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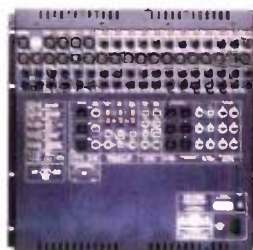
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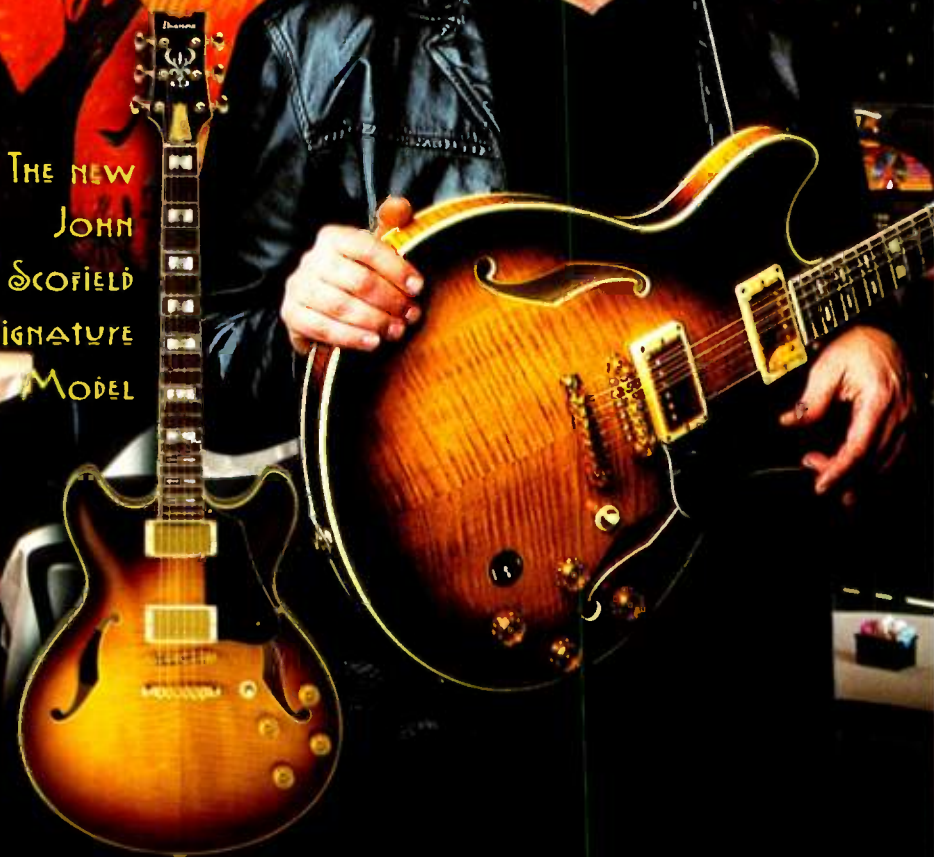
Margaret Malandrucelo

Cover photo by Roy Timm.

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feed BACK

Rubberman Bounces On

Dear CM,

I enjoyed the article about Montréal-based band Rubberman! Their CD is pretty impressive and from experience, they ARE really passionate and friendly guys. Hope to here about more going for them in the future.

Emily
 Pte-Clairre, PQ

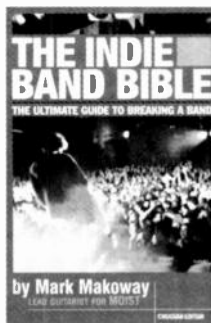
**Ed. I'm sure Kevin Young will be glad to hear that you enjoyed his article ... he did a great job covering Quebec's musician market.*

Band for Hire

Dear CM,

Thanks for letting us readers know about *The Indie Band Bible*. It's great to see a book released for us Canadians, as most publications out there don't focus on our home and native land. I had a chance to thumb through the book at a local store, and I'll be buying it soon (when I get the money). I have a band, and we're trying to get gigs nearby. The music business seems like some secret society that is really tough to crack. Hopefully this helps.

Untitled e-mail
 Toronto, ON



Selling Out

Dear CM,

Why didn't you put Sum41 on the cover of your last issue? They're selling way more records than Big Wreck. Come on, get it together.

Untitled e-mail
 Vancouver, BC



**Ed. Sorry to hear you only want to see artists on the cover that sell the most records, and that you're brave enough to not put your name on a letter. Big Wreck's band members are some of the finest musicians out there, which is why Ian appeared on the cover. CD sales aren't everything...*

Where's the Band?

Dear CM,

What the hell happened to the rest of Big Wreck? Is Ian a cover hog? It would have been great to see the whole group featured. Bands work as a unit, and they should be covered that way. Too many magazines only put the frontman on the cover, and the other players in the band get left out. I hope Ian is happy for leaving his bandmates out of the spotlight.

Ryan Barber
 St. Catharines, ON

**Ed. Harsh words without knowing the whole story... Actually, we had planned on having the whole group on the cover, but unforeseen circumstances caused the whole band to not be able to be present at the photo shoot. We thought it was still a great cover, even though yes, it would have been nice to have the whole group. Take it easy, as it wasn't done by choice.*

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Canadian-Music.com

by Ryan McLaughlin



Canadian-Music.com was started two years ago as a labour of love by Sean Harley, a musician of some 15 years. Originally entitled Music ConX, the site recently re-launched itself as Canadian-Music.com as a way to better capture what it's all about. Featuring a directory of over 1,500 bands, songwriters, agents, management firms, record labels and venues, Canadian-Music.com is positioning itself to be the world's leading source for Canadian music online.

What This Means For You

The site offers musicians the ability to create an online electronic press kit complete with bio, photo and songs (in MP3 or Real Audio format). With over 20,000 hits a month, the site is a great way to start promoting your music.

Are you curious if anyone but yourself and your bandmates enjoy your music? Well, get together your closest friends and family, only the non-biased ones of course, and point them to your electronic portfolio and they'll have the option to review and rate the songs you've made available.

In Search of Canada's Best Indie Artist

Tired of constantly telling everyone that your band is the best and not having the proof to back it up? Think that you should be signed, but just haven't received the right exposure? Well plug in your patch cords, tune up your instruments and dust off your demos, Canadian-Music.com's "Canada's Best Indie Artist" contest is looking for you!

Register online by creating a new profile or by using your existing listing; making sure that an MP3 of your music is included.

Registration begins September 10, then starting two weeks later short listing the entrants to five per week will begin. At the helm of deciding who is cut and who stays is both a panel of judges as well as 24/7 online voting from the public. At the end of five weeks the 25

artists will enter into the final week in which only one will come out with the prestigious title of Canada's Best Indie Artist.

In this winner-take-all contest, the victor will receive 16 hours of recording time at their choice of one of five different recording studios (in Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Guelph and Halifax). Additionally, the recording will be digitally mastered by Shark Fin Digital and then Healey Disc will press 300 copies for the winner. On top of that the band will get artwork for their new CD, a professional bio with glossy photo, a professionally designed logo and mention in three upcoming editions of Canadian-Music.com's monthly newsletter.

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If you've already got a disc produced, or are extremely confident about winning the aforementioned contest, then Canadian-Music.com's new album distribution service is for you.

Their e-commerce distribution works essentially the same way as consignment in your local record store. You send them your merchandise, informing them what amount of money you would like to receive for each unit, then the site posts your items on their site with a price tag of your price plus a \$3.99 mark-up and a \$0.90 transaction fee. For example, if you would like to receive \$10 a CD, the on-site price would be \$14.89 (\$10 + \$3.99 + \$0.90) not including tax or shipping and handling.

Not only does Canadian-Music.com's distribution model allow independent musicians to reach international markets with their music, but they are also able to accept major credit cards as payment. The best part, if you don't sell any CDs you don't have to pay anything.

To get more information on the site and all its many features, set your browsers to www.canadian-music.com.

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Media Kits

'A How To' Guide

Getting your name, face and music into the right mind, eyes and ears is possibly the most important marketing skill an independent band can gain. At the forefront of any publicity plan are the media. They are the eyes and ears (and sometimes mind) of the public. Often regarded as just slightly higher than insurance companies on the Evil Totem, they can be your best friend or your worst enemy so getting in good with media early is not just something to strive for, it is a matter of survival.

Unfortunately, you are not the only musician looking to get an article done, a CD reviewed, or a show attended. Hundreds of bands are searching to get publicity, and sometimes the dividing line between who gets picked and who doesn't has nothing to do with the quality of the music, but more to do with the presentation.

In every media outlet there is a person, or group of people whose menial daily task is to sort through piles of information and decide what is important and what gets an all expense paid trip to the recycling centre. Often the degree of professionalism presented in a band's media kit can act as the deciding factor between being contacted for press coverage or being filed under "When Hell Freezes Over."

The following are a couple of quick pointers on how to clean up your kit and make it shine.

1. Make sure you have the correct address for the publication, as well as the correct contact information. Either phone the company directly to ask how to submit your kit or search their Web site for proper submission guidelines.

2. A band bio is a great way to inform prospective editors what you are all about. This is essentially your band's resume. Make sure the information is presented in an orderly, prioritized fashion. Do not just include a page of quotes stating how amazing your band is, a couple qualified blurbs are fine but don't over do it. Also, and most importantly, make sure you read, re-read and re-re-read the text. The people you are sending this to are paid to find spelling and grammar errors, it's their job, so a good way to impress them is to make sure everything is spelled right and you are using proper sentences. Do not just rely on your computer's spell checker ... re-read the bio and then get a fresh set of eyes to read it too.

3. Including a selection of music with your kit is a great way of giving a perspective reviewer an idea of what you're all about. Generally speaking, most places accept CDs as well as cassettes, but it is important not to assume that just because you have the latest Digital MiniDisc recorder technology that the reviewer will, and ditto with vinyl. Also, do not over do it, include your most recent work, but don't send in a virtual catalog of every CD you and all your buddies have ever recorded, it's a waste of time and money, reviewers just want a taste of what you sound like.

4. Definitely include some photography in your kit. At the very least have a black and white, 8 x 10 glossy print or slide included.

Some places will accept digital photography if the quality is high enough, but you should not assume, so check first. Digital photos are a tricky item to deal with, you may have a JPEG image that looks great on your monitor, but when it is printed in a newspaper or magazine it will look horrible. Most print media institutions have strict guidelines when it comes to digital pictures and you should call or e-mail for the proper specs before you make any assumptions. Another photo faux pas that bands often make is the submission of previously printed photos. This is essentially anything that is not an actual photo or slide, anything printed from a computer (laser, bubble jet or otherwise) printer, don't do this, it's bad! It may be cheaper than nice glossy photos, but if it can't be used it's worthless. The main point is to check with whomever you're sending the images to so you know *exactly* what

they want. Don't send large unsolicited photos by e-mail without asking. [*Ed. Trust us.*]

5. Finally, you need something to package your beautiful new kit in. This is quite possibly the simplest part of the whole process. All you need is a standard pocketed folder available at any stationary store. Make sure it is properly labeled (using one of your band's promo stickers on the front is a good idea) and that there is cardboard or padding to protect photos and CDs from being damaged in transport.

Following this advice is not guaranteed to increase your chances at being noticed, but it will sure go a long way in illustrating that you are serious about what you are doing to a prospective editor or reviewer, and sometimes that is all that counts. For information on *Canadian Musician's* submission policy, see our Showcase section on page 78 of this issue.

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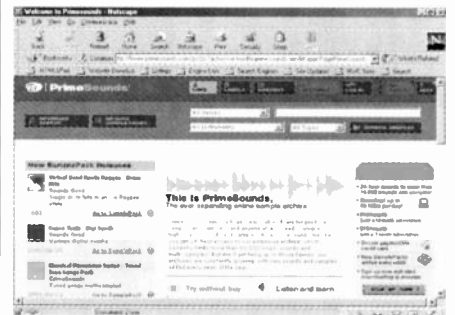
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Are you a remixer or songwriter looking for a unique sample that hasn't been used a thousand times by a thousand artists? If so, PrimeSounds.com is definitely a site worth perusing.

Developed in 2000 by a group of sound developers called Sounds Good, the site contains a searchable library of over 10,000 loops, sounds and multi-samples. To access the site's features you first have to sign up to a subscription plan (starting at \$10 per month), then you are free to roam the site and download up to 50 MB per day.



Using Real Audio, the site offers the ability to preview the sounds you want before you download them. However, if you are just curious about PrimeSounds.com and not sure you want to fork over any dough yet, you can travel the landscape of the site (with the exception of the downloads section) before you decide to subscribe.

Worried about tired or not-so-fresh content? Worry not, as the site adds new sample packs every week, and with 24-hour access, you'll never run out of sounds to play with. Additionally, all sounds are completely royalty-free, meaning you can download whatever you like, use it to create the next hit single, score yourself a million bucks and never worry about some lawyer giving you a call asking for a percentage of your new found fortune.

To check out the site, point your browser to www.primesounds.com.

Matthew Good Band Readies New Release

Vancouver's Matthew Good Band are gearing up for their next major label release: *The Audio of Being*, which is rumoured to be the band's heaviest effort to date.

After consulting his meticulous personal lawyer, bassist Rich "Rock" Priske informed CMhe was permitted to speak freely about the highly guarded album. Recorded over several months at two of Vancouver's largest studios, the band is methodically putting the finishing touches on the album for its October 30/01 release date. "We recorded most of the bed tracks at the Armoury, and then we recorded a couple of beds and overdubs at the Warehouse, and also mixed at the Warehouse," Priske explains.

The band has selected a release date so close to Halloween, simply because "We want to scare kids with our brand new heaviness," he warns. "I think it's a natural evolution. It's a more complete record – it's a little heavier, a little darker. I think it's some of the band's best work. Dave's playing the best guitar of his career, and Matt's writing the best songs he's ever written. It's all good." In a move typical of ego-rich bassists, Priske neglects to mention his rhythm section counterpart, drummer Ian Browne, known for his thunderous performance.

After a lengthy tour in support of its last album, *Beautiful Midnight*, the band was whipped into shape by MGB veteran producer Warne Livesy, who has "become a really good friend over the years. Warne is like the fifth member of the band at this point – it's his third record with the group. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. It's a labour of love and he knows how to get the best out of all us, really. It's nice having someone in the mix that isn't afraid to tell you that you suck. That's basically his job." The other member of the award-winning Team MGB is recording engineer Zach Blackstone.

In terms of changes in the group, Priske had a hard time expressing what the band has planned for the future, with the exception of this cryptic message: "We're younger, smarter, and better looking. We've been involved in a cloning experiment overseas in Sweden and Japan, and because of the proliferation of boy bands out there, we figure the only way we have a shot at this is to try and look cute and dance better. We're looking, but we haven't found the fountain of youth."



So Happy Together: Matthew Good, Rich "Rock" Priske, Dave Genn, Ian Browne

Check out www.matthewgoodband.com, which Priske has taken control of, for even more confusion.

National Jazz Competition Heading to Toronto

The Canada Council for the Arts is hosting a Canada-wide competition for young professional jazz musicians at the Canadian International Jazz Convention in Toronto on November 2, 2001.

The competition, dubbed Jazz i.d., is open to all Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada working as individuals, ensembles, groups, bands or collectives in the professional music industry.

With applications having been accepted up until July 13, 2001, all contestants must have had at least one year of experience performing, and have produced a sound

recording to be qualified to enter the competition. Additionally, all contestants have to be under the age of 30. From there, each application was evaluated by a peer assessment committee composed of three to five experienced professional musicians selected for their expertise in jazz.

"There are relatively few opportunities for Canadian jazz musicians to perform and showcase their work outside of the major jazz festival circuit," explained Sandra Bender, the Canada Council's Market Development Co-ordinator. She continued, "These obstacles can be particularly challenging for

young and emerging artists who wish to access audiences and markets outside their home region. We are hopeful that Jazz i.d. will give some of Canada's most talented young jazz artists an opportunity for national and international exposure."

For more information on the contest, contact: Canada Council for the Arts Outreach Office, 350 Albert St., PO Box 1047, Ottawa, ON K1P 5V8 (613) 566-4414, FAX (613) 566-4332, sandra.bender@canadacouncil.ca, www.canadacouncil.ca/jazzid.

