

COLOR IT ROCK AND ROLL

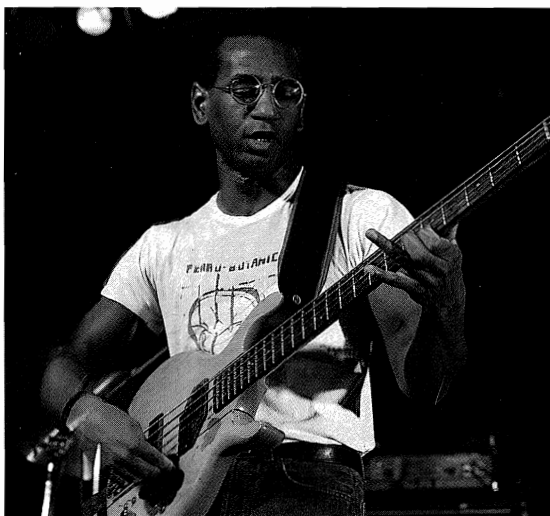
WHEN LIVING COLOUR opens for the Rolling Stones at Shea Stadium this week, they may look like just four guys alone on a big stage, rocking as hard as they can.

What you can't see are the dozens of other black bands and artists behind them in spirit. That spirit comes from the Black Rock Coalition, formed by Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid in 1985 to fight what he saw as record-industry prejudice against black rock and rollers. As Living Colour's first album, *Vivid*, climbed the charts this past summer, Reid often said the BRC's work wasn't done.

Bass player Jared Nickerson knows about the strange reactions black rockers can

get. "In 1981, on the very first date I played in New York with an Ohio band called Human Switchboard, people were asking our guitar player, 'Oh, you've got a black guy playing bass—are you a funk band?' We came out and played straight-up rock and roll, and it freaked people out."

Nickerson is now the BRC's director of operations, helping organize seminars on everything from financial planning to eardrum



Nickerson on stage with the J. J. Jumpers.

protection—and as many live showcases as possible—for the coalition's fifteen bands.

Though Living Colour has been the first BRC band to gain national attention, three others—the Uptown Atomics, Blues Slant, and Nickerson's own J. J. Jumpers—are on the verge of signing recording contracts, and a Los Angeles chapter of the coalition has just opened.

Perhaps Nickerson's greatest contribution to breaking the white rock mold is his

frantic schedule. "This Friday, I'm going to try to be at the Cat Club at seven with Strange Cave, at the Knitting Factory at nine with Gods & Monsters, then at the Lismar Lounge at midnight with Raining Violets," he says, a little short of breath. On Halloween, Nickerson and the J. J. Jumpers are at The World.

Originally from Cleveland, Nickerson, 36, now chases his dream from an apartment in Hoboken. "For me, the idea is to reinvigorate blacks to play the music they feel like playing without being brainwashed by an industry that says you have to play pop or you have to be a love, soul-ballad 'Quiet Storm' performer. That is offensive to me," Nickerson says. "I've been playing rock and roll all my life. It's not a hobby. It's what I love and how I make my living." LAUREN SPENCER

SCREEN GEMS

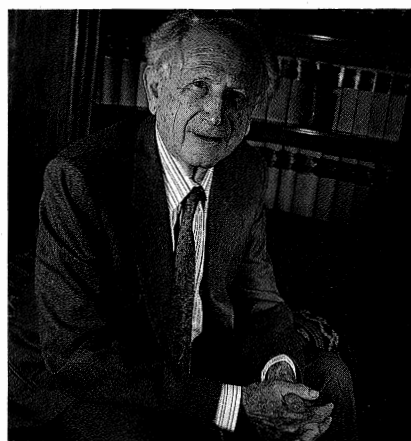
Woody's Bergmann Period

IN THE HIGHER REACHES OF A plush upper Fifth Avenue apartment building is the home and office of Martin Bergmann, a Manhattan psychoanalyst and New York University professor. After 40 years as a doctor, teacher, and writer, Bergmann has added another stripe to his impressive list of accomplishments. He has just made his acting debut as philosophy professor Louis Levy in Woody Allen's *Crimes and Misdemeanors*.

Bergmann became *Crimes*'s moral spokesman after one of his private psychiatric students suggested him to Allen's casting director, Juliet Taylor. He says he agrees wholeheartedly with Levy's outlook on life—which is only fitting, since Levy's words are almost entirely Bergmann's own.

Except for Bergmann's final voice-over, none of the neophyte actor's scenes were scripted. For his one day of

shooting, Allen sat Bergmann at a desk and asked him questions on the nature of God, love, and suicide. As the camera rolled, Bergmann recalls, Allen observed his spontaneous responses "like a student listening to his master or guru." Only after filming



Bergmann in his office.

ended did Allen intimate that Bergmann's character was modeled on Jewish-Italian

Holocaust writer Primo Levi.

Born in Prague, Bergmann immigrated to America in time to serve in the U.S. Army during World War II. He says he has no interest in acting as a second career, though at another time the idea might have been intriguing. "It's a little late now,"

Bergmann says. "You can see how old I am."

Asked whether he would like to be Woody Allen's psychiatrist, the normally effusive Bergmann is momentarily speechless. "That's a tough one," he replies after collecting his thoughts. "I know he's been in and out of analysis for many years. For me,

creative people make the most interesting patients. He'd be fascinating." JOEL WEINBERG

OVERHEARD

ON AN AMTRAK TRAIN TO Washington, a man turned to his seatmate and asked, "Do you have the time?"

"It is not possible to possess time" came the reply.

"Well, just this once, why don't we try."

"In that case, it is 8:30."