as a democracy," Tom says. "But if it gets down to 'Are we gonna tour for a year?' No." He laughs. "I have to suffer that in a way. It's not comfortable always being the one. Everyone seems to feel insecure, shaky about it, but I don't think it's just *my* band."

Tom, Ben and Mike all say that from the day it was decided Tom's name went up front, Tom's been the boss. Stan disagrees. Stan says that it was only with the third album, *Damn the Torpedoes*, and the coming of super-manager Elliot Roberts, that democracy went out the window. "Ohhh yeah," Tom sighs. "I know what he's referring to. Elliot came in and said, 'Look, you'll do better if you just focus in on somebody instead of five people. Maybe on this album you should just put Tom on the cover.' Nobody liked that very much, but Elliot was right, I guess."

THE BACKSTAGE AREA in North Carolina is full of bikers—pals of Howie Epstein. They take over the hospitality room and spill out into the corridor, where tables have been set up to feed the band and crew. A teenager comes up to Petty and asks for an autograph saying, "My sister took me to see you when I was 10 years old!" Petty deadpans, "My, how you've grown."

This is the last night of the tour, so everyone is claiming different souvenirs. Tom has staked claim to the most coveted: the 15-foot-tall Indian totem pole that looms above the stage. TP plans to have it installed at the top of a hill in the woods behind his new home. If his new home is ever finished. Stan Lynch is eating dinner and telling Georgia Satellite Dan Baird about Petty's new house when Tom comes over and plops down next to them. Stan starts kidding Tom that as soon as the tour's over he's going to go stand in front of the house and catch some of that money Tom's throwing at it. "I figure I'll just stick out my hand and grab a bunch of hundreds as they fly by." Petty shudders and smiles.

Baird says he used to work construction and can estimate how much Tom will end up spending by a breakdown of the details of the materials. Tom smiles and says nothing, but Stan makes Baird's eyes



AMERICAN ROCK'S PREMIER SONGWRITING/GUITAR TEAM.

pop by telling him that the house is being made of poured concrete—with six foundation holes, each big enough to lose a Greyhound bus in. Stan goes on about the steel frame and Baird says, "Steel? You're building your house out of steel?"

Tom mutters and nods. Stan enthuses, "It's a love palace! It's Petty Park! It's 60 feet high!"

Baird's eyes pop again. "Sixty feet of steel?!"

"At the highest point," Tom says.

Baird computes this and holds up three fingers. "I'm saying, *three big ones!*" Tom mumbles, "Nahh."

"With the land!" Stan yelps. "Land in L.A.!"

"Well remember, I bought the land in '81."

"Eleven thousand square feet!" Stan adds. "I walked halfway through it and said, 'Where's my golf cart?' The floors are cherry wood!"

Petty smiles and says, "I had to hire somebody just to spend money on it while I was gone."

Stan delivers the trump: "There's no corners."

Baird: "No corners?"

Tom: "There are no corners anywhere in the house. It's all—" Tom makes a cantilevered gesture with his palm.

Baird hits the table: "We may have underestimated! I say four! Four million!"

Stan says, "By the time you've hung the curtains."

Baird says, "By the time you take your first comfortable bowel movement in that house you will have spent four million. Wait—let me be more exact." He computes in his head and announces, "Three point eight five million!" They all crack up laughing. Whatever the price, Tom's making sure this house is fireproof.

Howie's motorcycle club pals are roaming the backstage; one has a video camera and is filming. Howie, the late Heartbreaker, is a biker himself. He is also a record producer with a home studio that is the envy of his bandmates (except Ben, who says he would never want a *studio* in his house. He sounds like he's talking about an outhouse).



