

UNING IN TO THE NBA / Alan Parsons fires up crowds

Arenas seek just the right music for the masses

The lights dim. The crowd stands and yells. The P.A. announcer's voice becomes a growl as the home team's starters take the floor to the strains of Michael Bolton's anemic cover version of *When A Man Loves A Woman*.

What's wrong with this picture?

Choosing music for basketball games isn't brain surgery, but it's obvious that some choices won't work. Around NBA arenas, many teams seem to have decided that copying is the best solution.

The Chicago Bulls have the prototype for jarring player introductions. The announcer introduces the visiting team's starters as Pink Floyd's tape-loop experiment *On The Run* plays. Then the stadium goes dark, the menacing Bulls logo glares out of the scoreboard and the eerie Alan Parsons Project song *Sirius* starts. By the time the announcer begins, the crowd noise is overwhelming.

Simply put, it works. The fans go wild, and the players enjoy it.

"It's a really exciting introduction," said Jayburn Grady of the Bulls' promotions department. "We've heard no complaints yet." Complaints, no. Copycats, yes.

**Beau
DURE**



The Bulls must have gotten a little sick of Alan Parsons by the end of last season. After the Bulls had been introduced in Charlotte, the lights went out and a giant beehive model started buzzing. Then . . . the same music — Alan Parsons' *Sirius*.

Said the announcers on Chicago's WGN: "That seemed a little familiar."

Charlotte dropped the Alan Parsons song at the end of the regular season. After experimenting with a Van Halen song, the team now takes the floor to a remixed version of Duran Duran's *View to a Kill*.

The players instigated the change, said Jim Wilson of the Hornets' office. "They didn't want to copy the Bulls."

But the Bulls found plenty of flattery through imitation in the NBA Finals. In Chicago, it's Alan Parsons' *Sirius*. In Phoenix, it's

Alan Parsons' *Sirius*. Throw in the fact that Parsons was an engineer on Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*, from which *On The Run* is taken, and one must wonder if the NBA has the venerable musician stowed away in a lab somewhere.

This season, the Bulls' office asked others to cease and desist.

"I didn't know Chicago owned it," Kenny Glenn of the Suns said wryly.

"We did try to change it this year, but not because of Chicago. We tried to find a piece that would beat it, and we came really close. But we decided to go with what the crowd wants."

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The players seem happy as well. Glenn said some players, including Dan Majerle and Cedric Ceballos, listened to the new music and urged him to keep *Sirius*.

"I think every team should use this," Glenn said. "It really fires the crowd up."

"We're in the business to entertain our fans."

The Washington Bullets have a more unique player introduction. The opposing

team takes the floor to an appropriately intimidating song — the theme music from *Mission: Impossible*.

The Bullets' theme music is still up in the air. This season, the team often has used the Allman Brothers' instrumental *Jessica*. A better song may be hard to come by, but is the laid-back guitar melody really what players need to hear before banging with Shaquille O'Neal?

Glenn Morrill of the Bullets' office said the team also has used the Average White Band's *Pick Up The Pieces* and some original music this season. "We're not married to any of them yet."

Morrill said the players haven't put up much of a fuss about the music. The other USAir Arena tenant, hockey's Washington Capitals, are another story. "They complain about music all the time."

And there haven't been any complaints from the Bullets' resident bullhorn-in-the-stands, Robin Ficker, Morrill said. "He doesn't hear anything but himself."

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