L'Esprit 2001: The Making of a Band



TooTall

The CHOM FM L'Esprit contest takes place once a year to give independent artists a chance at winning some great prizes and, more importantly, possibly getting discovered. This year's finals took place Thursday, Aug. 16 at Montréal's Club Soda. Taking home the 2001 title was Montréal-based rockers, Moonraker.

The driving force behind the contest is CHOM's veteran radio host, TooTall, who on top of hosting the weekly all-Canadian music show *Made in Canada*, has worked hard at cultivating this contest since its beginning back in 1978.

"I just love discovering and looking for new talent. It's amazing, you think 'Holy Shit! These guys are going to be big some day!' You just get that feeling that you are discovering something," says TooTall. Starting out with 12 contestants, the bands were whittled down to four finalists, who

all played a set of their best work at the August 16th event, which managed to pull in 700 people.

"The first one that played, Confusion, was a very young band. A bit heavy in the vocals, very metal sounding sort of Limp Bizkit-y kind of vocals, but some neat jazz progressions as well, a really, really good drummer," explained TooTall.

"The winner played next, Moonraker, it's a rock band but confident. It was their confidence that really put them over the top. They sort of grabbed that stage and just kicked loose. They had some really amazing songs in a very good performance."

Third up was Veronica Speedwell, a band with a female vocalist who TooTall compared to Pat Benatar and commented that the band was "very, very tight."

"The last band, Brighton, came very close to winning. A brit-pop kind of sound, a

very good-looking band, they have a lead singer that looks like Russell Crowe – I think. They were very, very, very close. Give them another year and they're going to conquer this country."

The contest is no stranger to giving birth to successful bands, some past winners are Slaves on Dope, who are doing quite well in both Canada and the U.S, as well as the Respectables, who have been working with Gordie Johnson, from Big Sugar, on his French album.

(cont'd on page 15)

Royal blue.



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L'Esprit 2001: The Making of a Band Cont'd:

Judging the contest were Mark Makoway (Moist), Jason Rockman (Slaves On Dope), Jamie O'Meara (Flour), Keith Brown (Aquarius Records), Alex Andronache (Metalworks), Patrick Turgeon (Fusion III), Steven Perrault (MBG Street Marketing), Neil Kushnir (C100) and of course, Too Tall.

For winning, Moonraker will receive a recording package adequate for four songs (64 hours) at Metalworks Studios in Mississauga, ON. As well, the session will be produced by Mark Makoway, and engineer Nick Blagona whose credits include Deep Purple, The Tea Party, Limblifter and Serial Joe. The polished disc will then get a 500 copy run at American Pro Digital, and will receive promotional support and radio servicing through Aquarius Records. Additionally, the band will get a prime showcase spot at NXNE 2002 in Toronto and \$4,000 in Peavey Electronics equipment from Steve's Music Store.

The runners up will not leave empty handed either, each of the three bands will receive \$2,000 of Peavey Electronics equipment from Steve's Music Store.

"I've never had a bad show, over all these years all these shows have been well attended, and the reaction has always been good. It is just a contest that I think has a lot of credibility - people want to be a part of it," concluded Too Tall.

Offishall Cleans Up at Urban X-Posure



Kardinal Offishall

Toronto's Kardinal Offishall cleaned up at the 2001 Urban Music Awards hosted at the Phoenix Concert Theatre on this past August 11.

The Canadian rap artist managed to take home Best Hip-Hop/Rap Recording for his recently released *Quest for Fire: Firestarter, Vol. 1* on the MCA/Universal label, as well as winning Best Music Video ("BaKardi Slang", directed by Kevin Francis) and sharing a win for Best Songwriter Award with Solitaire ("BaKardi Slang").

The awards ceremony was presented by the Urban Music Association of Canada (UMAC) in conjunction with EMI and Virgin Music Canada.

Also picking up a pair of awards was Baby Blue Sounderew for Best New Artist and Best R&B/Soul Recording.

"Canadian hip-hop artists have grown to the acclaim that their American counterparts now enjoy," said UMAC president, Tony Sutherland. "With the growing profile reached by Kardinal, Baby Blue, Choclair, the Rascalz and Dubmatique, combined with international successes from homegrown talent like Deborah Cox, Tamia, Nick Holder and Londa Larmond, it means Canadian urban music is truly a global force. Tonight is a testament that hard work and talent does pay off and the dividends are here for everyone to witness and enjoy."

In total, 26 awards were given out at the 3rd annual Urban X-Posure event while a packed house of artists, fans and industry-folk celebrated urban music in Canada.

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Making The Connection The Fender Pro Audio Primer

By Tom Butler

Published by the Fender Musical Instrument Company, this text is a basic primer for anyone interested in pro audio. Areas covered include: Sound Basics, Microphones, Mixers & Mixing Consoles, Amplifiers, Loudspeakers, Applications. (c)1995.



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Finger Eleven <i>The Greyest Of Blue Skies</i> (Sony)	gold
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Sum 41 <i>All Killer No Filler</i> (Aquarius)	gold



Laurier Launches Master of Music Therapy Program

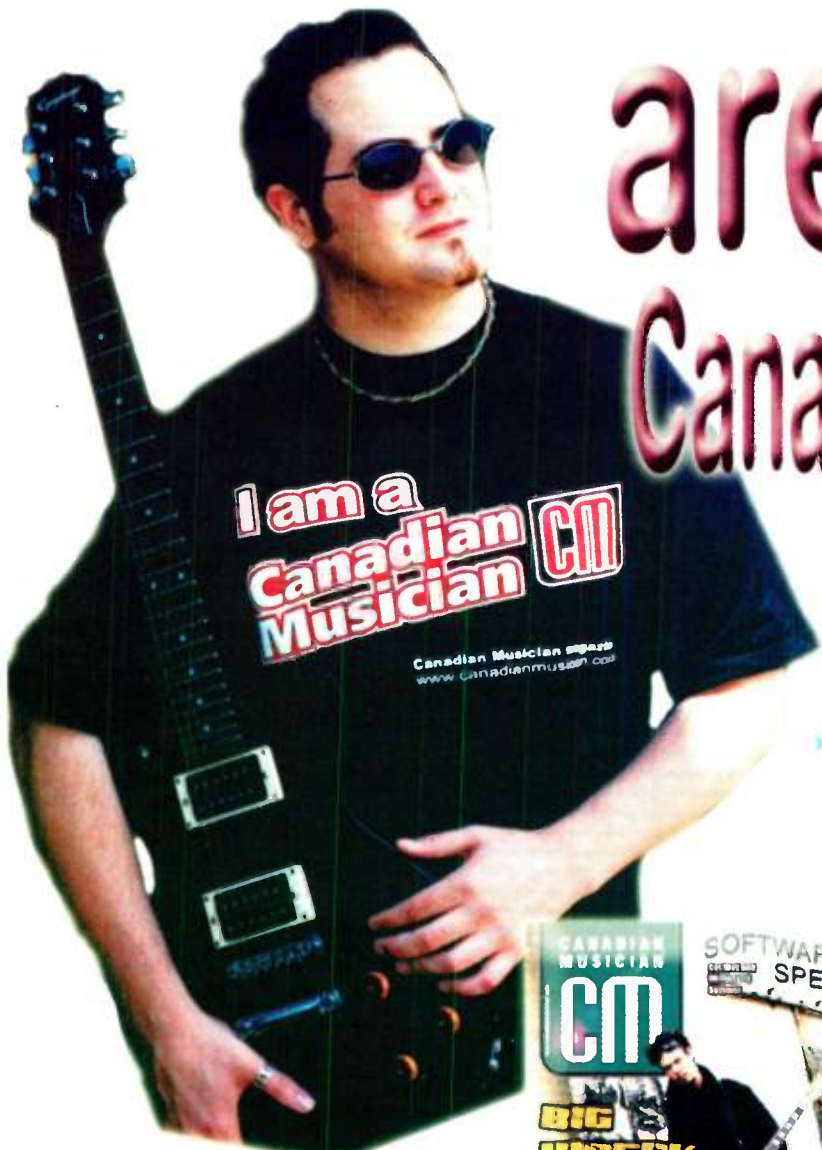
Wilfrid Laurier University, in Waterloo, ON, will be launching Canada's first full-time Master of Music Therapy (MMT) program this coming fall.

Involving the clinical use of music as a therapeutic intervention for people with special needs, music therapy is used as an alternative to conventional forms of treatment. It has proven successful with sensory-impaired children, developmentally delayed children and adults, adolescents with emotional disorders, autistic children and people with Down Syndrome.

"More and more people are realizing the benefits of alternative forms of health care, such as music therapy," explained Charles Morrison, Dean of the Faculty of Music. "Laurier's undergraduate program is one of only four music therapy programs in the country, and the only institution with an on-campus music therapy clinic – so it is only natural for us to create a graduate program that will allow therapists to further their research skills and pursue advanced clinical training."

The MMT program will only be admitting four to six students into each of its two annual streams. A one-year program for students with an honours bachelor of music therapy will begin in 2002, with a two-year program for students with degrees in other programs who meet the academic and music performance requirements starting in 2003.

For more information, contact: Wilfrid Laurier University, Faculty of Music, 75 University Ave. W, Waterloo, ON N2L 3C5 (519) 884-0710 ext. 2432, www.wlu.ca.



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country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

The San Francisco Blues Festival

San Francisco, CA, September 22-23, 2001
(415) 979-5588,
www.sfb blues.com

Celtic Colours International Festival

Cape Breton Island, NS, October 5-13, 2001
(902) 295-1414, FAX (902) 295-2912,
info@celtic-colours.com,
www.celtic-colours.com

IMX 2001

Los Angeles, CA, October 9-10, 2001
(203) 256-5759, FAX (203) 254-2446,
jdunkel@instinctsg.com,
www.imusicxpo.com

Folk Meet: Ontario Council of Folk Festivals Annual Conference

Toronto, ON, October 11-14, 2001
(866) 292-OCFF,
ocff@icomm.ca, www.icomm.ca/~ocff

Autumn ArtsFest

Toronto, ON, October 18-28, 2001
(416) 622-8731, FAX (416) 622-5782,
www.autumnartsfest.com

DJ3 Atlanta 2001

Atlanta, GA, October 22-24, 2001
(770) 443-1869,
dj3@dj3.com, www.dj3.com

Montreal Drum Fest 2001

Montreal, PQ, November 2-4, 2001
(450) 928-1726, FAX (450) 670-8683

Jazz Expo: Canadian International Jazz Convention

Toronto, ON, November 1-4, 2001
(866) 566-JAZZ, (416) 531-2024,
www.jazzexpo.ca

7th Annual Northeast Regional Folk Alliance Conference

Lake Harmony, PA, November 9-11, 2001
(215) 546-7766, FAX (215) 732-7023,
info@nefolk.org, www.nefolk.org

Percussion Arts Society International Convention (PASIC)

Dallas, TX, November 14-17, 2001
(580) 353-1455, FAX (580) 353-1456,
percarts@pas.org, www.pasic.org

Midwest International Band & Orchestra Clinic

Chicago, IL, December 18-22, 2001
(847) 729-4629, FAX (847) 729-4635,
midwestc@wwa.com,
www.midwestclinic.com

International Association of Jazz Educators 29th Annual Conference

Long Beach, CA January 9-12, 2002
(785) 776-8744, FAX (785) 776-6190,
info@iaje.org, www.iaje.org

East Coast Music Awards and Conference

Saint John, NB, January 31-February 3, 2002
(902) 892-9040, FAX (902) 892-9041,
ecma@ecma.ca, www.ecma.ca

Canadian Music Week 2002

Toronto, ON, March 7-10, 2002
(416) 695-9236, FAX (416) 695-9239,
info@cmw.net, www.cmw.net

South by Southwest (SXSW) 2002

Austin, TX, March 8-18, 2002
(512) 467-7979, FAX (512) 451-0754,
sxsw@sxsw.com, www.sxsw.com

25th Annual Dallas Guitar Show and Music Fest 2002

Dallas, TX, March 23-24, 2002
(972) 260-4201, FAX (972) 243-5193,
www.guitarshow.com

Missouri Southern International Piano Competition

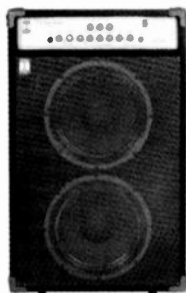
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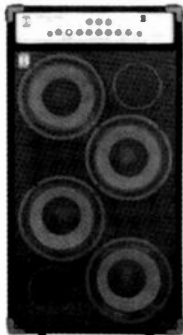


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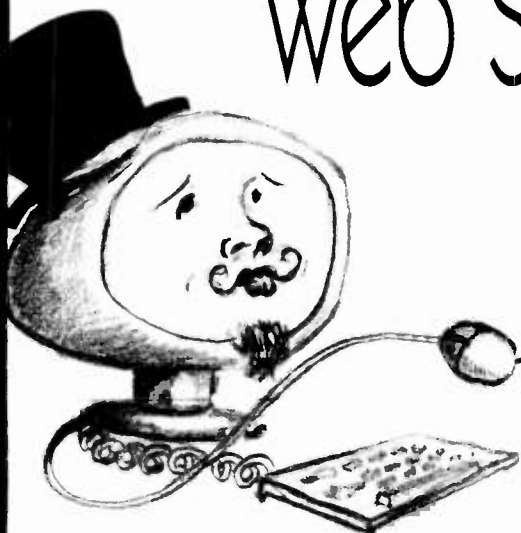
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Web Site Design

music **on** LINE
by Kelly Embleton



Tips & Tricks



One the major factors in the success of your Web site is professional design. Although it is usually best to leave this to a graphic or Web professional, here are some tips to set standards, or if you are tackling it yourself.

- Brainstorm and plot your ideas on paper first.
- Visit a lot of sites and analyze what works, and what does not. Do not copy information or graphics from other sites.
- Keep a common theme or look throughout the site.
- Graphics are very important, if you want them to look good ... get a graphic designer to create them.
- Design a page that is not too long (scrolling down the page for hours), to avoid this divide the information and place on two or three pages instead of one long page.

- Place important information, or information you want seen the most, on the first screen.
- Avoid having a lot of white space on your page, fill the page with information and graphics (that load quickly) but make sure that the page is not cluttered.
- Always have a way for the user to contact you on every page of the site in a place that is clearly visible ... post an e-mail address, phone number, FAX number and address.
- Include a 'help' page, 'about this site' page and 'FAQ' page to answer any questions the user may have.
- Create fast loading graphics with ALT tags.
- Feature a navigational menu along the sides or top of each page.
- Any links that send the user to other sites should open in new windows.

- Include a search function to make it easy for users to find products or information quickly and easily on your site.
- To bring attention to pages you want visitors to visit often, feature them on the home page and add links to these pages on other pages within your site.
- Check your pages in both IE and Netscape.
- Web sites to find more information are:
www.free-webmaster-tools.com,
www.cheapwebtricks.com/create,
www.toolshack.com
www.123web-master.com.

Kelly Embleton is computer services coordinator for Norris-Whitney Communications Inc.

Resources

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... Visit the **East Coast Music Awards and Conference Web site** for information on accommodations, registration, events, seminars, awards and association information. Check this info out at www.ecma.ca.

... If you are looking for free musician resources visit **Indie-Music.com** at www.indiemusic.com. This site contains an extensive database of information on bands, studios, resources, education, venues and much more.

... For complete information on **Canadian Music Week 2002**, visit www.cmw.net. The site provides information on festival venues, hotels and travel, conferences, registration, exhibitors, awards and more.

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Ovation Celebrity Doubleneck Guitar

by Levon Ichkhanian

It's been 35 years since Ovation came out with its first acoustic guitar model. Ovation has been making custom doublenecks since the mid-'80s. The first one was built for Al Di Meola; a doubleneck 6-string with one of the necks having a MIDI interface. They also made double necks and triple necks for Richie Sambora. Ovation is now producing a Celebrity model doubleneck manufactured at their plant in Korea with a 12-string upper neck and 6-string lower.