Howie's dad was a musician and ran a Midwestern studio. Howie came to California to join John Hiatt's *Slug Line*-era band. He was playing bass with Del Shannon when Tom produced an album for him. Later, when bassist Ron Blair left the Heartbreakers, Tom swiped Howie from Del. Del, in the middle of a tour, wasn't happy about it. "I'd always wanted a guy like Graham Nash or Phil Everly who could hit those super high notes," Tom says. "Howie could make the best solo album of any of the Heartbreakers 'cause he's the best singer."

"All I have in my stage monitor is the lead vocal," Howie says. "I like to fit right in with that. I mean, you're supporting the vocalist. It drives me crazy when somebody plays all over the vocal." This egolessness is a useful trait for a musician who came in late to a band who had grown up together, and for a bassist who not only had to fit into another bass player's parts, but who faced in Petty a bandleader who began as a bass player. Mike Campbell often plays bass in the studio, too. Howie was surrounded. "If somebody else comes up with a better part, great," Howie says. "I don't get bothered by that at all. I know some people do. 'I'm the bass player!' I think that's kind of silly. If Ben or whoever come up with a better bass part we'd be fools not to use it."

"I was definitely happy when I joined the band. I really think it was stranger for them. I don't think the guys had been in many other bands. They were so closeknit, where I was used to playing with lots of bands. I think it was a little weird for them to have this new guy in there."

Sitting at the dinner table, studying an empty plate, Benmont is

moping. "I hate the end of a tour," he says. "Now I have to get a life. Hey, Tony!" He yells to Tony Dimitriadis, the Heartbreakers' manager, "Is it okay if we call this a *break* so I don't have to go look for a session?"

"Take a *vacation*, Ben," Tony answers.

"I'm not going to play any more sessions I don't *love*," Ben resolves.

Unlike most keyboard players on the arena circuit, Ben rarely strays beyond the B-3 and the grand piano. "Hey," he says, "I've been playing piano since I was six and I'm just barely brushing the surface of what you can do with it. It's very, very personal. It's a real human instrument. If you hit it harder, it's louder. It's not louder on account of some kind of velocity light sensor. It's louder on account of there's a hammer hitting the string harder. It's wood and wires. And B-3s have just been around forever. I didn't like it when I first heard them in Gainesville, 'cause it was guys trying to be Felix Cavaliere and failing. When I heard something on the radio like 'Whiter Shade of Pale' I didn't even know it was the same instrument, that it could make that beautiful a noise. I'm ornery about it. I'm old-fashioned. I've got a sample keyboard, I like it. I used it on [Orbison's] 'She's a Mystery to Me' and I used somebody else's on [U2's] 'All I Want Is You.' But I keep going back to the piano and the organ and some kind of analog synth that can make a string noise. And a Wurlitzer if you want to get extravagant."

"Music to me . . . oh good, I'm preaching. Music to me is human beings communicating ideas and emotions as a sound. Music that I like is made by human beings for human beings to listen to. My heart doesn't beat in perfect rhythms. God knows my emotions don't beat in



NOW APPEARING ON THE OTHER END OF THIS CABLE.

perfect rhythms. I don't want a jackhammer. The best rock 'n' roll songs have three or four chords, five at most if you count the bridge. But there's a lot you can do with those chords. Some nights I go for the *Blonde on Blonde* approach, where there's so much going on; it's a delicate thing to make that work. And some nights I just back off and play to the vocal as simply as I can.

"I like it when Tom's dark. I like it when Tom goes haywire and goes crazy and writes 'Straight into Darkness,' 'Wasted Life,' 'Make That Connection,' 'Let Me Up, I've Had Enough.' I love that." It's not surprising, then, that Ben is the Heartbreaker who most enjoyed the wild rides the band experienced when they toured with ol' chord-switching, key-changing, tempo-shifting Bob Dylan. "God bless him, man," Ben enthuses. "That's living music! The worst thing to me, the preaching purist, is this trend where everybody's got things sequenced. You hit one key and in comes the horn arrangement. That ain't music! At least it isn't a performance—it's a playback. That's valid if you like it, but I don't like it at all. It makes me leave the room. Music is a *living* thing."

