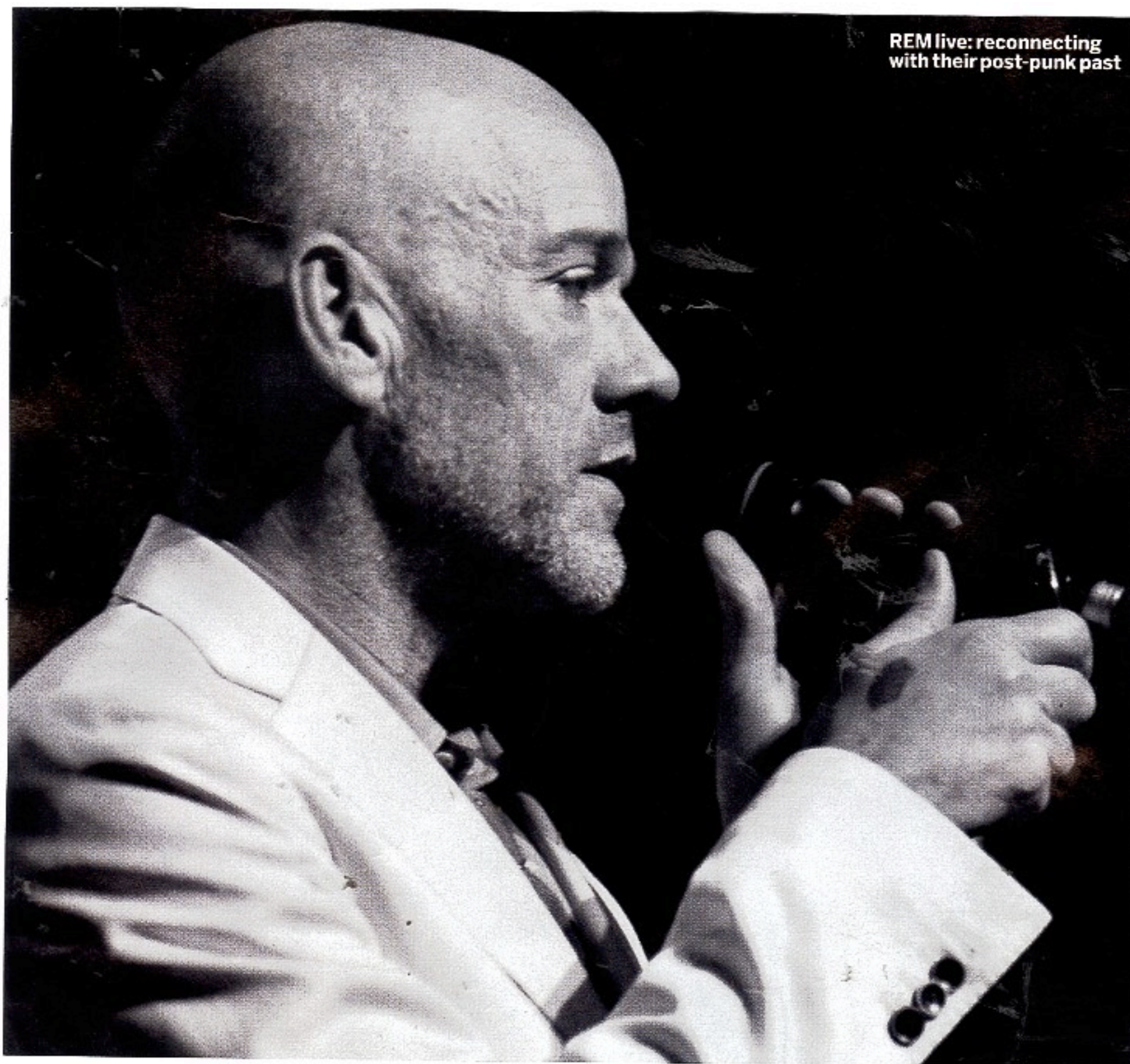


**REM****Live At The Olympia**

WARNER BROS.

★★★★

**Re-inspired veterans accelerate through their rich, durable body of work** Two summers ago, seeking to restore the hazy vitality of their early years while working on what would become 2008's *Accelerate*, REM jetted to producer Jacknife Lee's hometown of Dublin for five nights of "live rehearsals". The sets intermixed the new songs with material drawn almost entirely from the glory years, drawing heavily from 1984's *Reckoning* and 1985's *Fables Of The Reconstruction*. As the shows progressed, the band was surely delighted to find that the new songs coexisted seamlessly with the classics. In 39 tracks over two CDs, the punk-fuelled folk-rock group that had ruled the '80s along with U2 magically reappears. Longtime auxiliary member Scott McCaughey is invaluable, especially on backing vocals, locking in with the great harmony singer Mike Mills. If this is REM's idea of retrenchment, more power to 'em.

*Bud Scoppa*

REM live: reconnecting with their post-punk past