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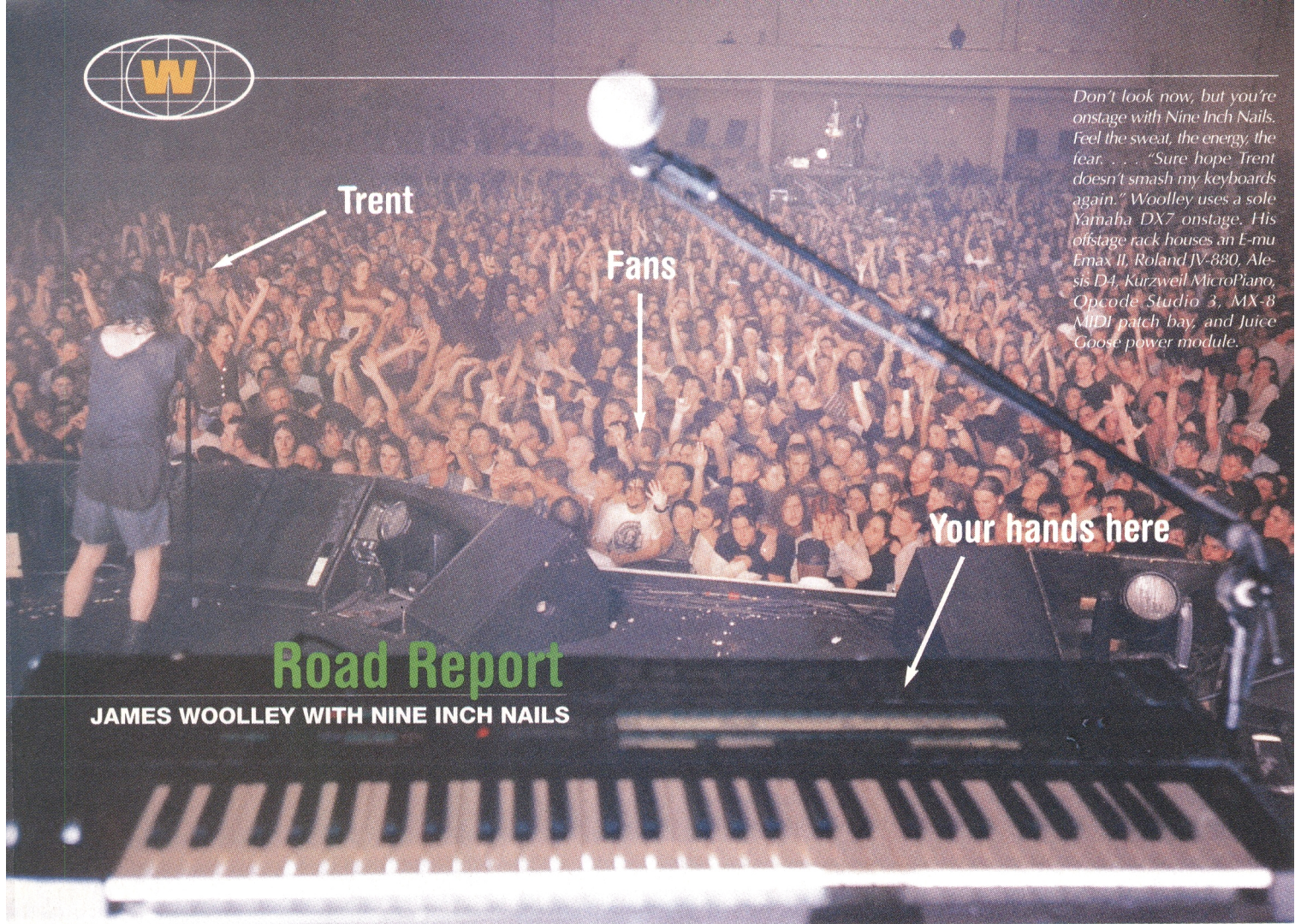
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Don't look now, but you're onstage with Nine Inch Nails. Feel the sweat, the energy, the fear. . . . "Sure hope Trent doesn't smash my keyboards again." Woolley uses a sole Yamaha DX7 onstage. His offstage rack houses an E-mu Emax II, Roland JV-880, Alesis D4, Kurzweil MicroPiano, Opcode Studio 3, MX-8 MIDI patch bay, and Juice Goose power module.