The last show is a ragged but righteous gem, the Heartbreakers' repertoire supplemented by versions of "Let's Stick Together," "Should I Stay or Should I Go" (which Tom points out is really "Little Latin Lupe Lu") and "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," which evolves into "Knockin' on Axl's Door." "Sorry about that," Petty shouts after the final chorus, "*it's our last night!*" After the encore it's another runner; before the fans are out of their seats, Tom is rolling down the highway, bouncing around his bus.

His ears still ringing from the show, he enthuses about how great Howie Epstein was: "You gotta love him, I don't know if I ever tell him how good he is. Tonight, there was a line early in the show I could just barely sing. I was having to work harder than I normally do to make it, I was getting really close on the mike. I was thinking, 'Oh, gotta shake it off!' Howie saw it. I hadn't said anything to any of them about it, but this real hard section was coming up and I'm thinking, 'Oh boy, I hope I can do this . . .' I got to it and I heard Howie singing it with me over his mike. It sounded great, it sounded like a double track. I just looked at him, he caught my eye like 'Yeah!' It made me feel great, 'cause I know he was thinking the same thing, 'I know he's tired, I'll cover him—wham! Got it!' That's what a great band's all about. That's what it's all about."

A bell on the microwave announces a seafood dinner. As Tom digs in, the onstage adrenalin starts wearing off. It's a two-hour drive tonight, so that the Heartbreakers can wake up at the airport from which they'll fly home in the morning.

"They're all my neighbors now except Howie," Tom says. "Every one of them now lives really near me. Having Stan move into the neighborhood was real weird 'cause now he comes over and stuff. But I kind of like it. It's funny, we've all drifted to that same little area. It's a nice happy band most of the time." Petty laughs, then turns serious. "But it's intense, too. It's real intense. I don't think we should stay on the road for long periods. Some people think the tour should be longer, we've been offered a lot of other dates, but I don't want to live that life exactly. I like touring, I've enjoyed this one, but when it's

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endless there's something wrong with it to me. I feel a little confined by it. 'Cause all you can do is try to get there physically, get up and do it, and leave. You can't really write."

Tom says he's come to enjoy spending the afternoon at the venue, doing soundcheck, hanging out with the crew, eating dinner—and then beating it out of there instead of gladhanding for hours backstage. But he worries that people get their feelings hurt if they come back and he's gone. When the Heartbreakers played Florida recently, Tom spent two hours after the concert greeting small groups of friends for five minutes each. "We had a whole bunch of relatives when we played Florida," he smiles. "God, it was an ugly thing. I love Florida, it ain't like anywhere else in the world. It should be its own country. People are different, people are crazy in Florida. They just never told us not to try things."

Still, Tom's been in Los Angeles for 15 years, and on *Full Moon Fever* he's sketched a vivid portrait of L.A. today—something between a new-age dreamland and a teenage wasteland. He's circled around the subject before, with songs like "My Life, Your World," but with "Free Fallin'" and "Zombie Zoo," Tom finally nailed the post-groovy Los Angeles that is the face of America in the 1990s.

"I finally got it honed down," he says. "You could put the record on and get a feel of it, anyway. I like Los Angeles a lot. It's very chic not to like it. They always say it's shallow. It probably is, but it's a good place for me because there's so many musicians and so much music going on. I'm not interested in show business really, but I love making records. That's all I want to do."

"I feel cynical about it at times, but we've got so many friends there and I've been there such a long time. To me Los Angeles always represented the land of opportunity. You just wouldn't get paid for doing this in Gainesville. You couldn't make a living at it. You just go to another town and you can make a living. It's so weird." Petty leans forward conspiratorially: "The truth is, everybody goes through Los Angeles. There's nobody who doesn't. Even the smart guys."