Specs

Body: Lyrachord roundback (Ovation pioneered) $\frac{3}{4}$ size to allow for maximum comfort and accessibility to both necks.
 Neck: Mahogany, "through neck" design to insure stability and a consistent flat neck all the way up the fingerboard.
 Machine heads: Ovation
 Fingerboard: Rosewood
 Bridge: Solid walnut bonded directly to the wood of the guitar.
 Top: Laminated Spruce

The Rosette leaf is featured on the upper and lower top.

Electronics

Pick up: Ovation thin line pickup – Piezo transducer system (sensors are under the saddle)
 Pickup control: Bass, Mid, Treble faders –12dB to +12dB
 Push button for EQ in or out.
 Pre shape: Puts in a notch in the midrange of the guitar.
 Mid shift: 400 Hz in the in and 1 KHz in the out position
 Both of these functions (pre shape, mid shift) will extend your range of the mid.
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The celebrity is a great sounding guitar both plugged and not. I was amazed as to how accessible and comfortable it felt to get around both necks within the first few minutes. With all the EQ controls, it was a very short set up period to get a good sound. The mid shift and pre shape came in very handy for this purpose. (I tried the guitar with my band at a rehearsal).

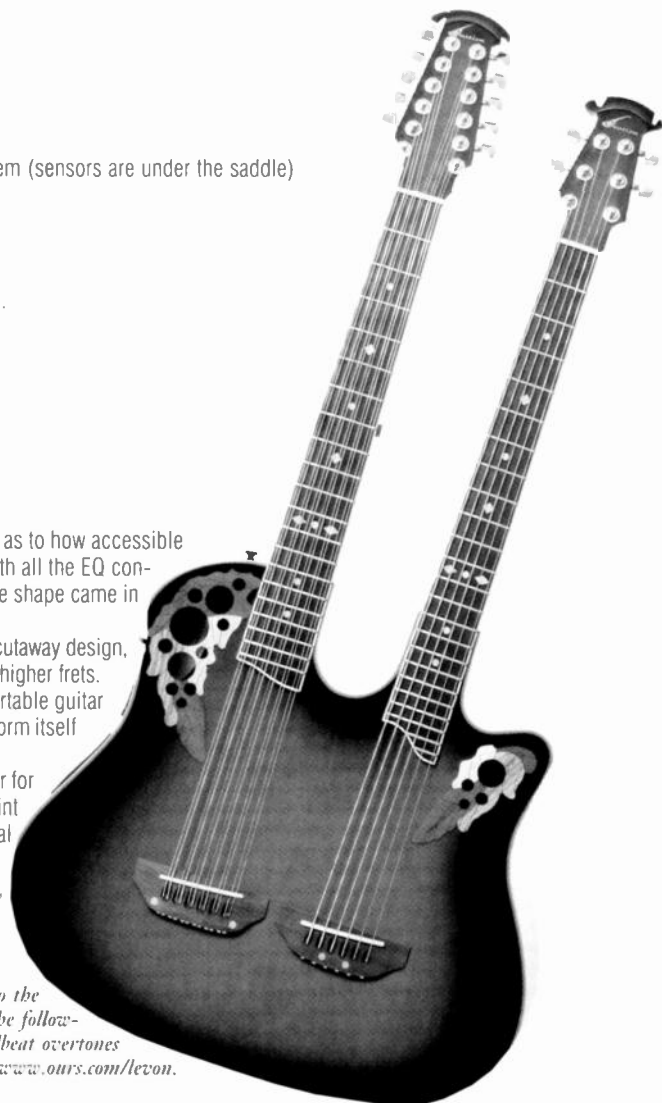
Both necks play great, as the lower neck joins the body at the 15th fret with a cutaway design, and the upper neck joins the body at the 14th fret with ample space to get to the higher frets.

As the body shape is $\frac{3}{4}$ of the standard Ovation acoustics, it is a very comfortable guitar to play along with the Lyrachord roundback design. It just makes the guitar body form itself naturally to you.

Along with the practical advantages of having to carry and play only one guitar for the dual purpose of 6 and 12 strings, the ovation doubleneck has a fair price point and is a great sounding instrument. Treat yourself to trying one out at your local music dealer. I had a lot of fun with it.

For more product information, contact: B&J Music Ltd., 2360 Tedlo St., Mississauga, ON L5A 3V3 (905) 896-3001, FAX (905) 896-4554, bjmusic-kmc@kaman.com.

Levon Ichkhanian is a D'Addario clinician and jazz faculty member to the National Guitar Summer Workshop. He is currently wrapping up work on the follow-up to his debut CD After Hours, which blends contemporary jazz with worldbeat overtones and features John Patitucci and Paquito D'Rivera. Visit Levon online at www.ours.com/levon.



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ROAD test

Traynor Custom Valve 40 Amplifier

by Leroy Emmanuel

My name is Leroy Emmanuel, and I sing and play guitar professionally. In the past, I've recorded with many record companies and labels. I've recorded with a very long list of recording artists and musicians such as John Lee Hooker, T-Bone Walker, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Funkadelics, ZZ Hill, Maceo Parker, The Fabulous Counts, Bohannon, and Sheila E among many others. I currently play with LMT Connection.

Having been a professional musician for over 40 years, there's one thing for sure — you go through a lot of gear. And speaking of gear, I just received the new Traynor YCV-40 amplifier. The YCV40's tube overdrive is driven by three Sovtek 12AX7WA dual triode preamps, while tube power is provided by two Sovtek 5881WXT beam power tubes. It also features one 12" Celestion Red Label speaker. I would say a real plus about this amplifier is that it weighs only 45 lbs. I'm currently using a Super Twin Fender Reverb, which weighs about 100 lbs and kicks out 160 watts or so. The only difference between the Fender Super Twin and the Traynor YCV-40 is power. I love the tube sound, and I love clean.

There is so much product on the market today, so much that it is so easy for a lot of great product to get lost in the sauce. The Traynor YCV-40 will never get lost in the sauce because this piece of machinery has the beef.



We were playing a gig in Toronto and Mark Rogers and John Irvine, drums and bass respectively in LMT Connection, were watching me set up my gear and smiling when they saw the Traynor logo. They didn't think it was up to the job. After the first set they came to me telling me the amp sounded great — and it does sound great. This amp is not only clean, but if you want to get down and dirty and bang your head a little bit, try Channel 1. Just hit the foot switch and adjust the gain. Three basic tones, clean, crunch and overdrive, give good tone at low levels and extra strength when the amp is cranked.

I can honestly say that I've been around performing since the late '50s and I remember when Traynor first came on the scene during the early '60s. Here we are in 2001 and Yorkville has a new secret weapon which they've named the Traynor YCV-40.

Leroy Emmanuel is a Niagara Falls-based musician who plays with LMT Connection, which plays the Orbit Room in Toronto on Wednesday nights, and the Basement in Niagara Falls on Sunday nights. Visit www.lmtconnection.com for more information.

ROAD test

Behringer V-amp

by Ziggy Sigmund

Many problems face musicians today.

Global warming, nuclear war, and the end of the world? More importantly, which virtual guitar amp to use in the back of the tour bus for the next six months?

Over the past couple of days I checked out the Behringer V-amp. The German-engineered V-amp is a 'Pod'-like unit, which uses similar digital amp-emulating technology, but with some of its own original characteristics and innovative design features.

The most striking and user-friendly feature is the control setting display indicators. A circle of LEDs around each control dial gives instant visuals of where all controls are set. So when you choose a preset sound, you instantly see which amp emulator is on, which effects are on and where all the parameters are set. This shows you exactly how the overall sound of each preset is put together. It then becomes easy to build your own sounds, and keep track of your modifications. Now, there is no need for reference sheets to remember where the settings are – it's simply right there, lit up in front of you.

There are presets up the freakin' yin yang, 95 in all. Plus another 30 blank channels to save your own modified sounds in. The sounds are state of the art, with the typical amplifier and cabinet emulators, ranging from the vintage "Tweed Combo," to the full blast balls-to-the-wall "Rectified Hi Gain."



There is also a full range of digital effects. Unfortunately, most of these can only be used one at a time, although eight variations of digital reverb can be mixed in with any one of them. I liked several effects in particular: the "Rotary" is a good one. This gives you that Leslie speaker sound, with adjustable, rather than fixed (fast or slow), speed of speaker rotation; but this is one of the effects that can only be used on its own. The "Echo" is another non-combo effect, but does a fine job of recreating that classic tape-echo sound without the incumbent tape-hiss. Another effect that caught my ear is the "Ping Pong" – which takes advantage of the unit's stereo capability, bouncing the delayed signal from side to side.

It's worth mentioning that the aux. input, (which allows you to mix in another source, like a CD player), has its own volume control. The V-amp also comes with a heavy duty foot control pedal. Unfortunately, it can only go up or down five channels at a time, although an optional MIDI foot pedal can be connected to control all presets and amp models.

As usual, with amps like these, there is a headphone out and a left/right line out to patch into a home stereo, amp or PA. The V-amp itself is quite lightweight, made of hard plastic, and does not look particularly durable. Luckily, the padded gig bag (for the unit, pedal and AC power supply) could definitely be considered carry-on flight luggage.

The extended cord to the plug from the power supply will conserve space on your power bar. However, this brings us to the last point, which is that there is no On/Off switch. This is inconvenient, because to shut the machine off, or re-boot, it must be unplugged from the wall socket.

At the end of the day, although I do wonder if the V-amp could stand up the kind of abuse my equipment (and me for that matter) has to take out on the road, I think there's some pretty good and very usable sounds here.

For more information, contact: Behringer Canada Ltd., PO Box 24043, Dartmouth, NS B3A 4T4 (902) 860-2677, FAX (902) 860-2078, a.maurik@behringer.de, www.behringer.de.

Ziggy Sigmund is guitarist for Econline Crush.

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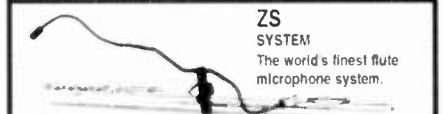


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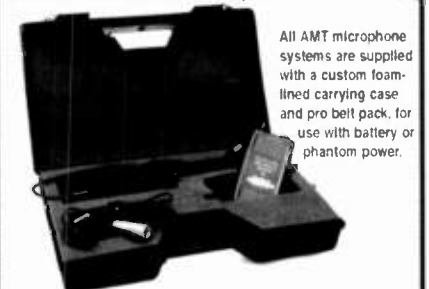
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finding the right guitar

G
finding
guitar

I started playing guitar in grade nine after I watched my friend's band play at an old church hall in Toronto. It was their first gig and they sounded terrible. Feedback cut through every song; their singer was off-key and the band was really loose. But, they were great: a true punk band. Totally cool. It didn't hurt that someone drove a car through the front window of the hall shortly after they finished their set. I was hooked.

That year my sister got a cheap classical guitar for her birthday. It had a rudely wide neck and no tone at all, but it was a guitar. So I liberated it and immediately started playing pick and strum songs like "On Top of Old Smoky." Not my musical taste, but Rush seemed a little bit ambitious at the time (I did manage to figure out the main riff for "Smoke on the Water").

Soon I discovered that Neil Young songs were the perfect teach-yourself-to-play material (Nirvana songs are also pretty good for this). So, I bought a Neil Young songbook and went to town.

After a few months I was pretty fast with my open chord changes; I had D, G, and A minor down to a science. The only problem was my sister's classical guitar had nylon strings, and sounded nothing like the guitar on my Neil Young CDs. Young played a steel string acoustic (a Martin D-28). It was time to upgrade. I had to have a better guitar, a real guitar.

My first trip to Steve's Music Store was typical of any visit to any music store in any city. Before entering the shop, I thought I was getting pretty good—I could play simplified versions of "Powderfinger" and "Hey Hey My My".

When I walked into the store, however, everyone seemed like Eddie Van Halen shredding through monster licks and speedy little blues solos. There was one guy doing a stirring rendition of "Stairway to Heaven" while another character played effortlessly through some Guns 'n' Roses song. And there I stood, in awe, more than a little intimidated. Everyone had an attitude and I had the fear—I couldn't even play my open chords very well. Everyone's had this experience. It's a rite of passage. Are you worthy? Well, I didn't feel too damn worthy. The thing to remember is everyone sucked at their instrument when they started. It takes time to become a good player. You have to really practice all the time. And no matter how good you get, there will always be someone better. It's a fact of life.

Finding the Right Instrument

Buying a new instrument made by a known, reputable company is a pretty safe bet, particularly if you don't know much about gear (you can't go wrong with a manufacturer's warranty). I bought my first electric guitar new and it served me well for quite a few years. There are a million great used

instruments out there if you look around, but you must exercise caution. Instruments can suffer from serious problems that aren't immediately apparent to the untrained eye. Buying used from a reputable music store usually gives you at least a shot-term warranty, whereas buying through the newspaper is strictly a buyer beware situation.

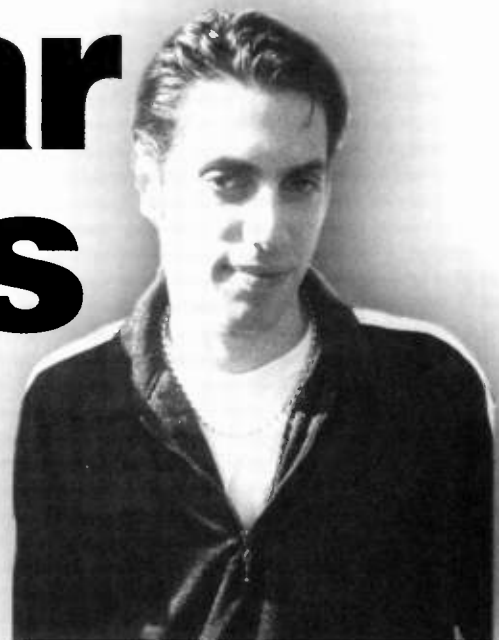
I recall being at the house of a guy who was selling off his gear. He didn't really know much about gear and obviously wasn't playing, so he was selling his amp (a 50-watt Marshall JCM 800) which I was interested in, and his guitar, a Les Paul. While I was there someone called him about the guitar. I overheard him say he hadn't played it much and that it was in great shape—all the usual seller's bull. When he got off the phone, I asked to see the guitar because it sounded pretty great. Wrong. It was a Les Paul all right, but the neck was twisted, it needed new frets, and one of the pickups was completely microphonic, all of which would have cost big bucks to fix. The funny thing was I don't think the guy even knew his guitar was a good guitar. The amp however, turned out to be a real bargain and I bought it on the spot.

There's no point in my endorsing any specific gear. Yamaha, Fender, Gibson, Marshall, Peavey, Roland, Korg, Pearl, and Tama are all pretty well-known, reputable names, but every company makes some products that are better than others. Instruments are a very personal thing. What feels right for me may not be right for you. Look for product recommendations in music magazines that do product ratings, although, I don't very often see negative reviews in these mags. I guess you should just look for the unusually positive reviews.

Mark Makoway is a producer, songwriter, and guitarist for Moist. This article is excerpted from his new book, The Indie Band Bible. Check out the Web site www.indiebandbible.com for more information. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.



linear sprints



by Tom Brislin

and warm-ups

This issue, I bring you more warm-ups and linear sprints. These linear sprints focus on the left-hand crossover. The pattern consists of an ascending and descending arpeggio of the four basic triad qualities, with the left hand crossing over the right hand for a two-octave jump. When crossing over, keep the hand as low as possible without hitting the right hand, of course. This will help you land in time, especially at faster tempos. Remember to keep the fingertips firm each time the hand lands for a clean, balanced sound. Try this in all keys.

Linear Sprint #1



Here is an etude featuring right-hand 4th voicings. Starting with F7sus, the chords move up in whole steps through the first four measures. In the fifth measure, they start from F#7sus and ascend again. The chords are also given in descending order.

Chord-Toner #1



Variations

Practice Linear Sprint #1 with a short, detached staccato feel. Play at both piano and forte levels. Practice Chord-Toner #1 giving a short staccato sound to all the quarter notes.

