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## Y&T

**T**his kid comes up and says to me, '... Jesus, you guys, you melted my face off! Cracked me up. In fact, that's what we call our publishing company now, Facemelting Music. And that's precisely what it is,' explains David Meniketti, lead guitarist for Y&T. Though he's talking about a reaction to a live show, "facemelting music" is also an apt description for Y&T's debut album on A&M, *EARTHSHAKER*.

"They call us the 'Oakland Raiders of Rock,'" says Dave Meniketti, who handles both lead vocals and lead guitar. "Not only because of our underdog image and aggressive stage presence, but we're also all from the East Bay." Meniketti was born and raised in Oakland, as were Phil Kennemore (bass and vocals), Leonard Haze (drums), and Joey Alves (rhythm guitar and vocals).

Meniketti and Haze started as Yesterday & Today in 1972, playing Top 40 clubs with, as drummer Haze recalls, "considerable restraint," regarding the dredges of playing other people's pop tunes over and over. "It wasn't 'til we hooked up with Joey and Phil in '73 that we found our release. We really cut loose and started playing the way we felt like playing. It was luck and instinct that started this band—luck and instinct and rock 'n' roll."

Keyed-up intensity is the trademark of this blitzkrieg quartet who forged their early triumphs by building a large, rabid following through constant concert dates, and initiated their own local concert scene in the subterranean element of San Francisco's East Bay. They would rent their own halls, print their own tickets and line up other bands, handling all the promotion themselves.

With the release of their first LP in 1974, titled simply, *Yesterday & Today*, Y&T immediately transcended the local band syndrome, receiving national airplay and media attention, and playing concert dates with acts like Kiss, Boston, Montrose and AC/DC. Their second LP, *Struck Down*, made international charts and successfully spread the Y&T sound across the globe.

Y&T's blistering stage style invariably causes near hysteria—not by merely strutting like peacocks, but by involving their audiences in the entire tornado. By playing for, with, and not just to their audiences, they've earned the reputation of grinding out as one fan calls it, "truly benevolent rock 'n' roll."

*EARTHSHAKER* extends this intensity, setting Y&T apart as uncommon rock stylists. The songs are accessible, but not simplistic, with immediate hooks and tight, quick stops by drummer Haze that are truly "earthshaking." Lead guitarist Meniketti's incendiary solos on songs like "Dirty Girl" and "Rescue Me," are unfettered by cheap and easy parlor tricks, while Kennemore's bass and Alve's rhythm guitar drive the band with skill and savagery. "We've taken chances with this album," says Meniketti. "We made an almost conscious effort to lose control—to make it tight, but keep it live. Too much of what you hear these days is studio-dry and over-produced. You can lose it easy, if you don't do it right."

*EARTHSHAKER* is no mere exercise in overkill. This timely music defies those sleepy critics who have turned away from urgent, heavy metal; the ones who can't remember things about the heart and heat of rock 'n' roll. Or to put it bluntly, here is Y&T: Forget about keeping the party polite—turn up the sound of tomorrow, tonight.