He stares out the bus window and then adds, "Right now everybody's asking me what I'm going to do. I don't really want to do anything! I just want to stop for a little bit so I can get my brain back and write some songs. Nothing more elaborate than that."



IT'S THE END OF JANUARY, 1990, and the Heartbreakers are back on tour. Sitting on an unmade bed at a fancy Manhattan hotel, Ben Tench is still bleary-eyed from sleep at two in the afternoon. "I was sitting at home and the phone rang," Ben says. "It was Tony sounding like he had bad news. He said, 'We're going to tour again.' I said, 'What are you so depressed about? This is great!' We started out in Tampa and then we played Gainesville, our hometown. It was wonderful. My mom and dad, my sister, niece and nephew came." Judge Tench feels better about letting Ben quit college? "Dad feels okay about it now," he laughs. "He's been real supportive for the last 10 years. He was just a little nervous about it at first. I never told my folks this, they can read



it: I only went to college hoping I'd find a band. I was just killing time. Tom called me up at three in the morning when I was cramming for an economics final and said, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'You're right.'

"At the show in Gainesville it was a band. Five people, one thing. I love that. I love that. I'm never happier than when that works. "This band is a very precious thing to me. On a good night it's without effort, because of the length of time we've played together. Which doesn't mean that you're on autopilot. It means you're watching the show and you're in the show and you're *playing music*. You're not doing a recital, you're not doing a pop show, you're not playing a performance—it's *music*. It's above and beyond all other concerns.

"I just need it. I need to play. I get frightened before we go onstage, a feeling of impending doom, but once the first song starts there's nothing you can do but hold on. It makes the bus rides and hotel rooms worthwhile. Although I like the bus rides and hotel rooms, too. Look at this! I'm making my living seeing the world and playing music!"

On a less inspirational level, *Full Moon Fever* is still raking in the bucks. When "Free Fallin'" was finally released as a single it was a smash, bringing the album back into the Top 10 for the winter. Grammy nominations rained down on Petty, Campbell and company. In a year when Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers made no album, three of the five album-of-the-year nominations went to albums on which various members of the band were instrumental: *The Traveling Wilburys* (Tom), *Full Moon Fever* (Tom and Mike with Ben and

Howie), and Henley's *End of the Innocence* (Stan and Mike).

"I'm staying out of that!" Ben laughs. "I want everybody to win! God bless whoever wins the Grammys. But it's an award ceremony. It's nice, I'm sure it feels really good to win, but you can't take 'em too seriously. This isn't a competition. Music is a competition with yourself to get better. It's not about awards. But if they ever nominate *me* for an award, ask me again and you'll get a different answer!"

The next afternoon, before a show on Long Island, Petty chuckles about having his solo album up against the Wilburys. "I'm rooting for both! I'd love to win it, but I'd be happy with either one winning. You know how they always say I'm happy just to be nominated?" Tom laughs at how show-bizzy that sounds. "I really am pleased. We're in some pretty good company. It's not A Taste of Honey."

About the unstoppable sales of *Full Moon Fever*, Tom says, "I'm so pleased it's hard not to act like an idiot! It's really nice, all the room service guys like it. The next single's 'Face in the Crowd.' We just did a video with Jesse Dylan, Bob's son. He's really talented. I made a deal with him that if I got as far as 'Face in the Crowd' he could do it."

During the recent break Petty moved into his new home, worked on Jeff Lynne's album, helped with a Susanna Hoffs record Mike's producing (Mike's also working on Patti Scialfa's debut) and tried writing some new tunes. "I got about half a song done," he smiles. "When I get back I'm gonna have to put on the blinders and get our album done. People keep saying the Wilburys are going to record. I'm not really sure we will right away. I've talked to all of them recently and they all want to do it, but Jeff's in the thick of [cont'd on page 113]