Tom Brislin is a keyboardist, vocalist and songwriter who appears regularly in the New York and New Jersey areas. He has performed and/or recorded with artists in many styles of music including Meat Loaf, Glen Burtnik and Michael Brecker. Currently, he fronts the original modern-rock band, You Were Spiraling, and has produced the band's two CDs: You Were Spiraling and The Hello CD.

empty your cup

B

bas

Do you ever find yourself going back to the same old licks and lines when you play? I know I'm guilty of resorting to the safe approach when I don't feel adventurous. I call this the full cup approach, meaning you've already filled your creative cup with the same old licks and lines and you haven't given spontaneity a chance.

It's a hard rut to get out of, but when you *do* try something new it's amazing what can happen. I recently had an empty cup experience

when I got called for a session for a hip-hop artist named K-OS who was working on his first major release. The cool thing about this session was that it wasn't your typical hip-hop session. There were no posses, or crews... no smoking of illegal substances, no drinking – just K-OS, an engineer and I. I've known K-OS for years and I've respected his approach to his music, which is, there are no rules. We loaded up the track, which was based on a guitar progression and a strong vocal hook (oh, did I mention he plays guitar and is a great singer?). He said he wanted me to take it to another level, I thought 'okay,' but the guitar line that was there, was played like a bass line and the vocal followed it so harmonically I had to follow what was there. The other obstacle was that the track was something he had worked on at another studio

and all he had was a 2-track CD copy of it. So I had to play on top of that, there was no way to manipulate the individual tracks. I mentioned all this to him and he told me to "Just do your thing." I asked him what kind of vibe he wanted, and he replied "Just do your thing." So I pulled out my trusty 4-string and started to lay down a line on top of the song by following his guide. He then said, "Don't follow what was there ... do your own thing." Right there I realized I had to empty my cup I had to ignore the obvious and go for a total creative approach. Sometimes a creative approach doesn't make sense to you, and that's what made this session fun. I started to feel the track and they started to feel it too. When heads start bobbing and hands go into the air you know you're on the right track. I finished the take and decided to do another on my 5-string to give him the option of some low end (for the Jeeps). When I hit the low Ds and Cs the track took on a new life. I got the thumbs up and I thought I was done then K-OS asked if I would try to do the same thing on another song. We loaded the song up and once again it was based on a loop with a pre-existing bass line. I gave him a safe track and then he wanted me to empty my cup. He took out everything but the drums and vocals. He wanted me to interpret the track with my bass. I've never done that before but I had a great time with it. Since we tracked to ProTools, he could keep what he wanted and mix and match. He called it a bass maze. He had everything he needed from a solid groove to solo leads ... with him nothing was off limits. It was a fun session and it taught me a lot about how I approach music and that sometimes there is no predetermined approach, it is what you make it then and there in that moment.

So if you ever find yourself getting into the full cup syndrome, go and find some recordings that have a full track and a cappella versions ... learn what the bass player did and that will help you understand where the song goes harmonically. Then take the a cappella version and do your own thing, leaving everything you just learned behind and letting your feelings guide you. Or maybe try it in reverse. Do the a cappella first, then learn the song see how creative you can be. Another idea if finding a cappella is hard to do, is to buy Music Minus One tapes. That is where you have a song, and everything is in the mix but your instrument – that helps you come up with your own parts. If you want to practice soloing buy Karaoke tapes where the singer or melody of the song is taken out, this allows you to come up with your own melody. These are all great ways to keep from filling your cup with the same old creative approach that we all are guilty of falling into. 'Til then, mad love to all my bottom dwellers.

Orin Isaacs is the Bassist/Musical Director of Open Mike with Mike Bullard which can be seen nightly on the Comedy Network and CTV. Check out his album entitled Where I'm From in stores and online. Orin can be reached online at orin@mcmusic.com.

by Orin Isaacs

P

the secret Of numbers

percussion

Greetings fellow drummers. Throughout this issue I will illustrate drum fills and grooves utilizing a concept of numbers. Every day we deal with memorizing numbers, whether it be an address, a phone number etc. Many times it's easier to think of things in groupings of numbers as oppose to what is really written. Let me relate this to music. If we take a bar of 16th notes we are playing a total of 16 notes. What I've done is put together some simple groupings of notes: a two note pattern (RL) a three note (RLB) four notes (RLLB) and five notes (RLRLB). B= Bass Drum. The idea is to put any of these groupings together that add up to 16 notes. Lets look at the first example.

a) A1. 3/3/3/4/3/3/ = 16. The reality is that we are playing:

b) A1. RLBR LBRL LBRL BRLB. Sometimes we get boxed into trying to memorize the idea in groupings of four

16th notes. I think it is a lot easier to memorize the pattern as example a) compared to b). They are both the same – just grouped differently. Now in example A2, all of these fills can be converted into a groove. Basic rule:

- 1) Right hand on the hi-hat.
- 2) Add a bass drum on beat one.
- 3) Accent the snare on beats two and four, or the closest snare to beats two and four.

By memorizing a few numbers, you could create so many possibilities for fills and beats. The fills are just written on the snare and bass, but experiment by moving your hands to different sound sources. These are some basic groupings. Try permuting these ideas as well as create your own personal numbered patterns. As in example D) I just grouped the two and four pattern together and memorized it as a grouping of six notes. Some great books to check out this concept further are *Rick's Licks* by Rick Gratton and *Linear Time Playing* by Gary Chaffee. Have fun, and e-mail me back some of your creations.

Jeff Salem is currently involved with the Educational Seminars in Percussion (ESP) program, where he performs drum clinics at schools sponsored by Sabian, Vic Firth, Pearl Canada, and Drummers' Choice. Jeff freelances with many artists throughout the Toronto area and maintains a teaching schedule at Drummers' Choice. Check out his Web site at www.salemdrum.com, or reach him by e-mail at jsalem@interlog.com.



The musical notation shows various drum patterns with rhythmic values and drum symbols. The patterns are labeled A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, and D2. Below each staff are boxes containing numbers representing the total number of notes in the pattern. A legend on the right indicates: HIHAT (X), SNARE (R), BASS (B).

by Jeff Salem

what flute players do I listen To?

W

WOODWINDS

Actually, I don't listen to flute players much at all. Why? Because I am so often disappointed by what I hear. So instead, I listen to strong, inspiring horn players and vocalists. This pattern of listening has been very beneficial to me and it has also influenced how I approach the instrument – physically! One of the consequences is that I tend to tackle the flute more like a tenor or a trumpet – and, as a result, I play with much more aggression than most listeners expect from a flute player.

I will give you a very, very (and, in fact, far too) short list of the musicians that I listen to a great deal. For horn players,

(1) John Coltrane (whom I listen to absolutely religiously),

(2) Miles Davis (and, of course, all of his bands) and

(3) Clifford Brown (especially the sessions with Harold Land).

For vocalists, I gravitate (strangely enough) to soul and gospel singers – notably

(1) Aretha Franklin and

(2) Johnny Adams.

In terms of flutists, I might just mention a few exceptions to my “no-flute-players” listening policy. Hubert Laws is one exception I make (with pleasure) because he is such a fine technician and he is so musical – even in rather “light” musical contexts. I also like Frank Wess. He's a very “inside” player – but you can't go wrong with him. If you want to go “outside” with your playing eventually, fine. But it's always best to start on the “inside” – and someone like Frank Wess is perfect for that. And, finally, I really dig Eric Dolphy. He is utterly inimitable and he tackles the instrument with a truly venturesome spirit. Even his failings (on matters of pitch, say) are not critical to my ear because he is such an extraordinary and singular player.

Finally, in recent years, I have done some flamenco work with Esmeralda Enrique's Spanish Dance Company and, as a consequence, I came across a flute player who is not strictly a jazz player (and is therefore not really known in the jazz community at all) but who is quite a remarkable player and improviser nonetheless. His name is Jorge Pardo and he plays in Paco de Lucia's band. Check this guy out! He has brilliant technique and, as well, a very, very groovy melodic and rhythmic sense. Indeed, Jorge Pardo is the first flute player who has come along in years and actually said something to me on the instrument. I would strongly recommend hearing him live with Paco de Lucia's band. I would also recommend Jorge's album, *10 de Paco* (on Milestone), because it is very cool

(check out the piano player, Chano Dominguez too!) and has some really groovy flute playing on it.

Conclusion

I would like to make two last points, both of which are obvious – but it is the obvious that is so often overlooked!

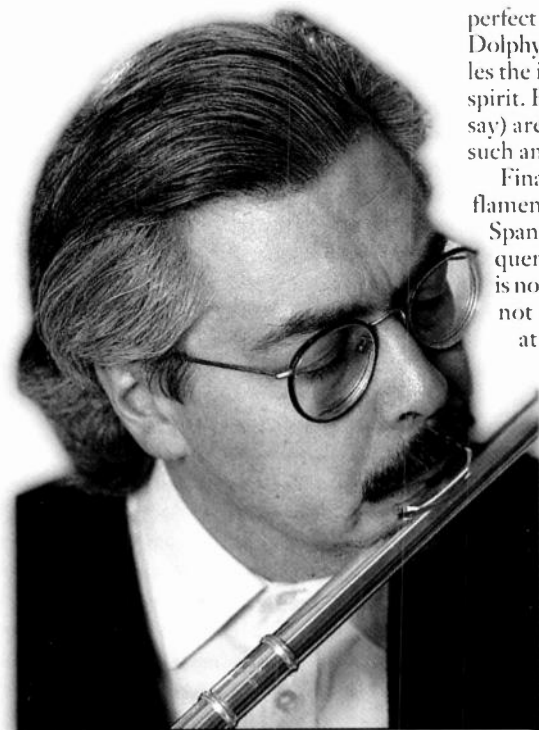
First, the flute is a very small instrument – and it is delicate in many ways. It follows that you can achieve very “big” changes in your sound with very “little” changes in your body.

Second, playing the flute is an entirely stress-free experience – on every dimension. There should be no tension to speak of with respect to the embouchure, the wind, the body positioning, the hands, the fingers, the mechanism ... you name it. Therefore, you should be able to play the instrument without ever getting tired – which is why really great flute players can continue to perform, at very high levels, even in very advanced stages of life. Therefore, beware! If you ever find yourself over-exerting, or if something hurts, then you are definitely doing something wrong! Look into it carefully because playing the flute *never* hurts!

These last two points are very important physical principles for you to bear in mind because playing in recognition of these principles will enable you to minimize any undue expenditure of energy at the same time that they will enable you to maximize your control of physical (and, hopefully, musical) outcomes.

That ends this series of articles on playing in non-classical contexts. It is my hope that the series has been of use, as well as interest, to flutists specifically and wind players generally.

Bill McBirnie has been voted Flutist of the Year by the Jazz Report. His flute work is featured on the album, Desvio, catalogued under the project name, EXTREME FLUTE. It is available at major retailers and through the distributor, Indie Pool. If you have any questions for Bill, he can be reached at billmcb@idirect.com.



by **BILL MCBIRNIE**

B

brass

the Yamaha factory



by Chase Sanborn

I recently had the opportunity to tour the Yamaha band instrument factory in Grand Rapids, MI. This is an assembly factory; the parts are manufactured in Japan and shipped to Grand Rapids where they are put together. My expert tour guide was customer service manager Bill Matthews.

The first thing I noticed was how clean the shop is. Yamaha prides itself on the state of the workplace, and strives for the highest standards of environmental responsibility and worker safety. There are numerous examples: Every machine is connected to a central air filter system, which is incredibly effective. In the room housing the polishing and buffing machines the air pressure is kept to a negative level so that the air collection system works to its optimum and when you open a door to the room the air rushes in, rather than dust rushing out. In the lacquer application area the wall is covered with a waterfall which collects any over-spray and carries it to a water treatment plant. From there it is returned to a cleaner state than when it arrived.

Another thing that struck me was the number of people involved in the construction of each horn. Unlike auto factories with lots of automated and robotic procedures, the majority of the work here is done by real people. From sorting the parts, to assembly, polishing and finishing, these are very much handmade products.

The workers we talked to are dedicated and proud of what they do. Nobody seemed rushed or under the gun to produce. It was

explained to me that the workers are assessed not on volume of instruments completed, but on the number of returns. In other words, quality takes precedence over quantity. This is quite obvious to the casual observer. At numerous places along the assembly line you see people inspecting each horn, looking for any little flaw. Each station is ergonomically designed for the individual worker. It is consideration like this that makes for a happy work environment, and the average length of time on the job for Yamaha factory employees is well over 10 years.

The spot at which quality control becomes most obvious is at the end of the line, where every instrument is inspected and play tested. The lead brass tester is Tim Smith, who has been at Yamaha for 18 years. Day in and day out he passes the final judgment on each brass instrument that comes off the line. He looks for leaks or flaws in construction, and then plays the instrument, searching for anything that is not just right. If he finds a problem that he can't correct on the spot, it is notated and then returned to the appropriate station. It is this almost obsessive attention to detail that has earned Yamaha a reputation for incredible consistency. Every horn comes out of the box ready to go – slides and valves work smoothly and the horn blows consistently. You don't have to search to find a good Yamaha – they are all good.

In one wing of the factory is the new Custom Shop where I spent some time with

the newest member of the Yamaha team, Bob Malone. Bob is well-known and respected worldwide for his leadpipes and custom modifications to horns. As the Product Development Manager for Brass Instruments, Bob will be developing new instruments as well as engineering modifications to existing models. He works alongside Hiroshi "Tommy" Nakajima (Product Development Manager for Woodwind Instruments), Bill Mathews (Customer Service Manager), Lyne Selleck (Customer Service Assistant), Mike Lutley (Customer Service Technician), Dan Ensing (Customer Service Technician) and Kurt Witt (Product Manager for Wind Instruments). Bob's knowledge and experience, coupled with his understanding of brass instruments and the players, brings a potent new force to Yamaha. Look for some great things to come out of this partnership!

A trip through the factory makes it obvious why Yamaha is a world-leader in so many different product areas. They are already making some of the finest instruments in the world. With the additional resources provided by Bob Malone and the Custom Shop, the future is looking very bright for the company and the players!

Chase Sanborn is a trumpet player and teacher in Toronto. The author of Brass Tactics and the Brass Tactics Companion, Chase has just released his second CD entitled Sweet & Low. You can hear a cut from this CD (and others) on his Web site at www.brasstactics.net.



digital music



by Paul Lau

hard-disk VS. digital tape

Recently I was quite intrigued by many discussions of the differences of opinion between "direct-to-disk" recording and "digital audio tape" (systems in general). Digital recording has come a very long way. Most music you hear today, has probably been "touched" by the digital realm in one way or another whether in the recording, mixing, post-production or final set-up and creation of a final CD product. They used to say digital just "takes the life out of the music recording." Now it seems one can't live without it and it is readily accepted.

Throughout the evolution of time and digital, has the human ear accepted that the digital realm could or can be warm sounding? It's amazing how hearing a recording on one hard-disk recorder and playing the same sample piece on another system actually will sound different even with similar technical "specs" for both systems. Endorsements of certain digital systems from major studios or bands can cause heads to turn and ears to perk up, "So it sounds better on..." or "Oh, you won a Grammy, what was that edited on?" "Oh, best musical score for a movie." "Gotta get one of those..." etc.

What is direct-to-disk? Digital audio recording is when the audio signal is changed via an analog/digital converter (A/D). The information is recognized in a format that the hard-disk can read and which the user can then manipulate the information on the drive, then it comes back out through a digital to analog converter (D/A) so one can hear it.

What is digital audio tape? When using digital tape, it is the same process except there is no hard drive storage. The information is stored on digital audio tape. Now the tape can be a DAT (digital audio tape) which is a 2-track digital tape, (mainly used for mix downs or data storage), or a multi-tracked super VHS tape that has been formatted i.e. ADAT (this would be an example of an 8-track digital tape). The difference is not so much as the quality of the recording going in, as to the ability to get to the data information more readily and to manipulate the recording (also known as RAM-random access memory). Here is where the concept of "linear" recording and "non-linear" recording is very important. With non-linear recording, everything seems instantaneous, for example just rewinding to a particular part of a song and to loop it can be done easily and within seconds, point and click, and you're there.