Road Report

JAMES WOOLLEY WITH NINE INCH NAILS



A graduate of Chicago's Academy of Performing Arts, keyboardist James Woolley toured with Die Warzau (profiled in *Keyboard's* March '92 issue) before joining Nine Inch Nails in 1991. We caught up with him during the *Downward Spiral* tour.

Gear. "It's very minimal. We have three Emax IIs onstage, and Trent's got a [Prophet] VS is his rig that he uses for the end of 'Slavery' and 'Closer.' My rig is pretty simple: All I do is trigger an Emax II, a Roland JV-880, and a Kurzweil MicroPiano module from a Yamaha DX7. Everybody else is triggering Emax IIs, so we're all backed up on each other's drive. The Emaxes are easy to use, and we already had a lot of the old songs stored in Emax format, so it wasn't a big hassle. That's it."

Patches. "It worked out cool because I got to go into the studio [prior to the tour], pick out the parts I wanted to play, and dump them all into an Emax II. For every song I use a different Emax bank. Some songs have more than one preset, but it's very minimal. It's not a heavy technical or chops-oriented gig really; it's more energy and attitude. A little melody here, a hit there. What I'll do is take one sample and map it to a group of keys so if I hit one note it'll be thin, and if I hit a cluster of notes it'll come in thicker, phased. I trigger a few loops, but not that many, really."



The Nine Inch Nails power station. Left rack: Furman PL8 power module, two Alesis D4s, Akai S3000, Tascam DA-88, Yamaha MV-802 mixer, and audio modules from Toa, Crest, and Rane. Right rack: Furman PL8 power module, Alesis ADAT, and Alesis MicroVerb.

In Sync. With the exception of one song, the entire show is played to a click track that only drummer Chris Vrenna hears onstage. Vrenna told us recently: "We still use tapes live, although since we're a five-piece band now, there's less stuff on tape than there was before. The drums are all live, the guitars are all live, the vocals are all live. It's mostly the bleepity-bleepity-bleep keyboard loops and synth bass that we keep on tape. We couldn't really expect someone to play the sixteenth-note bass lines live. And, to cover every keyboard part, we'd need 20 guys onstage. We thought about

using an ADAT, but we ended up going with the Tascam DA-88 because it seemed a lot more road-worthy. [Ed. Note: Yes, that's an ADAT tucked into one of the racks at left, but its role is subservient to the DA-88s]. We felt that the Hi8 transport mechanism was more sturdy. VHS mechanisms are really only used in VCRs, which sit on top of TVs and never get moved. Hi8 mechanisms are used in camcorders, which you throw in a bag and take on vacation and throw around the beach. With the ADAT, you can only get about 40 minutes worth of material on a tape. With the DA-88, you can get an hour and 48 minutes, which means we never have to do a tape change during the show. Even though we use a lot of technology, we like to keep it as simple as possible. It's punk rock technology."

Horror Stories. Trent Reznor is notorious for breaking gear . . . and bandmates. Nine Inch Nails' live show was once described as a hockey match with guitars. Woolley recalls the time he was KO'd. "Lollapalooza [1991]: Trent smashed his guitar across my keyboard, and I wasn't even playing at the time. I looked up and the headstock of his guitar broke off and cuffed me right between the eyes. Blood was everywhere." As for the keyboard, "Those old DX7s are steel, so it only left a small dent."

For more on Nine Inch Nails, see our March '94 cover story.

—Greg Rule