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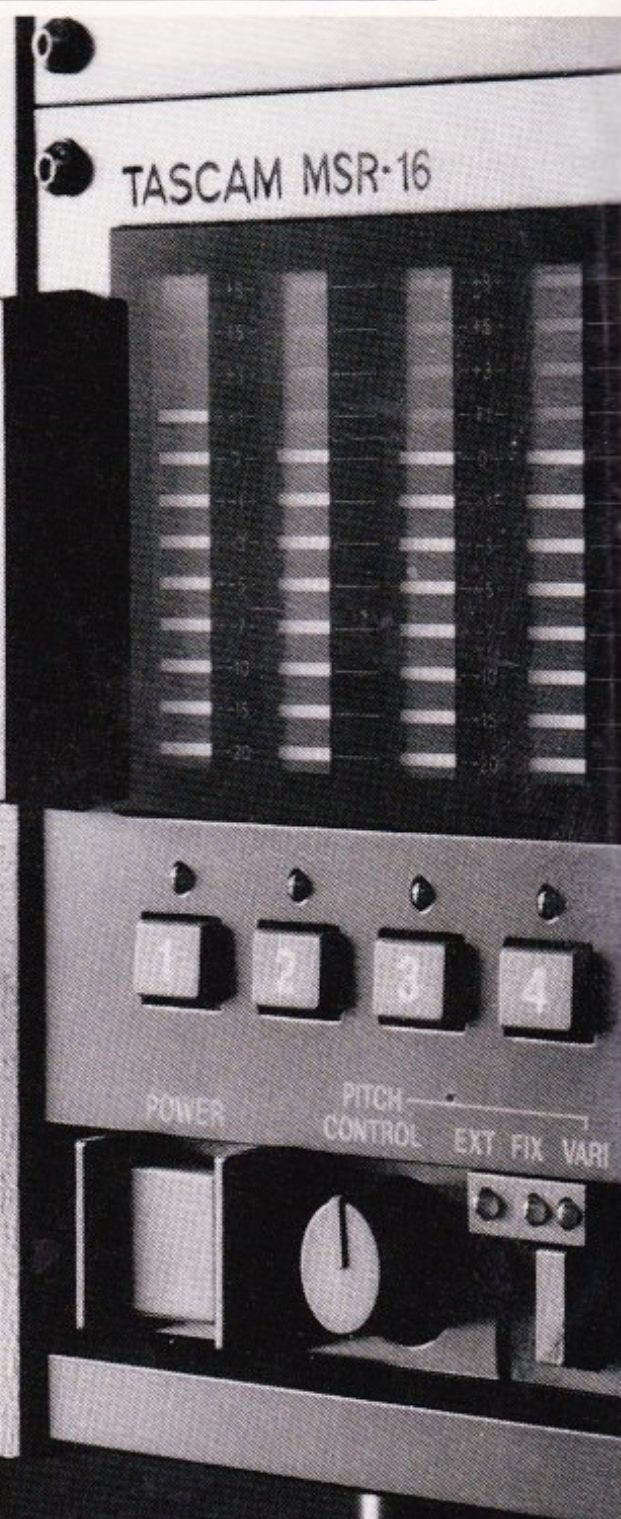
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JAMMIN' MEANS

TOM PETTY says, "On this tour I've got a Telecaster, well, it's not even a Fender, made by Norm's Rare Guitars in the Valley. It's become my main road guitar. I've got a red Rickenbacker six-string and a yellow 12-string. The acoustic is a Yamaha; they're really nice small-bodied guitars made for Bob Dylan. They have a real nice tight sound. It's tough to get an acoustic sound live. I sometimes use an orange Gretsch Round-up. I brought my Gibson 335 but I never got it out the whole tour. Sometimes I played Mike's black Rickenbacker solid-body. Amps? Vox AC30s, the same ones we've always had. The Replacements asked me if I really had Vox amps in there. They said, 'You must do something special to your amps.' I said, 'No, we don't, they're just straight.' Some sound better than others. I have a wire to the Vox amps that I run through a Roland Chorus for just a tiny bit of chorus, just to make a little bit wider sound than the AC30. 'Cause Campbell plays out of two, and I only play out of one. So one's super clean with a little chorus and other's a real Vox sound. With the 12-string you've got to have one that's really clean."