With linear recording/tape, it isn't visual, it's slower and a bit more cumbersome. This is not to say it can't be done with digital tape recording but there is so much more that can be done via hard-disk computer recording. This is similar to a typewriter versus a word processor. But please, can you still create an essay on a piece of paper? I believe that one of the concessions of the inflexibility of editing of digital audio tape is the digital transference to hard-disk. This is when a digital tape recording machine has the ability to transfer the information via coaxial, S/PDIF or optical to a hard-disk. Since the data can be manipulated, some companies

have created specific protocols to allow the digital information to be transferred without any loss of quality like TDF, Alesis ADAT Edit Card, etc. If you already have experience in recording you will find the learning curve much easier using digital audio tape then hard-disk recording, because you are replacing an analog tape machine with a digital tape machine. Whether you are an experienced recording engineer or a novice, once you step into the realm of computer hard-disk recording, the learning curve is based on acquiring knowledge of three new technologies. Before you begin to record, you need to learn about the computer platform, the software, and the interface hardware, not to mention a plethora of extra hardware like CD burners and integrated software plug-ins (which future articles could be written on both). Most musicians or engineers who discuss the differences gravitate to one or the other. Sometimes both. It is now possible to have it all synched up together if you prefer. The word that comes to mind is "transition", analog tape to digital tape to hard-disk, digital recording will continue to evolve and grow no matter what and at the end of the day I still enjoy that proverbial saying "it's not what you have but what you do with it."

Paul Lau B.Sc., is a MIDI/digital audio consultant; music software consultant for Steve's Music Toronto, Rama Computers; owner of SoundLab3 and SNC Christian Productions. You can hear Paul on his latest CD release Do You Know Jesus?

V

recording the voice in your head

vocals

It's studio time and the singer's up. No more pre-production. No more scratch vocals. This is the take that's going to pilot your song to the top of the charts.

Take 1: Sounds good. Just warming up. Take 2: Nice. Just got to work a little on the pitch. Take 3: Good attitude. Still a little dodgy on the pitch. Take 4: Maybe you should have a listen.

Gasp! I don't sound like that, do I?

Have no fear. All singers go through the same growing pains as they learn to be recording artists. We all face the same phenomenon. We can sing live, but when we get into the controlled atmosphere of the recording studio with those damn headphones on, it's "back to jail, do not pass go, do not collect \$200!" You can't seem to sing on key. And the harder you try, the worse the performance gets. And at the expense of singing on key, you sound contrived, mechanical and lifeless.

Then, if practice makes perfect, how can you practice singing in the studio without it costing you an arm and a leg? It's not like

sitting in your bedroom practicing your guitar every free moment you get.

I'm here to tell you there is a way. And it's easier than flying hours!

Getting Started:

1. Get yourself a multitrack recorder, a set of headphones, and a microphone. It doesn't have to be expensive or elaborate. Today you can pick up this stuff on sale or secondhand for less than the cost of a few hours in the studio and it will last you for years. For all you computer heads, there are lots of multitrack software programs available.

2. Before you start singing you'll need some accompaniment - something to sing to. If you don't play, have a musician buddy or band mate lay down the music to one of your favourite songs or one of your own songs. It's always good to record some sort of beat, either with a drum machine or metronome, so you can practice singing in time. And make sure all the instruments you record are in tune. It would make it nearly impossible to learn to sing on key when the music is out of tune.

3. If you're working with a 4-track, record all the music on one track and leave yourself three tracks to practice with. Now record your voice on one track. Just relax and don't worry about how you're doing or whether you're on key. Now listen back and take note of what you'd like to improve. Record again and again until you're happy. Then pick another track and practice doubling the vocal you just sang. See how close you can match the two tracks. When you double your voice you can really hear when your pitch is slipping.

You'll find some higher notes are harder to hit. And long sustained notes tend to waver in pitch. And the most shocking discovery is hearing your voice played back. It certainly doesn't sound like it does in the headphones. Well, you're not alone. For most singers, probably all, it's something that takes time to get used to. As your voice improves and you get better at singing in the studio, you'll get used to what you are hearing. You see, the voice inside your head sounds better because it's resonating. Your skull is acting like the body of a guitar, and giving your voice a tone. The microphone only hears what is coming out of your mouth. So with a lot of practice you will learn to develop a tone. What ends up on

tape will be more like what you hear in your head.

One of the most difficult things to deal with when you're recording is the association between what's coming out of your mouth and what you're hearing in your headphones. This is the biggest benefit of practicing your singing on a portable multitrack. It gives you the opportunity to learn how to control what you're singing in relation to what you're hearing. It takes many hours and years to learn how to make this work, so why not practice at home on your multitrack before you spend umpteen dollars in the studio.

Tips:

1. If at first you're having trouble identifying your voice in the headphones, slide the headphone speaker off one ear. That way you can hear both what is coming out of your mouth and what you sound like in the headphones.

2. Experiment with levels. Adjust the "music to vocal" ratio and find out where you're comfortable. You may find that you can sing better when the music is lower and your voice is louder. Or maybe you like to hear what you're singing to, and have the music louder.

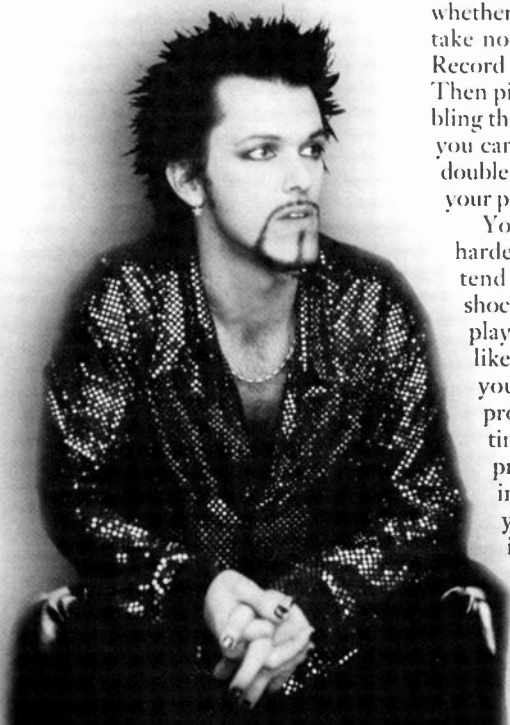
3. Do not bathe your voice in effects. It may make your voice sound better to slap on a delay or wash it in reverb, but it's only skewing the tone you're trying to develop and making it harder to sing on key. A little vocal plate reverb is all you should ever need. Better to get used to your voice as it really is with no equalization and no effects.

4. Last but certainly not least, don't tire yourself out. As your voice gets tired it only gets harder to sing on key, and you'll only get discouraged. Start again the next day when you're better rested.

Singing and writing on a small multitrack in your own space is infinitely more fun than practicing your scales. And when it's time to record your vocal in a "dollars-an-hour" recording studio, you'll be better prepared and more comfortable with yourself. Don't frustrate yourself trying to record the perfect vocal before you're ready. Spend the time at home with your multitrack, where there is no pressure to beat the clock.

Have fun and don't be afraid of the red light!

Chris Brodbeck is vocalist/bassist for See Spot Run.



by Chris Brodbeck



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2 h e 2 e a

PARTY

by Krista Lamb



Roy Thomas

Mid-way through the photo shoot for the cover of this magazine Jeff Martin announces that he wants to try a look more “menacing.” He leans over the console, stares into the camera and projects the dark, brooding aura that has become the hallmark of his band, The Tea Party. It’s the sort of shot that fans of the band are accustomed to: the penetrating gaze of Martin looking out from the printed page, but today there is a sense that it brings with it something new.

‘Menacing’ is a word that singer/guitarist Martin uses to describe the band’s new collection of songs, *The Interzone Mantras*. The album is a return to the band’s roots, a record that melds The Tea Party’s Middle Eastern influences with the crunch of real rock ‘n’ roll. “It’s just an onslaught,” says Martin. “It’s the type of record that you have to sit down and listen to. You can’t just put this on as background music.”

Gone are the loops and sampling that highlighted the band’s most recent records, for *The Interzone Mantras* those accoutrements simply weren’t needed. This album was to be raw ... passionate ... menacing.

“For The Tea Party, it’s our hardest rock record,” says Martin, “and it’ll probably be the hardest Canadian rock record ever.” Seated next to a console in a dimly lit recording studio, dressed in black with a cigarette always at hand, Martin says this seemingly without irony. He and his band mates, drummer Jeff Burrows and bassist Stuart Chatwood, have set out to make a record that will reflect their heavier, harder tendencies. “We’ve had moments in our career when we were very focused, like on *The Edges of Twilight*, we had a focus, we were going to do this alchemy of world music meets rock music with all the instruments and everything. On this album we had a focus too – we just wanted to make the heaviest rock record that the three of us could make,” Martin explains. “Musicianship in this band is quite high, so we figured, let’s exploit what we do best and just jam and play rock music.”

From the moment they sat down to start writing, there was an awareness of where this album needed to go and of the changes that needed to happen for that vision to be realized. “It was a conscious effort by the three of us because we wanted to write a record that sounded like the band,” says Martin. “See, *Transmission*, and *TRIPtych* even, those records were constructed in the studio, so it was kind of like one layer, then the next layer, then the next layer. That’s a cool way of writing songs and everything, but we just felt it was time for a different approach.”

That approach meant that this time Martin, who had been the primary songwriter for the last several albums, worked in a more collaborative fashion with the rest of the band. “This record, we all brought in different parts,” he explains. “The other two records before that, I was pretty much constructing things and then Jeff would add his different style of drumming and Stuart would add his nuances. This one is the first time that it’s a real equal effort.”

The change seems to be refreshing for Martin, who is known for his exacting control of the band’s music. He has always produced and recorded the band himself (save for the *Edges of Twilight* album, which Ed Stasium co-produced) and, while he continues this tradition with *Interzone*, there is a sense that Martin is truly thrilled with the creative contributions of Chatwood and Burrows. “This band, when it’s on, is probably one of the best live bands going,” he says. “I wanted to capitalize on that with the writing of the record and get the three of us in a room and construct the songs as a band and jam on the riffs and everything else.”

His decision to produce allows him to maintain creative control over the final results, developing something that speaks to the original vision and which doesn't bow to industry pressures. "I'm very particular. I want this band to stand out," he says. "You see, that's what's happening right now with rock music, everything is becoming very generic. Even the new metal bands, you get rid of a certain singer and all of these bands really sound the same. [They have the] same guitar tones, same drum sounds, because the American producers go in for the fast food model."

The Tea Party has never been a band that does anything in the expected way. When its debut album, *Splendor Solis*, was released, its sound – influenced by artists like The Doors and Led Zeppelin, with a heavy dose of eastern sensibilities thrown in – was far from what rock radio was embracing, yet the band never bowed to pressure to change. Instead, the trio honed a sound of its own, releasing albums that heightened the eastern influence, then melded dance and industrial sounds to broaden and shape the band's tone. The result has been an increasingly strong unit, one that has never abandoned its trademark sound, but which has brought fans along while the members matured and ripened as musicians and artists.

Martin's decision to take the helm has no doubt had a significant influence on this growth. "I'm very protective of the band's sound. We've worked over the records and we've established a certain sound now," he says. "There was a time when my band first came out that we were being compared to Zeppelin and things like that, but now, on the last few records, it seems that bands are getting compared to us."

Part of The Tea Party's continued charm is Martin's ability to weave the esoteric and the spiritual lyrically into his songs without crossing the line into pretentiousness. This melding of human emotion and cosmic intangibles has found its way into all of the band's records, *The Interzone Mantras* being no exception. Even the title came from Martin's interest in how spirituality can affect society. Inspired by William Burroughs' book, *The Interzone*, Martin expanded on Burroughs' concepts to create a title befitting The Tea Party's unique outlook. "*The Interzone* is a semi-fictional account of [Burroughs'] life in the city of Algiers, as a news correspondent," Martin explains. "At that time Algiers wasn't taken over by the Islamic movement, so it was the gateway to Africa and there was such a cross-colonization of cultures that was happening in this little square in the centre of town that everyone dubbed 'the interzone.' One of the things that [Burroughs] remarked on in his book was the disease of religion coming in and, basically, staining the beauty of all these cultures, of all this alchemy that was beginning to happen."

"So, for instance then, The Tea Party's music has a lot of cultural lacing, with my Arabic influences and Indian and even Jeff Burrows' African, with his percussion style," Martin continues. "So, I'm thinking about these songs that we happened to compose and mantra, being this spiritual, sensual, sometimes sexual thing, and this record, that's kind of where it's at." Creating a consistent tone with respect to music, lyrics and even song and album titles has allowed The Tea Party to present a total package, something many bands struggle to do. The band has grown and experimented, but it has never betrayed its core audience, instead, it has continued to expand on its original fan base without alienating those who were there from the beginning. This continuity is something that will no doubt help the transition into the American market that will begin with this record.

Unlike the *Transmission* album, which was primarily recorded at Martin's home studio in Montréal, Martin and the band returned to Montréal's Studio Morin Heights to record *The Interzone Mantras*, with the band again using Metalworks Studios in Mississauga, ON to mix and master the album.

Working at Metalworks allowed Martin to again use engineer Nick Blagona, who assisted him on *TRIPtych* and the band's recent greatest hits collection, *Tangents*. "Nick is the analog genius. He was the one who did all of those old Deep Purple records, so he knows all the tricks," explains Martin of his choice. "We're updating a classic sound." Blagona, a seasoned studio veteran who has also worked with artists such as Chicago and Moist, is the perfect in-studio partner for Martin, someone who is able to assist in developing Martin's vision without trying to overpower. "He's like my foil," says Martin. "It's a strange relationship. I can step away from the console at any time and say, 'Nick, I'm having a problem with this. It's not sounding like this and it's not like this,' and two seconds later it's done. It's a symbiotic relationship."

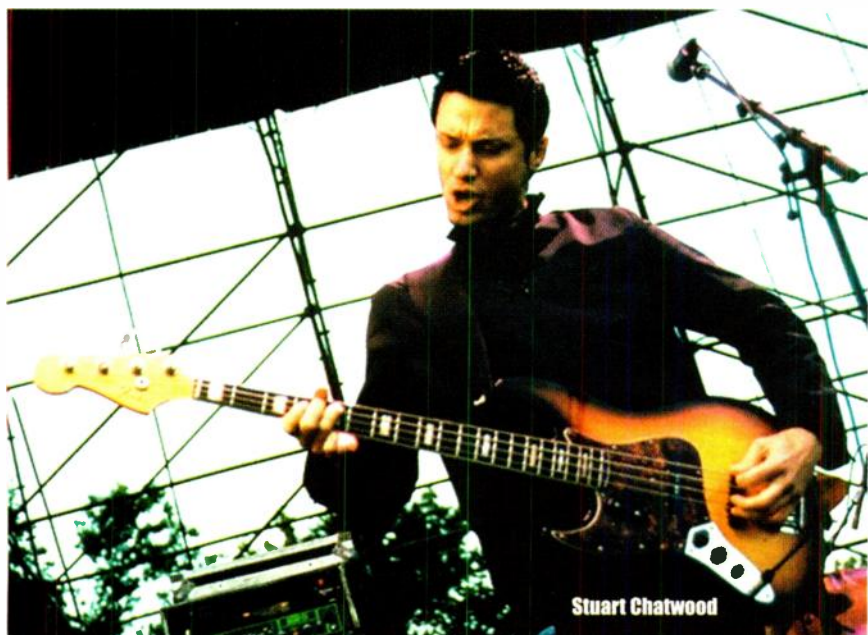
The recording process itself has been very smooth, with the band going back to its roots not only musically but also in its choice of studio equipment. "It's really old-school, what we've done. We're using 2-inch, 24-track machines and it's all about minuting and compressing things properly," Martin says. Still, the band has the technical savvy to create the sounds that they want, be it as minimalist as a bombastic, straight-ahead rock song, or as sonically impressive as a full orchestra. "This song that I'm working on right now, called 'Requiem', I filled up two 24s of analog and then we put all of the strings on a 24-track digital machine. So, the way that we recorded it and overdubbed it, we have 128 strings on the song," says Martin.

