

LIVE! TONIGHT

**Tom
Petty**
And The
Heartbreakers

'N Sync

Barenaked Ladies

Nickelodeon's ALL THAT Tour

Jewel

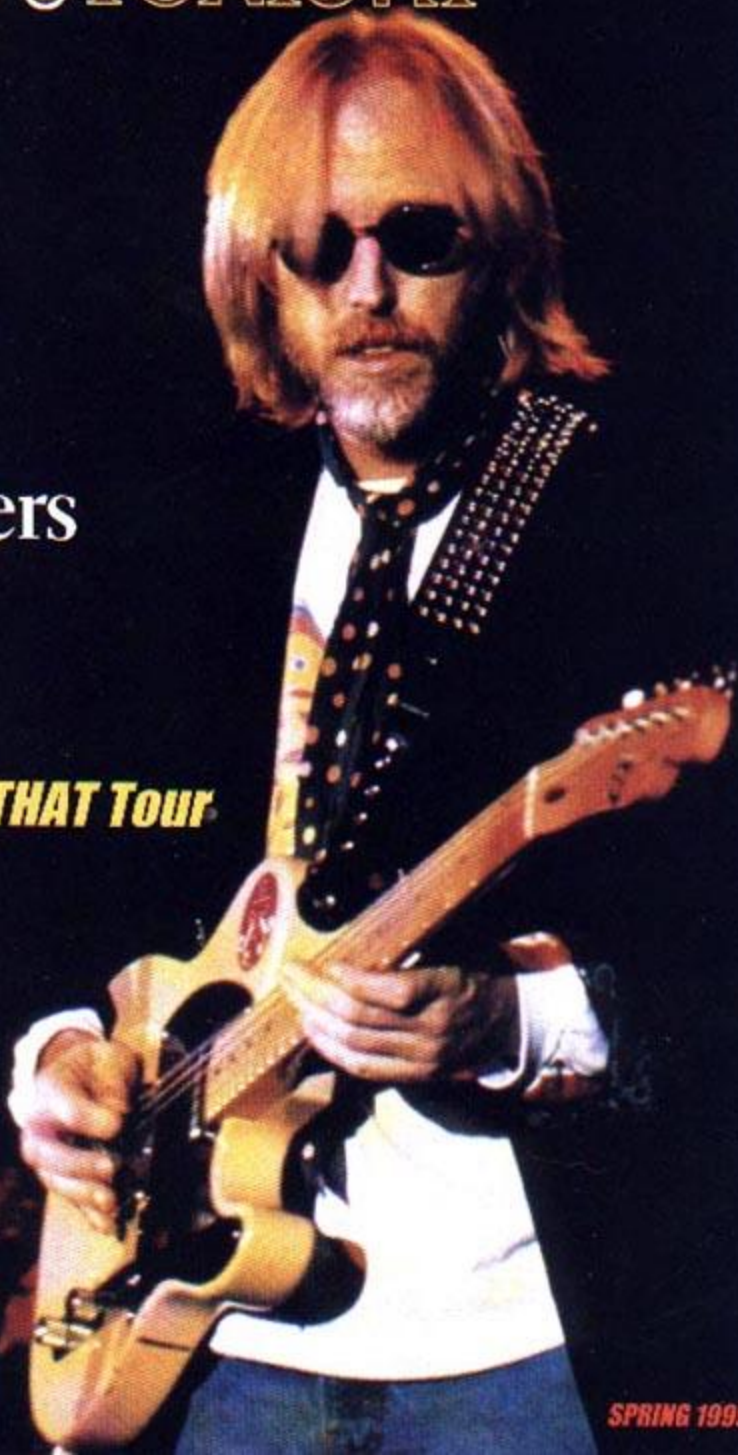
R.E.M.