HOWIE EPSTEIN plays a Fender Precision bass with Rotosound strings into a Gallien-Krueger head. His home studio is based around a Studer 24-track and a Soundcraft 2400 board. He uses Neumann and Telefunken microphones.

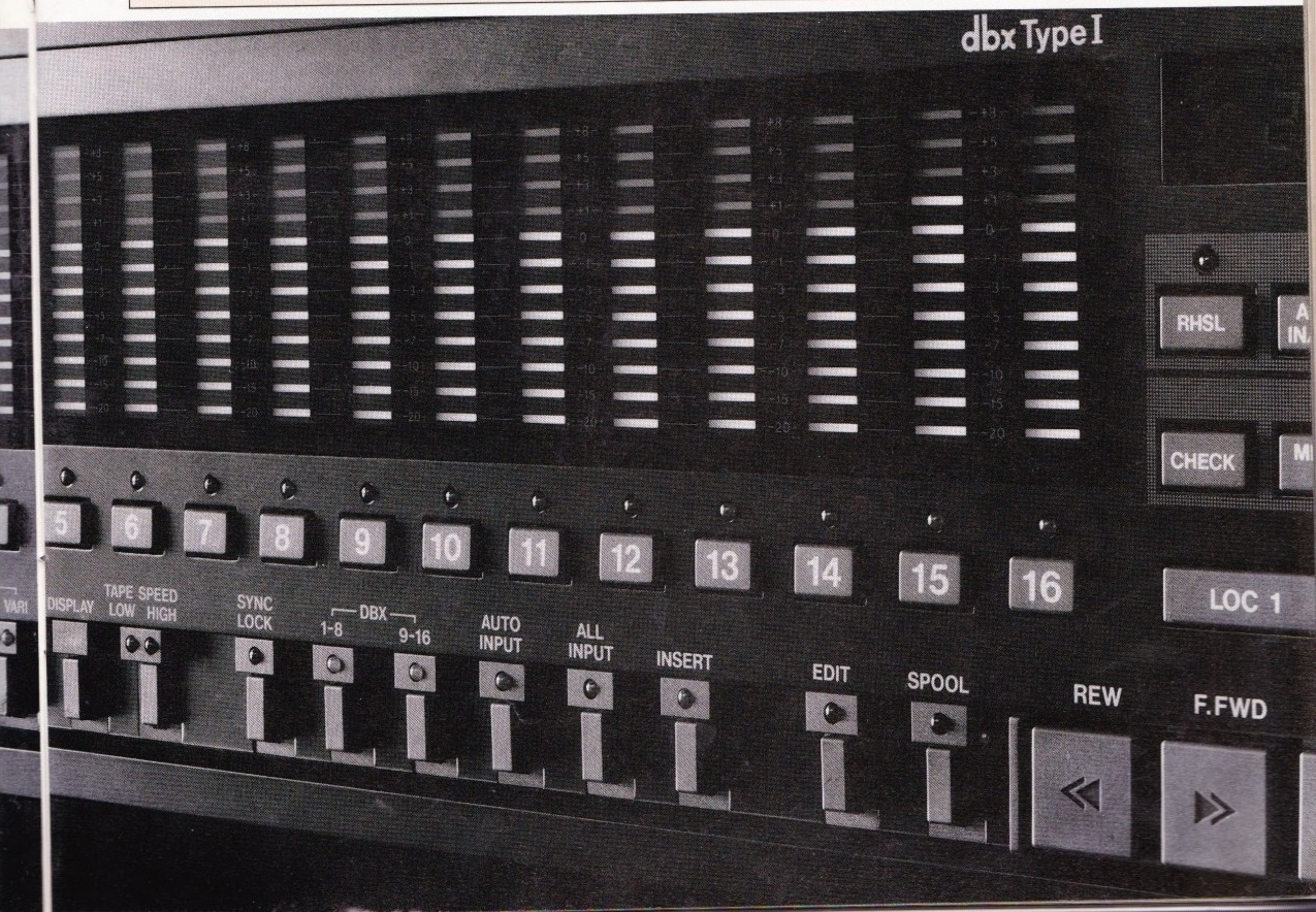
On this tour **MIKE CAMPBELL**'s left all his Fender guitars at home, so that his sound contrasts with Petty's. His current favorite is a Gibson Les Paul Junior. He's using a couple of Rickenbacker 12-strings, too, and a pair of Gretsches. Mike's also hot on a guitar he picked up in Japan, a Gibson copy called a Kusuga. He uses Ernie Ball strings.