The Tea Party has never been a band that takes hugely extended breaks between albums, and this session was no exception. Following tour dates to support *Tangents* and the release of *Illuminations*, a re-mixed 5.1 DVD compilation of its videos, work on *Interzone Mantras* began in earnest. Once the writing was completed, recording was done over only 20 days.

"It's the old adage, no rest for the wicked," Martin chuckles when asked about the quick turnaround. "As long as we keep working we stay out of trouble. This band works very hard, but we also play very hard, and if we're not working, then to play hard becomes too important and things get lost."



Stuart Chatwood and Jeff Martin



Stuart Chatwood

In the studio things came together quickly, with Burrows being particularly "on" throughout the process. He has always been known for being one of the strongest technical drummers in the country, but Martin feels that Burrows' performance on *Interzone* far outpaces his other work. "The drummers who would be in this record are all going to be pretty much blown away by Jeff Burrows' performance," says Martin. "I sat there with my assistant Nick, and Stuart, and the three of us were just watching this guy, and in two nine-hour sessions he did the entire record – just one take, one take."

Burrows' performance was also a catalyst in the decision to forego any sampling or loops this time. While Martin has always been at the forefront when it comes to incorporating the latest technology into his musical creations, this time he didn't feel that all of the accents would compliment the vision. "We threw it out the window on this record," he says with a smile. "Jeff's drumming performance was so powerful, that that would just take away from it, having loops and things like that on this record."

Chatwood too moved away from anything that seemed to lack the hard rock sensibility the band was moving towards. He shifted away from the use of keyboards to fill out the band's sound, instead concentrating on trying to create something that was much more heavily guitar driven.

Even the Eastern influences, which have always been prominent on The Tea Party recordings, were inserted using guitars rather than sitars or any of the other Eastern instruments that the band has often experimented with. The melodies are woven into the big, loud rock songs on the album in a style that is unique to the band.

The result is a sound that, while still unabashedly The Tea Party, is rougher, less polished and somewhat dirtier. It is the type of rock 'n' roll meant to be played inexcusably loud.

The release of *The Interzone Mantras* heralds another huge step for The Tea Party. This is the album that the band and its label, EMI, have

decided to market to the U.S. The Tea Party's five previous albums have been remarkably successful in both Canada and Australia, but they have yet to take on the American market. It's a plan that Martin admits has been put on the backburner several times before, as the band concentrated on building its fan base elsewhere. He believes that the new record presents the best opportunity to catch the ear of fans south of the border. "There's a huge, huge interest now in the band because of the material and the style of the material, it's really like the American psyche's maybe ready for it now," he says.

The band will tour the States extensively following the October release of the record. Martin predicts that the band will spend at least two and a half years on the road across North America before they go back into the studio.

And they will be back in the studio. Recent comments to the media had Martin predicting that the band may have only one or two more albums left in it, if any. At the time, that was truly how he felt, but sometime during the recording of the new record he realized that he was wrong. "I needed things to change and I think the band needed things to change. 'Walking Wounded' [the one new track on *Tangents*] was such a huge song, and such a big statement, but we needed to re-evaluate our values and see where we wanted to go," he says. "And this record came about and the writing was so much fun and then recording the record was so much fun and, just the material being what it is, I see a pretty good future now."

Many had predicted that Martin might soon give up The Tea Party to further his in-studio career. He has, most recently, produced a song on David Usher's newest solo record and mixed the Static in Stereo album, both to positive response. The switch is certainly something that the singer/songwriter sees as part of his future, just not quite yet. "I won't be playing in The Tea Party when I'm 38 years old," he says with conviction. "That's one thing I'm quite sure of. That's really not my thing ... but after that I'll start producing."

Until then, Martin is content to continue stretching his creative muscles with The Tea Party. Knowing that the band still has the ability to develop new and interesting variations on its musical style will, if all goes well, keep both he and the band's fans interested for at least a few more records.



Krista Lamb is a Toronto-based freelance writer.



Jeff Burrows and Jeff Martin



by Rod Christie

An overnight storm has washed away Toronto's ubiquitous blanket of smog, and the early morning streets feel fresh, bright and breezy. Students, streetcars and office types hustle by the small patio outside of a Starbucks as singer David Usher arrives on time, a very un-rock and roll nine o'clock. Energetic and alert, he nevertheless admits to having insomnia and soon settles down with an extra large coffee.

After selling over a million records and climbing all over the charts with Moist, he is on the verge of releasing his second solo album, aptly titled *Morning Orbit*, and his excitement is palpable. While Moist as a band is by no means finished, Usher is keen to present his new songs as though he is starting all over again. In some respects, this is true, as his songs are being pushed into unfamiliar territory by a new group of musicians, and at the same time he has taken on the heady task of self-management. But there are some familiar names cropping up on the record, as his Moist partners Mark Makoway, Jeff Pearce and Kevin Young all lend their talents to various tracks, and the sound of his voice is immediately familiar to anyone who has tuned into MuchMusic in the past eight years. The difference this time is that the album is a result of his vision alone, and the whole process of writing, recording and making these songs road worthy has energized him and made music exciting again.

Morning Orbit was in the works regardless of the fortunes of Moist as a band, but it was the decision of drummer Paul Wilcox to leave that provided Usher with the freedom to work on the project. "Paul hurt his back and decided he didn't want to come back at the end of the last tour," says Usher. "He made a life decision, and he knew I was going into this record anyway. We're all still friends, and we have a new drummer and intend to keep playing, but I'm going to spend a long time working this record."

Usher has been writing for almost two years in preparation for recording *Morning Orbit*, casting about for ideas and inspiration and continually honing incomplete work until it is ready. "I've been stripping a lot of songs apart, trying to figure out what direction to go in," he says of the process. "I was trying to make it different from the last record and just experimenting a lot. I think people that are writing songs are in general just collectors. You look around the world and take different ideas from different places, ideas that interest you, whether they are personal, political, social or whatever – things you see on TV. You're just collecting little ideas wherever they come from, and hopefully they come out in some sort of fluid way when you are writing."

Many of the songs on *Morning Orbit* are different from what fans have come to expect from his work with Moist. Performed largely outside of the rock vein he has successfully worked before, the album features ambient textures and melodic subtleties that might have been buried in the past. The arrangements are still accessible, and allow plenty of room for Usher's lyrics to breathe and grow on their own. "I'm very much a singer/songwriter person," he says of his musical influences. "I'm a huge Leonard Cohen fan, and Ben Harper, people who are real characters. I also like a lot of hip-hop and other things that are word-based. I've never truly understood ambient music or stuff like deep house, unless I'm really high. That's the only time wordless music works for me, otherwise there is no context."

The technological nature of creating music today allows for constant and careful revision, a useful feature that can become a trap for a compulsive editor. "Sometimes I will edit forever. I don't pick over finished pieces as much anymore because I'm always moving on to the next thing," he explains. "Some things come out in one sitting and I don't change them at all, but others I work on for months or years even, ripping them apart and putting them back together in a different form. I might keep the lyric, or part of the melody. You know when there is something in there, but you're not sure how to make it come out so you just keep working toward the end. I just like writing."

Photo by Margaret Malandrucolo

David Usher

"I'm writing in a journal quite a bit, but I tend to write with a guitar, so it will be melody with a lyric," he continues. "Sometimes the lyric will be thrown away and the melody kept or vice versa. Sometimes I get the seed of an idea with a lyric and I'll keep re-writing it with a different melody until I find that the two are coming together. A short phrase will often lead me into a song."

Thematically, the songs are mostly personal or observational, as Usher tries to figure out where he fits in a modern world ruled by cell phones and bank machines. As if on cue, a familiar beep sounds out from his bag, and he reaches to shut off the offending accessory. "It's a mix of where I am in terms of what I'm interested in," he says of his lyrics. "Where we sit, at least in North America, between the personal and technological, where these two worlds meet and how we are trying to find our footing. Without really realizing it, we live in a completely different world because of technology and where it is right now. I don't think we've come to terms with where we are and how it's changed the landscape, and how we keep things personal within that context. I do a lot of work with computers, I write using them and record using them, and I try to make sure that within the technology there is still the seed of an idea, a human touch, and the balance between the two."

Usher started using computers to create music years ago, and now he's honed his skills and discovered an ideal setup. "I started using Cubase, and now Logic. Logic and a laptop is how I work," he says. "I have a G3 PowerBook. I love the new iBook. They're so small and powerful, the perfect travelling musician's computer." Beyond their use in recording purposes, laptops also offer diversion during tedious hours on the road, enabling the entire band to link up on the bus and play games, as well as writing and editing material. Usher also enjoys playing with the video-editing program FinalCut Pro, "the poor man's iMovie," he laughs.

The record features some well-known Canadian talent, all friends of Usher from his travels as a musician. As previously mentioned, most of his band mates in Moist show up (except drummer Wilcox) as players, as well as Gord Sinclair from the Tragically Hip, Jeff Martin from the Tea Party, Jagori Tanna and Bruce Gordon from I Mother Earth, Julie Gallo from My Brilliant Beast and rapper Snow.

The collaboration with Snow is an unexpected pleasure that turns out well. Their vocals are in a similar range despite the differences in their approach to singing, and Snow's freestyling is a great counterpoint to Usher's melody. "I knew Snow through various award shows to say 'hey,'" explains Usher, "and I saw him at a friend's birthday. I got up to play with Moist, and then he got up and did one of his songs, stripped down and acoustic. He's an amazing freestyler, he's got a great voice and I thought it would be interesting."

When other musicians came in to play, Usher generally gave them free reign to colour the song any way they wanted. "When you make a record, you are hopefully rolling with whatever impulses take you," he says. "I think that every player brings a different flavour. I generally have an idea of where I want the song to go, but when other people come in to play they can change the song completely. I don't usually show people songs in advance when they come in to play, they just improvise. I trust their sensibilities with the song, and sometimes you just have to get lucky."

"I play them the song and work through parts, and maybe they will have an idea, so we roll through and develop it and play more to refine and refine until the part is there and hopefully we get a good take," he continues.

Samples are used in abundance on the album, including a piece of operatic singing on the track "Black Black Heart". "I'm not an opera fan, but I appreciate it," says Usher. "The sample just fit into the song. I was working on 'Black Black Heart' on the chorus and Jeff (Pearce, who co-wrote and produced a number of tracks on the record) was working on trying to make that sample fit into 4/4 time, grinding it out with the technology. We just melted our two ideas and it turned into the song. I think



Jeff Mackay

"Goodnight Cleveland!"

it is from a piece called 'The Flower Duet'. Jeff is always hunting samples, and making them work is partly luck and a lot of digging."

There is one cover song on the album, a rendition of Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car". "I always liked that song," says Usher. "I always wanted to hear it with a hip-hop groove. Sometimes you just make decisions about what songs you like and just use them. Fast Car was one of the first songs I did for the album."

In tune with the experimental and freewheeling nature of the album, the recording process took place in various locations with various people producing, including Usher himself. "Part of it was recorded in my apartment in Montréal, parts were done at Jeff's place, Mark's place, my place in Toronto. Jeff Martin (from the Tea Party) came in to play as well. He co-produced a song and played guitar. Part of the recording was also done at Metalworks in Toronto."

"Mixing was the same," he continues. "It happened in all those places, plus Dave Fringa, from Manic Street Preachers fame, mixed a track in England. I was in England writing and I met him there. I did ship the tracks over later, and we did it over the Internet. So he would mix it, dump it down and I would pick it up over here."

The business of forming and rehearsing a touring band has been consuming Usher for a few months, and with some shows already under their belt, he is confident they are ready for extensive touring. "Jeff and Kevin are both in the band, and they all (this new group) actually play on one of the tracks. I've got Chris Taylor-Munro from an Ottawa band called Hydrofoil playing drums, Gerry Finn is a guitar player from Toronto (ex-Killer Dwarves), and Kim Bingham from a Vancouver band called the Kim Band plays guitar and sings. It's a really fun band and I'm really excited."



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Top photo: Extasy Studios, North Hollywood, CA, courtesy of Genelec, Inc.

"I didn't really write the album with the idea of playing live," he admits. "The songs have developed a lot, they're quite different and it's quite a heavy show, which surprised me. It's more of a rock show, but the drums are intricate, which I like."

While there are some heavily sampled passages on the album, the electronic backing has been largely discarded for the live show. "With Moist, we were using so many samples by the end that I had to make a decision with this record whether I was going to go that whole route," he says. "It can really clutter your mind if you have a lot of text and just run samples. I decided when we started rehearsing to just take away all the samples and see how it feels, and it's ended up being really organic and it's really good. It changes the songs and they're a lot heavier, but it really works musically."

A rudimentary guitar player himself, Usher will likely just turn his attention to singing while onstage. "I play purely to write. I doubt I'll play live, because we have enough guitar attack with two players. I like to have a little more freedom on stage."

The band is a mix of old and new friends, and for Usher their ability to get along was as crucial as their musicianship. "It's important to have a tight group of people when you're travelling a lot. It's like a tight knit family that likes to hang out," he says.


The pressures of keeping up with the pace of a chart topping band like Moist became problematic for Usher toward the end of their last tour, and this time he is trying to maintain some sort of balance on the road. "It was a grind by the last record, I was a little exhausted I think," he admits. "After working on this record I feel inspired again. I'm self-managed now. I started a management company with a friend of mine, so we co-manage myself amongst other things. I just wanted to have fun."

Isn't he concerned that the demands of the business will outweigh the excitement of playing music? "It isn't that hard, actually. My partner Ray McDonald and I have been working together for ages, which makes things easier. I've always been involved with things like packaging and the record covers to videos and everything else, so it's not that big a leap, really. If

there were photographs or proofs before, I was always looking at them anyway, but now I deal directly with the record company, whereas before I might not."

"If you do this for a long time you want to make sure you try new things and keep it fresh and expanding, at least in your own mind," he says. "Playing a whole set of new songs, we're just getting a kick out of it. I think we may do a couple of Moist tunes, change it up a little bit."

After tasting success with Moist, is Usher ready to climb to the same heights by himself? "You can't predict how it's going to go," he says. "Every person has to figure out how to make success work for them and also how to live with it. You have a little success and a whole bunch of failures, and you have to live with it. This can be a nasty business so you have to surround yourself with people you like and that you trust, which I do."

"It's all about songs," he continues when asked about his advice for aspiring musicians. "A song will take you a long way, and if you don't have a song..." he trails off suggestively. "One thing I can recommend is that Mark (Makoway) has a new book out called *The Indie Band Bible* [www.indiebandbible.com], and it's basically all about indie bands in the music industry, and it's a great text. It's like a how-to book and he describes all the stages from agents to record companies, to split-song things to management, to when to tour. It covers all facets of the business and playing. There's his plug!" he adds with a laugh, proving once more that friendship can take you a long way in music. 

Rod Christie is a Toronto-based freelance writer.