PLUS

The 90s' Top Tours

Crossword Puzzle

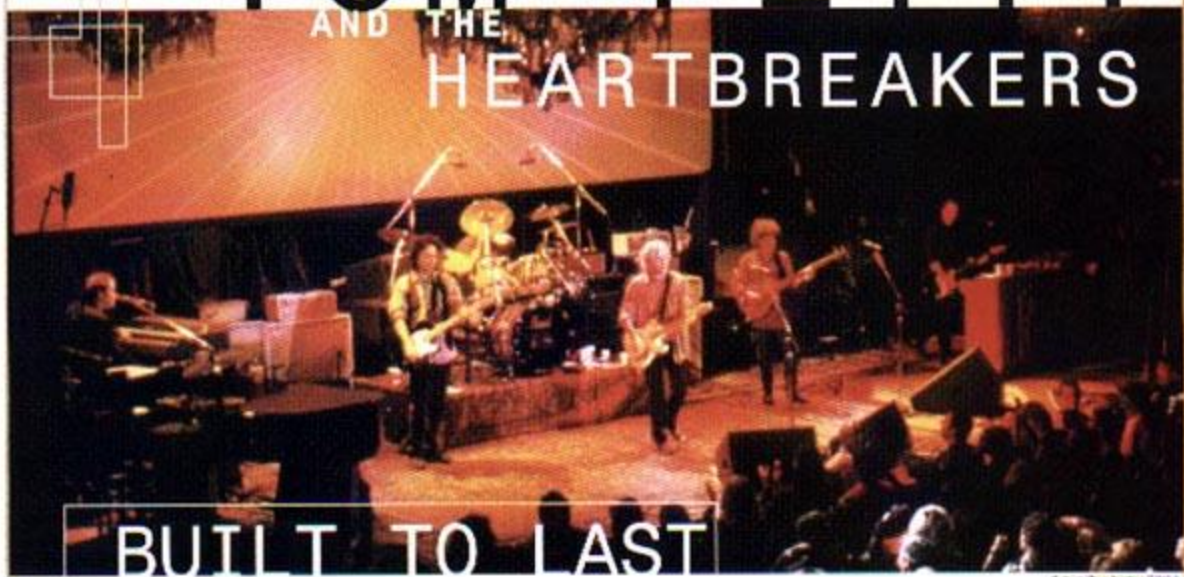
Music Genius Quiz



SPRING 1999

TOM PETTY

AND THE
HEARTBREAKERS



BUILT TO LAST

April 1 marked the 25th anniversary of the day Tom Petty and a ragged band of young musicians departed Gainesville, Florida, in a caravan headed for the mythical lights of Hollywood in search of fun, fame and a record deal.

It took a few years, but they found all three.

Since that fateful cross-country road-trip, Tom Petty and his Heartbreakers have perpetuated a distinctive vein of music that's part Byrdsian grace, part fiery orange and purple California sunset, part Southern redneck snarl, part reckless rockabilly elation and all American rock & roll.

Echo, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' 10th studio album, was released on April 13. It's a collection of songs drenched with tales of loneliness and of resilient American Girls, of reflection and escape—an organic blend of the melancholy scent of Petty's second solo effort, 1994's *Wildflowers*, and the spunk of the ensemble's 1987 effort, *Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)*. But *Echo*'s restless spirit is indicative of

what the group has endured in recent years: they ended an 11-year relationship with MCA to join the Warner Bros.' stable, stickman Stan Lynch relinquished his position after 20 years, and Petty's 22-year marriage ended. The tumult has resulted in an album of uncompromising faith and depth. It looks like it's going to be a good summer for rolling down the car windows and blaring some *Echo* through the night air.

For all the acclaim the tow-headed band-leader receives, he has achieved his success in great part due to his collaboration with the Heartbreakers, a band that rivals institutions like Booker T. & The MG's (the legendary Stax Records house band) in its reputation as one of the finest backlines in the rock canon (Bob Dylan obviously thought so, when he asked Petty and the Heartbreakers to back him up on his two-year *Knocked Out Loaded* world tour in 1986-87). Friends from Petty's wayward post-high school years, both guitarist Mike Campbell and keyman Benmont Tench were part of that Hollywood-bound caravan back in 1974. On a level that transcends their music, the loyalty and intimacy of the bond between the men is apparent. "We are friends and brothers because we've grown up together doing this," declares Petty. "We stick together mainly because we love this band, and I

think all of us know that we're not gonna walk into something like this again in our life."