Let's ask Mike about his famous garage studio, where *Full Moon Fever* and

parts of Roy Orbison's and Randy Newman's latest albums were recorded. "It's just a bedroom with a 24-track Soundtracs board. If you get three guys in there you're bumping elbows. It's real funky, all the wires are everywhere. The main thing is, I try to keep all the wires real short. A lot of studios are designed cosmetically—they run the wires through the walls so you can't see them, but then there's miles of wires between the microphone and the board. I think one reason my studio sounds good is because it's so direct. I have a couple of Roland things, nothing really extensive. I have a real good limiter, a Urei 1176. I'm building up a collection of pretty good microphones. The main one is a Neumann U-47, I've got a bunch of Shures, and one Sennheiser stereo mike that's got two microphones built into one head so you can split the signal, bounce it off a wall. We use that for ambience off the snare drum and on the acoustic guitars."

BENMONT TENCH plays a Hammond C-3 that's been cleaned up by Keyboard Products, through a Leslie. On the road he carries a Yamaha DX7 "with a pretty good Wuritzer patch in it—because Wuritzers pick up so many extraneous radio frequencies." Ben rented a Yamaha grand when his piano tuner told him one more road trip would do in his beloved Steinway. "I've got a Roland MIDI controller going through some Roland gear that makes a good string noise if you set it to one thing; I really am that primitive. I've got an Akai S900 at home that I like for a 'Walk Away, Renee' kind of string sound."

STAN LYNCH has "been using Tama drums for 12 years and they've been really great. I'm using their ArtStar Professional series." Stan hits Zildjian cymbals with Promark sticks. Drum Workshop made his bass drum and chain-drive bass pedal. "Real feather-light," Stan says, "real quick touch."



ZEVON

[cont'd from page 24] personal history, I don't think that I am the person that anyone wants to go have lunch with Shevardnadze. I don't really want to know who some of the artists I know think I should vote for. I don't want to know who they vote for. I would be just as happy not knowing that they were an alcoholic-homosexual-suicide. 'Cause if I think about that too hard, I may start turning away from their work. Do I really want to read this last 1400 pages of Yukio Mishima knowing that he was going to kill himself? Am I going to have trouble separating that philosophy behind the words from the quality of the literature? I stopped thinking, 'This guy is an incredibly great writer' and started thinking: 'What does this guy have to tell me? I don't know if I want to know.' At the same time, we can hire a carpenter and if he beats his kids with the same hammer, it doesn't affect the kitchen cabinets. But it's a little harder with art because it is verbal often. Because it is more personal. I guess that's how we make the leap of assuming that we want to know about the artist as a person and a politician. But for me, it's a distant connection." M

PETTY

[cont'd from page 45] finishing his album. I think when we see Jeff's done we'll make a stab at it. The Heartbreakers' album could be done first. I'm just going to go ahead with that until I'm interrupted."