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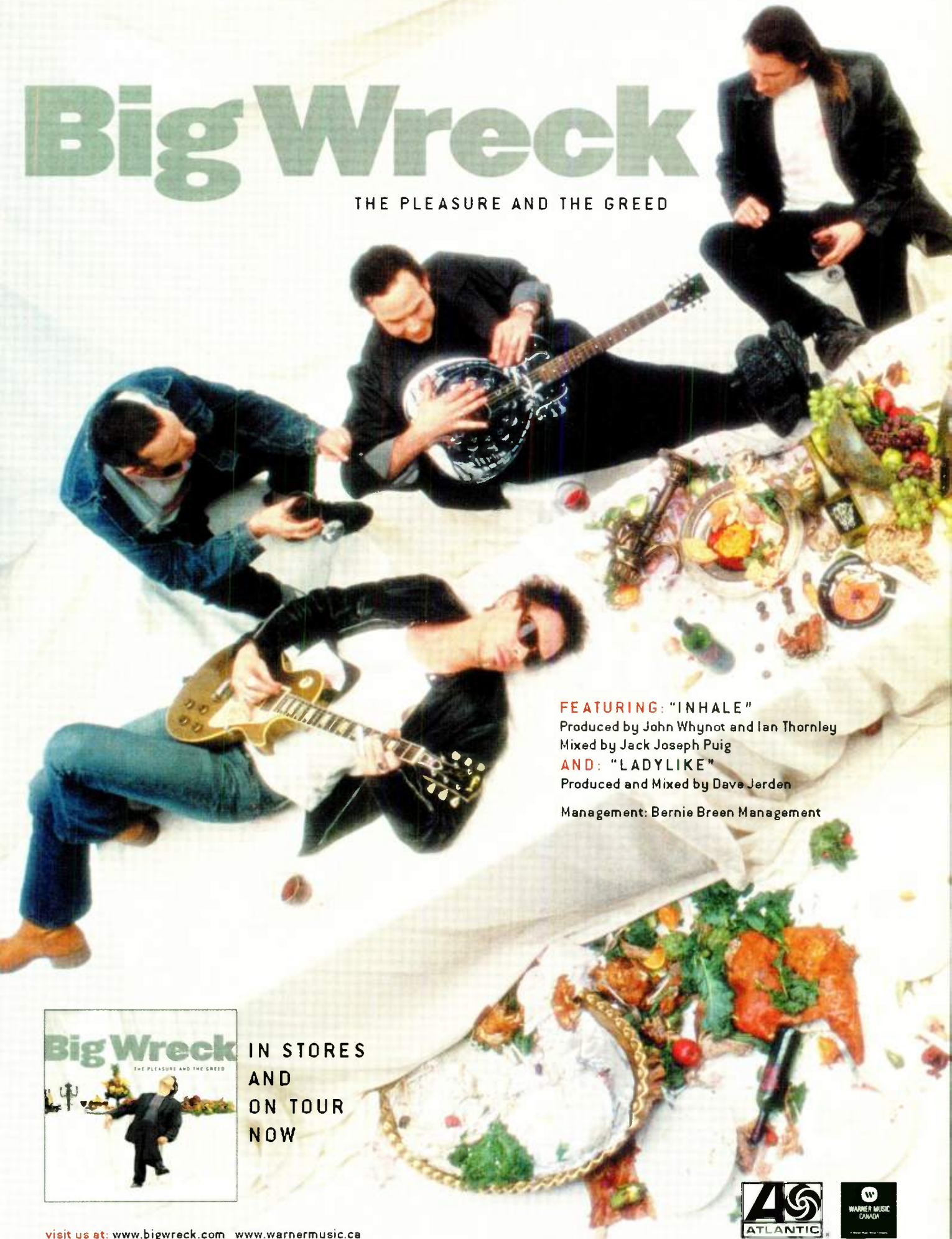
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World Radio History

Adam Gregory

by Jeff MacKay

Among the youngest Canadian musicians to possess a record deal, country artist Adam Gregory has achieved things many musicians seek their whole life, all by the age of 16. *The Way I'm Made*, Adam's debut album, was released in 2000 and he hasn't looked back since.

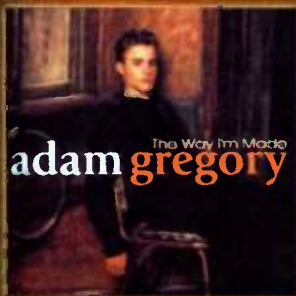
In his youth, Adam's main passion was soccer for years until music took over his life. Though he collects model cars, music has become his main passion. Adam enjoys pop radio and includes Britney Spears and Celine Dion among his CD collection, but he grew up with a special affinity for country music. "As a small kid, we used to take family vacations to Jasper and other places in the Rockies. I remember my parents always had a tape of George Strait, Randy Travis or another great country singer playing. I guess I got hooked on country music from there," explains Adam.

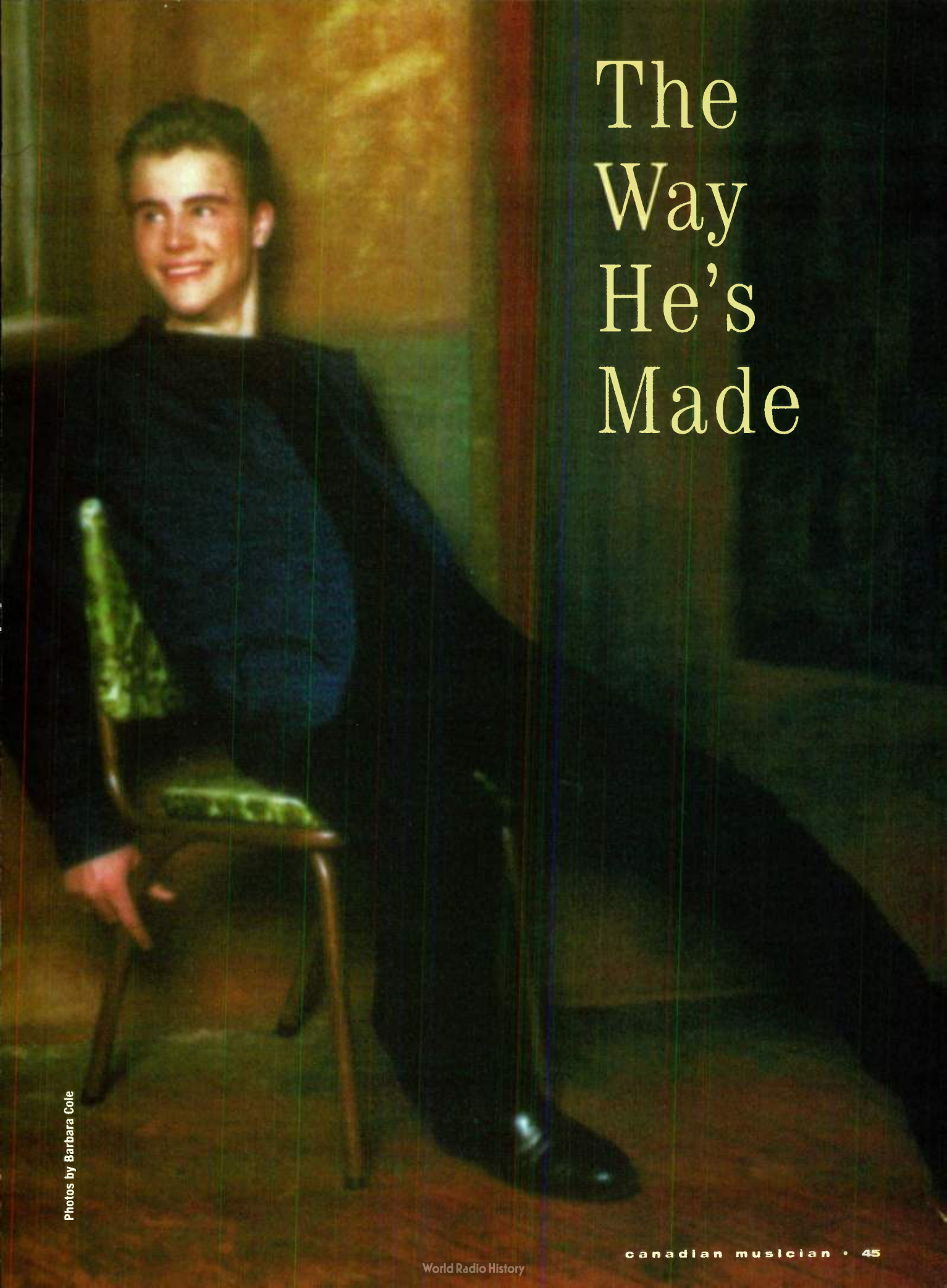
An Edmonton, AB native, Adam released his major-label debut last year on Sony Music Canada, and garnered a nomination for the Canadian Country Music Award's Rising Star award. This year, he's upped his ante to four nominations at time of press when *CM* caught up with him. He's up for Male Artist, Rising Star Award, Album of the Year, as well as producer David Martin being nominated for SOCAN Song of the Year, along with nominations for his album's graphics among other categories.

"So it's pretty cool. I'm very excited. This is going to be a big year for me – hopefully!" states Adam.

One of the big questions is how did he get this far so young? Starting at the age of eight, Adam was first enrolled in guitar lessons. "I'd go once a week for an hour lesson, eventually with three teachers," explains Adam. Not that he was displeased with any of his instructors, but he needed a little change with each of his teachers. The last teacher he worked with ended up playing guitar in his band. "He's one of my guitar players now. He taught me everything I needed to know for performing onstage." Adam originally picked up the guitar because of his cousin. "My cousin used to play quite a bit, and I was just so excited whenever I saw him play guitar. I wanted to pick it up and I really wanted to play it. That's when my parents bought me my first guitar – I was probably about nine years old. It was one of those \$39 guitars I started with and I gradually went up to better guitars. Actually I broke my first one, I sat on it." His first public appearance was at Heritage Mall, and the local Ukrainian Village. At 11, Adam and his family traveled to Nashville where he sang at the Ryman Auditorium and the Opryland Hotel. He's also performed for crowds at the Canadian Rodeo Finals, Big Valley Jamboree, Calgary Stampede, Ponoka Stampede and Hanna Rodeo. He has also toured with country stars Julian Austin and Jason McCoy in an opening slot. "I played clubs for a couple of years," shares Adam. "I had to have a permit though, which basically allowed me to come and sing, but not to hang out in the bar area. For those gigs, my parents and I would sit out in the car in the parking lot together and the bar owner would come out and get me when the time came. I'd go on to the stage, do my thing, and then when it was over, we'd go out to the car and head home for bed."

Contributing to his success, Adam also experienced some vocal lessons, in particular from Chandelle Rimmer and Laurier Fagnan. "After taking guitar lessons, I enrolled in vocal lessons. I went to Chandelle for a couple years and she taught me the basic vocal technique. We stopped going to her for a little while, and then we went to Laurier and she taught me. They all have different techniques. If it's not opera ... it's country ... it's classical. So I wanted to get different techniques down pat." Adam took vocal training for approximately three or four years to help develop his voice, which sounds years ahead of its time.





The Way He's Made

Photos by Barbara Cole

Adam Gregory

Today, Adam has moved on from \$39 guitars, to playing Yamaha and Godin guitars. "Godin sent me a guitar when I played the CCMA's to promote themselves. I played it on the show, and afterwards, Sony arranged for all of us in the band to get guitars so that was pretty cool. Basically I have four guitars now. My third guitar I ever owned was a Seagull, a 12-string Seagull guitar. I played that at a few shows - I really like the sound of a 12-string. It's like two guitars at once. It's a really rich sound. Then I received the 12-string guitar from Sony they bought me for Christmas. That was a pretty great Christmas gift."

In terms of musical influences, Adam credits one pretty heavy name in the country world. "My earliest influence was probably Vince Gill. I've looked up to Vince Gill my whole life; I've idolized him. Actually two summers ago while I was down in Nashville recording my album, by the end of the night Vince Gill had called me up on stage at this private show and I had the opportunity to sing with Vince, so it was quite a thing. That was a big experience for me." Adam would love the opportunity to write or record with his idol in the future, but he'll have to settle with sharing a stage with him for now.

On *The Way I'm Made*, Adam wrote one song on his debut. "I wrote 'The Sky's The Limit' on my album. I was sitting on the couch one day and I was thinking about life really, and how everybody ... I'm hoping everybody has a goal, and if they shoot for the sky I'm sure it will come true. Basically I had that thought in mind and the words just flew to paper, I don't know where they came from really, it's just one of those things." He came up with the lyrical idea first for "The Sky's The Limit", from the everyday phrase. "I just kept thinking of that thought, and I put it into words for the song. I like to take everyday things and create songs out of it. That's very important ... it has to come from the heart."

Adam has grown as a songwriter since preparing his last album by mainly contributing seeds of ideas that he'll spend more time on to grow them into complete songs. "I was down in Nashville this past May, and I was writing with some of the finest songwriters in Nashville. When you're going in to write with them, you think you're going to go into the writing meeting and it's going to be tense,

but you get in there and it's so laid back, that songs come to life in two or three hours."

He also found some inspiration from the passing of his grandfather five years ago. "Not too long ago, I was just doodling around and I was writing some words about how I felt and how I still think about my grandpa and I wrote a verse and chorus. I haven't quite finished it yet. I write songs and I don't quite finish them, but that was an emotional time for me - he was like my best friend." He sometimes carries a tape recorder to capture ideas when they strike him, no matter where he is whether in an airport or on the road. "Oh I'm singing, I'm singing all the time."

Production duties were handled by David C. Martin, who "definitely knows my sound," says Adam. "He's just a great guy.

I look up to him. He was once in the group Hemmingway Corner, and I have a lot of their records. Just to be working with him is quite an experience. Dave pretty much wrote all the tracks on the album, so thanks to him for all of this."

The Way I'm Made was recorded in Sony's Oasis Studios in Toronto, ON, and the other half in Nashville, TN. The band was recorded in Nashville, with the vocals being tracked in Toronto. Lenny De Rose mixed the album with mastering done by P. Letros both at Oasis.

As is with many albums recorded in Nashville, session players are hired for the album. This applies to *The Way I'm Made* as well. This presented Adam with a challenge - learning to play songs before going on the road. "I didn't play on the album, as I didn't know that much about the songs at the time. Within the last year and a half, I've picked up the songs for performances. My one guitarist is a fabulous player, and it took me a matter of one lesson to learn one song." The performances he mentioned include constant touring for the summer of 2001. "I'm proud to say I'm one of the artists in Canada that was pretty busy this summer. Not a lot of the country artists were that busy this summer."

When playing live, the musicians Adam shares the stage with include his guitar teacher Mark Sterling on lead guitar, along with Mark Puffer on electric guitar, John Towill on bass, Matthew Atkins on drums, and Tyler Vollrath on fiddle. "They're just fabulous players," exclaims Adam. Although the album features steel guitar quite frequently, they don't take a steel player on the road with them. "We don't have a steel guitar on stage, but I think that'd be cool."

When onstage with such accomplished players, Adam simply thinks about keeping his performance great. "People pay money to come see you play, so I want to give them the best show I can. We have a good half-hour to hour soundcheck just to make sure everything is in line. I'm the type of guy who respects the crowd and I want to give them everything I've got." Adam couldn't begin to find a favourite performance in his career so far, with the exception of his performance with Vince Gill. "That's definitely one of the highlights of my life." He also performed at the CCMA's last year, with the broadcast going out to millions of homes, which didn't even phase Adam: "I went up there and I was so excited - the crowd was awesome. Only the odd time do I get stage fright. I just hype myself up before the show and I just go up there and have a lot of fun."

The next album is already being planned, with Adam possibly returning to the studio in the fall of 2001. "We're writing songs right now, with me doing co-writing this time." He'll be working with the same musicians in Nashville as last time, including Bob Timberland who wrote Diamond Rio's song "One More Day". "I wasn't expecting to write with such great songwriters, but once I got down there and wrote with them a bit they're just like every day people." There are already five songs completed for the next album, with Adam co-writing on three so far. "We still have over 30 songs to choose from for the last album, so we may hopefully pick some of those songs we never chose before."

Adam has the option of recording pretty much anywhere he's comfortable, but he'll most likely stick with the successful combination of Toronto and Nashville. "But you know Sony, they're so flexible, yesterday they asked where I wanted to record, telling me it's up to me."

"And that's just it, you have to go step after step, just make the next album a little bit better than the first and then so on and so on. I have a lot of big dreams. I want to spend some time touring the States next album - get my music out there. I have a lot of support behind me. My family is the best support a boy could ask for."

