

## THE POWER OF PROACTIVE ARRANGEMENT

From her GRAMMY-winning records of the '70s and '80s through her more recent work in television, film and musical theater, Melissa Manchester has remained one of our most admired singer/songwriters. Her latest credits include the score for Disney's *Lady and the Tramp 2* and a performance at the *Million Mom March* in Washington, D.C. She is currently writing material for a new album, due next year.

### Have your songwriting methods changed over the years?

Yes and no. I still write my music out long-hand in standard notation. I like the meditative aspect of that process—the way it makes you slow down and study what you're writing. I know you can do that in various computer programs, but I like pencils and an empty page in my lap. Unlike a lot of songwriters today, I never turn on a groove to write a song.

### Then why do you use a Yamaha PSR8000 keyboard?

Because now, after a melody has gelled, I can turn on the machine and get fast mini-demos that give me clues as to which settings best evoke the inner life of the lyrics. I'm one of the lowest tech people you will ever have the pleasure to meet, but I love using the keyboard as a sketchpad. I put my simple little arrangement in, develop it and then pass it on to an arranger to use as a general point of departure.

### Have the keyboard's arranging tools ever surprised you by taking a song in a direction it might not otherwise have gone?

Yes. I just demoed a song I'd written about Alice Toklas and Gertrude Stein. When I first wrote it, I thought it would be very swirling and large and romantic. But when I put it on the Yamaha, I found that the song actually wanted to be much more intimate. Once it took on that intimacy, I found I was right there in the world of my characters and I was able to complete the entire song very quickly. That was very, very cool.

### What should we expect from your new record?

My goal is to, at last, become authentic. [Laughs.] When you're in this business a long time, you sometimes take circuitous paths. You can feel you're losing yourself. Now I feel like I'm back on track. Right now, I'm trying to conceptualize the sound of my record. I think it will be quiet. I want to get quieter while the rest of the world gets louder.



When speaking with Melissa, we asked if the PSR8000 was her first Yamaha portable keyboard. She said that she had used the "smaller" Yamahas for years. She said that she never goes on the road without her Yamaha portable keyboard. Melissa and other writers and friends would get together in hotel rooms with their Yamaha portables and write or just have fun. We asked if we could see her old PSR. Melissa said that it was in her road case but when we looked, the case was empty. It turned out it was in her daughter's room. We got a great shot of Melissa and her humble Yamaha PSR520 and wondered about the wonderful music that started there. "Has a broken key." Melissa says she did it. "Keyboard still works great!"



## Will the Real CLIFFORD CARTER Please Stand Up?

Pop fans know Clifford Carter as James Taylor's longtime keyboardist and they've probably heard him on records by Rod Stewart, Carly Simon and Roseanne Cash. Yet he's also worked with such jazz heavyweights as Yusuf Lateef, Hank Crawford, George Benson, Eddie Palmieri, Herbie Mann and Don Cherry. Which is the real Carter?

"Both", he insists: "I've always straddled the two worlds. I enjoy songs and the spirit of improvisation. My favorite times are when both are going on."

Carter refuses to characterize himself as predominantly a pianist or electronic keyboardist. "I've always taken both very seriously," he says. "I started on piano when I was six, but I was playing an Acetone organ in bands when I was thirteen. When I was in college, I concentrated on piano again, but I used electronic keyboards when I started gigging." The two worlds collide onstage with Taylor, where Carter plays a Yamaha acoustic piano that also transmits MIDI data to external synths and sound modules.



There's talk of a new Taylor tour next year, for which Carter plans to use his Yamaha S80 Synthesizer. "It has really good bread-and-butter sounds, like acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer, clavinet and organ. It also has very

usable strings, synth pads, orchestral sounds, and there's even a feature that makes it sound like you're playing through an amp. Yet it's also great for programming your own sounds. I don't use many synth sounds on the James Taylor gig, but I got to use a lot of them on a recent Rod Stewart session. I played keyboard bass, Rhodes, spatial pads, percussive filtered synth comps and the heart of most of the sounds came from the S80. I was able to use it like I would an old analog synth. It's versatile."

And if anyone is qualified to speak about versatility, it's Carter. "Sometimes it drives me crazy," he says, "but I've surrendered to the idea that my career just seems to go in many different ways. In the end, you just have to be true to the spirit of the music. You have to recognize the music's needs and surrender to them."

### S Series is Expanded and Expandable

S Series sonic power is now available in two formats: the original S80, 88 note weighted action version (MSRP \$1995) and the new 61 note synth action version (MSRP \$1295).

The S30 has all the same sounds that Clifford, Steve and Daryl are raving about in this issue. Plus the S80, S30, SW1000XG, CS6X and CS6R can be expanded with Modular Synthesis Plug in Boards to inexpensively and easily add more polyphony, effects and sounds to your system.