When they aren't fulfilling their sworn duty as Heartbreakers, Campbell and Tench are two of the most sought-after session men in the business. Campbell's songs and brilliantly instinctive (yet understated) guitar work and Tench's warm organ strains and plucky rock piano chords have graced works by artists including Bob Dylan, Elvis Costello, Don Henley, Bonnie Raitt, Johnny Cash, Taj Mahal and The Wallflowers, among many (many) others. Bassist Howie Epstein (whose high harmonies are as much a part of the TP and the Heartbreakers' sound as Petty's Dixie drawl) has been spending time in the producer's chair recently, having overseen albums by his wife, Carlene Carter (daughter of June Carter Cash and step-daughter of Johnny Cash), John Prince, and singer/songwriter Rosie Flores. Longtime touring

drummer Steve Ferrone and multi-instrumentalist Scott Thurston are not only welcome additions to the Heartbreakers' roadshows, they also performed an integral part in the recording of *Echo*.

Petty and his posse haven't mounted a major tour since they went out in support of *Wildflowers* in 1994, but

they did try to work in some live shows between their various side projects. In early 1997, they declared themselves the "house band" at San Francisco's historic 1,200-seat Fillmore theater—and sold out an unprecedented 20 performances. And because they had such a great time, they did it again this winter, taking over the Fillmore for seven marathon SRO concerts as a little warmup for this summer's big tour.

So, 25 years into the adventure, what does a Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers concert deliver? It's an example of the essential symbiotic relationship between rock & roll and its audience. It's nothing but magic to hear 15,000 fans—after Petty prompts them with the first line of the classic "Breakdown" ("It's alright if you love me, it's alright if you don't...")—to finish the *entire* song, even splitting into harmony and dividing again, half doing lead and half doing background vocals, all to the Heartbreakers' able accompaniment. As he's apt to say, about halfway through the audience's buoyant performance, "You're gonna put me out of a job." We hope not.

—Melissa Blazek

HE'S THE ONE: Petty's Cinematic Moments

"I don't want to be a musician that turns into an actor," Tom Petty told a caller this spring during the SFX Radio Network World Premiere of *Echo*. "It's just something to do if there's nothing else to do. It's kind of fun and I like film a lot, so I get to learn and hang around."

Long before he hit his mark as the scruffy, wild-haired mayor of Bridge City in Kevin Costner's post-apocalyptic epic *The Postmen*, Petty's love of film landed him upon a few other screens, both big (*FX* and *Made In Heaven*) and small ("The Larry Sanders Show" and "The Gary Shandling Show").

It's easy to see that Petty has had strong cinematic inclinations since early in his career. He and The Heartbreakers—who, ironically, got swept into the breaking wave of photogenic, skinny-tied New Wave bands that burst upon the scene in the early '80s—made a deep impression on America at the dawn of the MTV age, with a slew of extraordinarily creative and memorable videos (who could forget the Mad Max-flavored clip for "You Got Lucky" and the Alice In Wonderlandian "Don't Come Around Here No More"?). For his vision and originality, on the heels of the darkly riveting video for "Mary Jane's Last Dance," Petty received MTV's Video Vanguard Award in 1994 for career excellence in the medium of video art.

Still, Petty's most impressive work for the world of film is the score he wrote—in 30 days, no less—for She's *The One*, young filmmaker Ed Burns' major motion picture follow-up to his well-received indie debut, *The Brothers McMullen*. And while the soundtrack stands solidly on its own as a piece of music, what it does best is ultimately complement the film's mood and storyline—something that doesn't happen quite often enough these days.

Will we see Petty acting up on the big screen again anytime soon? While he says he thinks he will sometime in the future, he does have a day job. "I did get asked to do [a film recently] with Billy Bob Thornton. But I had to back out at the last second," he said during the same SFX Radio Network special, laughing, "because the record company really does prefer that I finish these CDs."



The latest CD from Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers is *Echo*, on Warner Bros.