

hear!

# World music in a magazine

Anyone who likes alternative rock reads Spin, Alternative Press or Option. If they prefer R&B, they scan Vibe. If they shake their natty dreads to reggae and African music, they might peruse The Beat. And if they like dance music, they might thumb through Urb. But what magazine does a fan read who wants to know about various types of world music?

There aren't too many options out there. There's Dirty Linen, but it has more of a folk focus. So that's why **Alicia Cohen** started RhythmMusic magazine in 1992. Covering everything from **Paul Simon's** failed musical "The Capeman," how Madison Avenue is using world music, and how the pop music world is dealing with Tibet, to stories on **Peter Gabriel**, **Cesaria Evora**, **Loreena McKennitt**, **Ravi Shankar**, **Robbie Robertson**, **Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan** and **Madredeus**, RhythmMusic takes a pan-continent, multi-genre approach.

"At the time I started it, people

CARY DARLING'S

## RHYTHM NATION

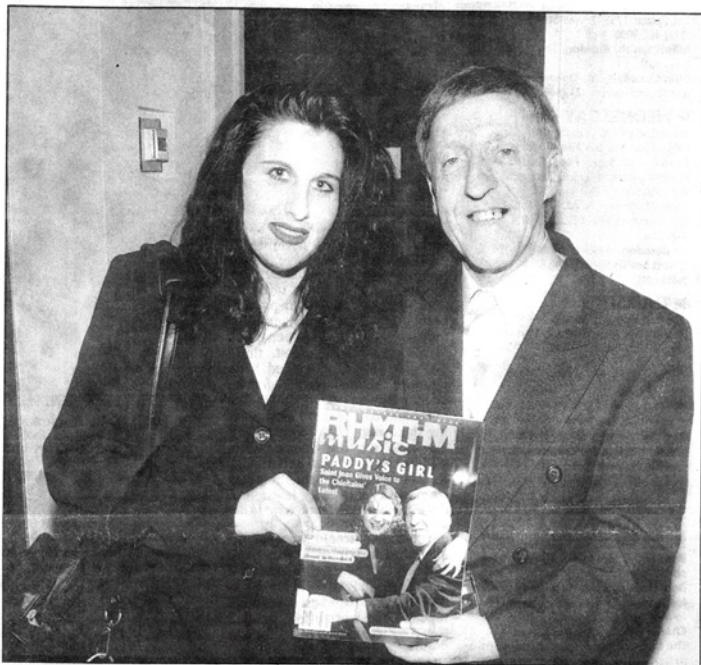
were putting all world music under 'Celtic' and 'reggae' sections at Tower," Cohen recalled with a laugh from her New York office. "That gives you some understanding of where world music was."

Since then, world music has grown as a genre, influencing dance music (in the ethno-ambient of groups such as **Deep Forest**) and pop music (in the Celtic-flavored pop of **McKennitt** and **Enya**) while acts such as **Evora** and **Khan** moved to headline larger venues in major markets.

"People say world music is a niche, but I often say, 'Is it really a niche?'" she said. "What are the statistics for the people buying Latin, Celtic, folk and African music? Like **Loreena**, she's platinum, now she's shoved in the pop bin. That's world music, but people don't want to credit it."

RhythmMusic has expanded with the genre, beginning as a newsletter distributed free in the Boston area; now a slick, nationally distributed, monthly, 56-page magazine costing \$3.50 at newsstands. Each issue comes with a compilation CD as well. Cohen says circulation is around 60,000.

Cohen says her interest in world music stretches to her Miami childhood. "I went to a record store in Opalocka and bought a record of pygmy music," she remembered. "Also, I used to make collages from Na-



**GOING GLOBAL:** Alicia Cohen, here with the Chieftains' Paddy Maloney, founded RhythmMusic magazine for young-adult fans of world music.

tional Geographic and Rolling Stone and cut up atlases and magazines. That's how I got exposed to other cultures."

In college, she planned to be an anthropologist but thought that was a bit too academic. "I learned anthropologists were more observers, not participants. When you learn about African music, there's more participation. You don't watch Latin salsa. You dance it."

Of course, just how you dance it has become the source of controversy in world music circles. The increasing use of ethnic and tribal sounds in dance music has some purists angry. A case in point is France's **Deep Forest**, which takes samples of African, Latin and Eastern European folk musics and adds electro grooves under them.

"I think what **Deep Forest** is doing is great on one hand. It's making all kinds of music extremely accessible," Cohen said. "On another note, they sell a lot of CDs, so why don't they tour with musicians from other countries? They could get more justice for world music by bringing them on tour with them. All in



**OUTLOOK:** RhythmMusic takes a pan-continent, multigenre approach.

all, though, what they're doing is positive."

As for the future, Cohen wants to get circulation to 100,000, include more socio-political issues vis-a-vis world music (such as Tibet), and tap into the consciousness of the 25-35-year-old pop fans who may be feeling that Spin and Vibe are just a little too adolescent for their maturing

tastes. "They've been through that hip-hop, punk or progressive rock stage and we hope when they are done with Spin and Vibe, they want something that reflects what their lives are like. That's why we have a travel and food column."

### AND THE BEAT GOES ON

Fans of Mexican rock have some shows to look forward to: Monterrey rap act **Control Machete** is due to play JC Fandango in Anaheim on Sunday night, while heavily anticipated Mexican alt-rock/hip-hop/lounge act **Plastilina Mosh** makes its L.A. debut June 7 at the House of Blues, opening for Argentine rockers **Todos Tus Muertos**. Then **Plastilina** returns June 15 to the John Anson Ford Theatre with **Cornershop** and Venezuelan retro-rockers **Invisibles**.

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