Why this return to the road? "Why not? We kept saying, 'Shit, this album's still going!' And the promoters kept calling and calling. I asked the band, 'Do you want to go back on the road or start an album?' Everybody said, 'I wouldn't mind going back on the road for a while.' So here we are. Gainesville was really good the other night. Probably as good as I've ever heard us. I was shocked. It was only the second show. It was really invigorating for the old Heartbreakers camp. It was funny it would happen in Gainesville, where we'd usually be kind of nervous. It was the most fun I'd had playing in I don't know when. I really enjoyed being in the band." Petty thinks about that and adds, "We're all pretty happy, I think." M

KRAVITZ

[cont'd from page 50] Brothers could sing their asses off!" We'll let the inevitable boxed-set CD reissue decide that one, okay?

Maybe a late-'60s childhood isn't such a bad place to be stuck, though; as another song on *Let Love Rule* puts it, these days we're all living in "Fear"—of "toxic waste and acid rain," of a world that's changing too fast. At the very least, Lenny Kravitz's success is a telling phenomenon. His naive rock 'n' soul hybridizations may not represent pop music's future, but he's not just rehashing the past, either. Whether even *he* realizes it or not, Lenny Kravitz is a sign of the times. M

LET-LOVE TOOLS

MOST OF THE TIME, I play an Epiphone Sorrento semi-hollow-body electric guitar," says LENNY KRAVITZ. "Live I use Mesa-Boogie amps, but in the studio I use old Fender Deluxe tweed amps for that really crunchy sound. Mesa-Boogies are really dependable on the road, and they have tubes so it's close to that 'old' sound. Oh, I use a wah-wah pedal but nothing else, no distortion pedals or anything like that."

On his debut LP *Let Love Rule*, Lenny played most of the instruments, "so my equipment list is really long. I played Gretsch drums, a four-piece set, a Fender Jazz bass and a classic Rick- enbacker bass. And, unnnh, a Hammond B-3 organ and a Fender Rhodes electric piano, plus Wurlitzer and Farfisa organs. I also used a Gibson SG and a Fender Telecaster, both vintage models from the '60s."

A&R PROJECT

[cont'd from page 90] all kinds of drama," says Ralbovsky.

"A record which we call *The Brown Album* was made with David Lindley, Dave Mattacks and John Doe—not at great expense of money or time. It was lackluster. The songs weren't up to snuff and the production values were very disappointing. I sat down with Hiatt and said, 'Buddy, I dunno. Maybe a couple of the ballads...' And he said, 'I've been thinking about this. You're right. We shouldn't put this out. We should start over.'" Glyn Johns came in to produce, and Hiatt made *Slow Turning* with his touring band, the Goners. "We're going to be working with Johns again," notes Ralbovsky. "I'm very excited about the next record," which should be out by summer. "Hands down, these are the best songs he's ever had on an album."

When inheriting a roster of names like Iggy Pop, Joe Jackson and Sting, "You can't

just go, 'Hi, I'm the new guy—your career's in my hands now.' It's got to be a process of gaining respect and trust. That takes time."

Interestingly, on Janet Jackson's *Rhythm Nation 1814*, by far the label's most important project of 1989, the A&R department took a decidedly hands-off position. "Basically we gave it over to Jimmy [Jam] and Terry [Lewis] and said, 'You write 'em, you make 'em. We're there for you and we trust you.' They really delivered," Ralbovsky says with pleasure that might be mistaken for relief. "We get involved in 12-inch remixes and the single selection sequence but, apart from that, they pretty much did it on their own."

With Jackson's album already past the three million mark and a long-awaited tour ready to roll, A&M must now concentrate on building a roster of similarly profitable performers. "If you have seven or eight [acts] that are platinum or multi-platinum," says Ralbovsky, "you're going to get at least three of those records in a calendar year. It's an incredible challenge creating the new round of those superstars." Reflecting on his first two years at A&M, he says, "It's been a major turnaround, and I think the artist roster is beginning to show it. It'll show even stronger in the new year." M

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