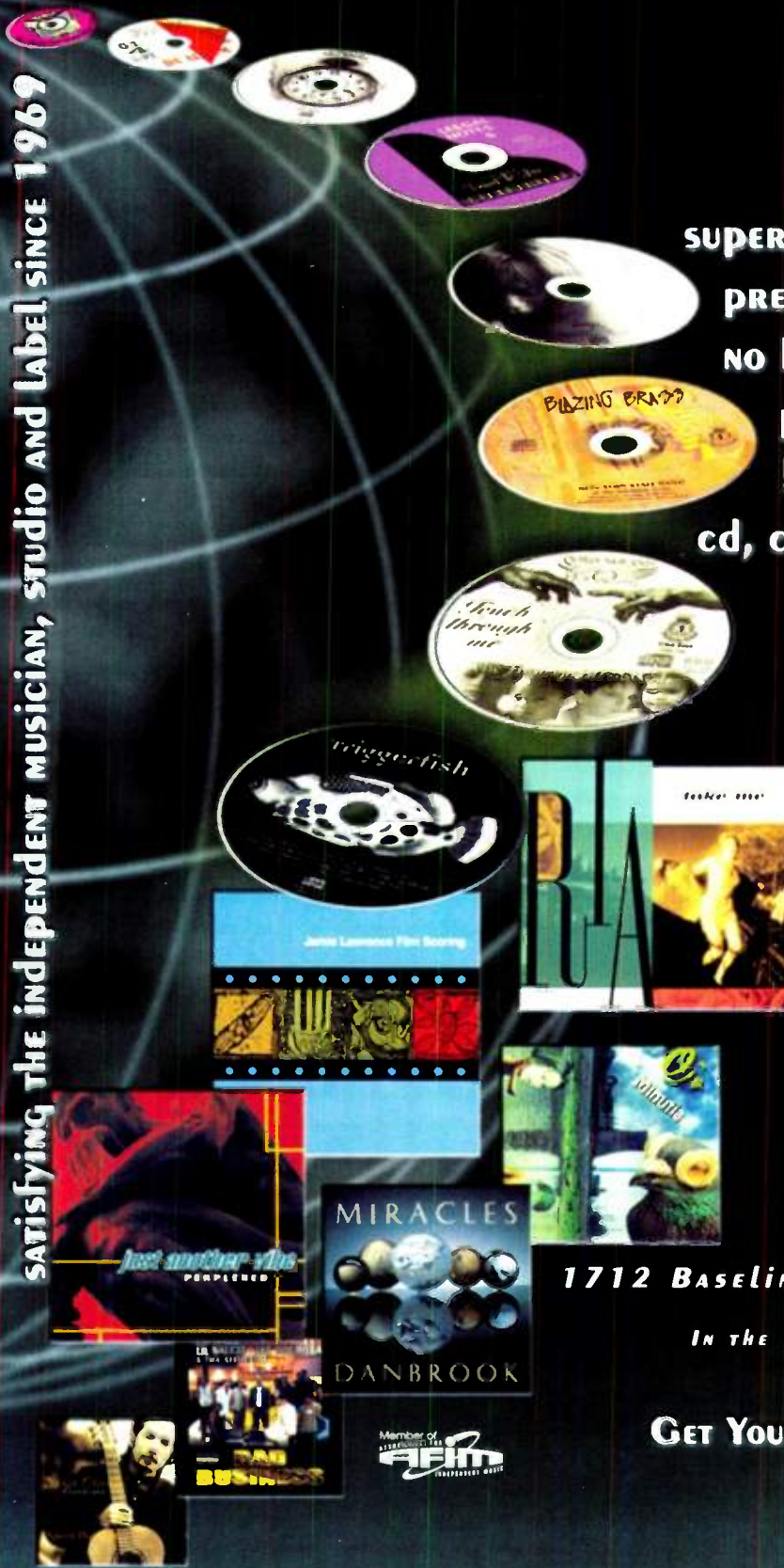


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Home Recording

by Jeff Pearce



Jeff Pearce, songwriter, producer, bassist for Moist.

Recording

Home Recording Overview

It took a hundred years for Thomas Edison's tinfoil cylinder phonograph to evolve into the first commercially available multi-track home studio. The TEAC 144 Portastudio was released by Tascam in 1977. It was a 4-track, cassette tape recorder and it retailed for about \$1,100. 25 years later, the 4-track is still available, at a fraction of the original cost, but it is just one of many options available to the home recordist.

Home studios are becoming a common and necessary tool for modern

Home Recording

musicians, and many artists have forsaken big studio facilities altogether when recording commercial releases. A home studio simply offers so much flexibility in terms of cost and convenience. Hollywood Records recording artist Leroy, says the best thing about his home studio is "I can act on inspiration. Instead of 'Alright, the studio is booked Tuesday through Friday, and you better be brilliant on those three days.' In your home studio you can roll in with your big cup of coffee, and take the phone off the hook, and start working."

Kid Kut, producer and MC for the Baby Blue Soundcrew has always done his recording at home. As he explains "Why would you spend the money to make one song, when instead of making one song you could make five songs or a hundred or however many you want?"

Craig Martin, a Toronto-based film and television composer agrees, but also points out "the cons are that you have to be very disciplined to work at home, you have to be able to set up some sort of mandate for yourself. Even when you aren't at work on a project you have to learn as much as you can about your system, and about how you compose."

A Whole Lot Of Choices...

Home recording has never been easier, but there are so many gear options that you have to be quite thoughtful when setting up your home studio. The most important thing to consider, before you start buying gear, is what are you going to be using it for? What are you recording and who will hear it? If you are a singer-songwriter and you are just looking for a way to get ideas on tape and perhaps sketch together arrangements, then an analog 4-track may be all you really need. If you are interested in making completed recordings then a digital multitrack might be more useful. If you have a bunch of MIDI keyboards and are more interested in sequencing than recording audio, then a slower computer, a MIDI interface and a mixer will do the job for you. And if you really want to produce your own records, then a Macintosh or PC computer with digital recording software could provide you with all tools you need, including automated mixing, mastering and duplication.

The next thing to consider is how much money you want to spend. Generally, the more money you have to invest the better equipment you can get, the nicer your recordings will sound and the more likely they will be useable as commercial releases. Like anything, there are exceptions to this rule, and less expensive gear in the hands of a thoughtful and creative musician is way more valuable than a room full of expensive stuff owned by someone who doesn't know how to use it.

The Basic Recording Chain

The biggest decision to make will be choosing a recording device. Briefly, there are four options: analog 4-track, digital multitrack, computer-based digital audio workstation, and tape-based digital. These options are described in more detail later in this article. But when putting together a home studio, you need to recognize that the rest of your recording chain is just as important, and needs to be factored into your budget.

Your signal path begins with your sound source, which is either a microphone, or a synth or sampler. The signal travels through a cable, to a mixer, possibly by way of a pre-amp, EQ, or compressor. The mixer sends the signal to your recording device, which captures the sound on some recording media. Your audio then goes back through the mixer, to an amp which powers speakers or headphones, through which you can hear what you are recording. With analog 4-tracks, and many digital multi-track recorders, the mixer, pre-amps and headphone amps are built right into the recording device.

The Weakest Link

The key to effectively setting up a studio at any budget is to make sure that you buy the same quality of equipment for every step in your chain. If you have \$2,000 to invest in your setup, then buying a \$1,500 microphone, a \$400 set of headphones and a \$200 cassette 4-track simply doesn't make sense. The 4-track is so limited in its construction that your recordings will not benefit considerably from having a really great mic.

Also, cables are part of your equipment, and need to be considered with respect. It is much less exciting to spend a small fortune on cables than on a nice new digital desk, but equally important.

Somewhere in your system there will be a link that is weaker than the others and it is that point that will determine how good your recordings can be.



Kid Kut with
Baby Blue
Soundcrew.



Mark Makoway, songwriter, producer, guitarist for Moist.

The Strongest Link

There may also be a piece of your chain that is far better than the rest of your equipment. This is okay. After all, you may plan to upgrade all the components of your system one at a time. The first thing producer, sound engineer, and studio designer Ken Friesen recommends investing in, is a good microphone. "A large diaphragm condenser mic, or a tube mic, a good microphone that everything sounds good with. For me, 95 per cent of great recording happens by the time you record it. You have to have a great song, great artist, great player on a great instrument running through a good cable to a great amp with a great microphone going into the mic pre, the compressor, the EQ. So by the time it hits the machine it's either there or not. And that starts at the microphone."

Mark Makoway, producer, mixer, and Moist guitarist agrees that the microphone is an important investment to make, but also stresses that the chain that leads to the recording media has to be completely weakness free. "A decent microphone, pre-amp, compressor chain will do wonders for everything. If the converters are decent in the digital deck you are using, then you will be amazed at the sounds you will get, and it won't be very far off the sounds you will get from Metalworks, or Studio Morin Heights or any of these big facilities."

For Mark Vreeken, a studio designer, producer and engineer, having a great signal path to tape is very important, but he also stresses the importance of having good monitors to listen back with. "What you are listening to is the final product, so you have to make sure that what you are listening to is a good representation of what your end product is going to be. If you are not monitoring accurately then your music is not going to turn out the way you want it to."

Ken Friesen agrees and adds that it's important to pick a set of monitors you like, and stick with them, so you can

become familiar with how they sound. "Consistent, properly set up monitoring in a good room is critical and usually missing in most home set-ups."

For composers who want a vast sonic palette, Craig Martin believes that the most important part of a home studio is "a sound source that has lots of possibilities, and is really expandable. Like the Roland JV and XV series. Even if the synth you buy has a thousand sounds you will eventually become so bored with those and you are going to need the ability to get new sounds to inspire you and move you in different directions."

Learn To Use What You Have...

For Kid Kut, the pros of home recording far outweigh any downsides, and he believes that the best thing someone who wants to start recording can do is, "buy yourself some equipment, take a month and learn to use it, and then start to record your own songs." Unlike going into a pro studio, filled with seasoned engineers, the beginning home recordist may find himself a little adrift in a world of recording technology. "The one thing you miss out on," Kid Kut says of beginning home recording, "is experience."

For Andrew Vincent, the experience will come, and as long as you like what you are hearing back, limited experience doesn't have to be a limitation. "It only seems like a limitation to me when I take it to the guy who is going to be mixing it down after and he says 'Did you have both mics pointing at each other? You know there is a serious phase thing happening here', and I'm thinking 'I don't know what phase is!'"

But for Andrew, whose two self-recorded albums *To Thine* and *After School Special* have received a boatload of critical praise, his inexperience may be part of what gives his recordings their charm. "I have the utmost respect for engineers and producers and sound guys that know the stuff really well, but the process of setting everything up seems to take a lot of time. It's the right way to do it, but sometimes I would rather just plug the mic in and start recording. I think maybe you end up capturing the moment better that way."

Craig Martin began his career composing with an 8-track digital deck, before moving to a Macintosh running Logic Audio, and he knows the pitfalls that come from suddenly having more sonic choices. "When I moved to my new system I found that I suddenly had way more options, like an infinite number of options, and sometimes that gets in the way. When I was working on the 8-track it was a little limited, which suited my style as a composer, which is quite minimalist. More options have made my sound get a lot bigger. It's only recently that I have been able to scale back and rediscover my roots as a minimalist."

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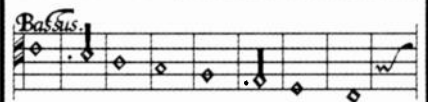
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Living With The Limits Of Your Studio Space...

Even using the most powerful home recording set up can have limitations if your studio space is part of a residence. Recording acoustic drums can be troublesome if you have limited space and nearby neighbours, but as Mark Makoway points out "people get around that as well, simply with drum loops, or drums that are created using software. And if that doesn't work, it's a short trip to your neighbourhood full-service studio where you could do a couple days of drum tracking, then bring them back to your home studio where you track everything else."

Leroy had a similar problem when he was tracking vocals for his debut, self-titled album. "Sometimes when I cut vocals it would be weird because I would be screaming and I would know that everybody could hear me. So, I would hang up some blankets, or get in the closet or sometimes even put a blanket over my head and just hold the microphone and sing into it. Pretty lo-fi city, but it seemed to work."

Leroy also discovered that the sound of roaring guitar amps could be simulated using the right technology. "Eventually I scored this piece of gear called a Roland VG-8 which is a guitar modeler. It's a very complex piece of gear where it actually models every guitar sound you can imagine, and it models the pickups, the neck, the amplifier, the speakers, the microphone and the angle of the microphone, all with one box. And it does acoustic guitars too, 12-strings, banjos, 6-strings..."

Mark Makoway often uses a Line 6 Pod for his loud guitar needs, but "I also recently built an isolation box for a Marshall cabinet, which works to a lesser degree, only because it is very difficult to completely block out the super-low frequencies. But it is still useable. I run a Shure SM57 into the box to mic the cabinet, and seal it up, and basically that gives me the Marshall sound in my house."

Jon Bartlett is the founder of Ottawa-based Kelp Records and has recorded and released 25 records since 1994, including his own band Greenfield Main. He admits that home recording sometimes takes more than a little patience. "Our house is at an intersection with street lights, so that's a problem. Lots of screeching

brakes and boomy bass speakers from convertibles make their way into some tracks. The house is old too, and the wiring is brutal, so (Greenfield Main co-founder) Jarrett had to painstakingly hang mic cables in certain ways to minimize buzz."

There are very few home studio owners who have the time and money to design an acoustically ideal workspace. Mark Vreeken has a couple of tips for making your room as sonically pleasing as possible. "The most important thing, is not to deaden it too much, but to kill the first reflection from the speakers. If you can imagine the walls are like mirrors and so when you are sitting in your mix position, try to imagine where you would see the speakers on the walls to your left and right and the ceiling. Cover those places with some kind of deadening material, like foam or a packing blanket, and then put some kind of sexy vibe over top of it so it looks good. Then have a listen. Listen to music that you are really familiar with and have a walk around the room and familiarize yourself with how the speakers sound in the room."

"A great thing to do, for the back wall of the room, is to get some bookshelves, and then take a bunch of books - cheap books from churches, old schools, libraries, garage sales, and stagger the books so you have big ones next to small ones. This gives you a really staggered topographical thing going on. This will diffuse all the reflections off the back wall."

Working from your home can create other hassles, especially when your home doubles as the recording studio for a larger collective of musicians. For Kid Kut, it's sometimes hard to play host and produce records at the same time. "People want to smoke, people want to drink, spill stuff on your floor, and sometimes I don't want to have to be the guy who is always asking people to smoke outside."

For other musicians, home recording is a more solitary endeavour, which Craig Martin warns can also have its downsides. "If you aren't careful, recording at home can be a little stagnant, because you don't have to leave your house. So you've got to force yourself to get outside, expose yourself to a variety of new situations, new studios, other musicians, anything musical. As long as you spread yourself out, and keep your antennae up and you are open then you will be able to keep the inspiration, and hopefully you will be able to bring it home with you."

Keep It Creative

No matter what home studio set up you may decide to invest in, there will come a time when you discover its limitations. And sometimes you may need to cobble together solutions in order to avoid another bank-breaking trip to the music store. Most composers score for television using MIDI set-ups synced to video, but Craig Martin got his start scoring using nothing but a digital 8-track. "I would have a VCR and a small TV in front of me and I would put the timer on the VCR and I would know that at seven seconds I had to cue the balloon falling. I had to make the sound of that balloon falling, and then after another 15 seconds the child runs across the park, and I would need a bit of score for that. It was very low-tech and very rudimentary but it always worked. I would send a DAT tape to the editor with instructions to cue it at zero, press play and sync it up to picture, and it would always sync."

Other times, having less gear at your disposal can force a musician to explore and create in a confined space that might lead to great results. Andrew Vincent abandoned his digital deck and chose to record his second album on an analog 4-track. "My strategy for recording was to fill up as much of the tape as possible. Basically I was trying to hit the red all the time. I had



Andrew Vincent and Jon Bartlett of Greenfield Main hunt for the Blair Witch.

some problems when I tried to mix it afterwards, from trying to squeeze two instruments, like vocals and electric guitar, onto one track. But other than that I was really happy with how it turned out."

Rob Laidlaw, a Toronto-based composer/producer, uses his home studio mainly for demo work for television, but has found times when his basement demos have been chosen as the final version, over the finished, big studio version. As he explains, "at a certain point it is the creative people behind the gear not the gear that makes it happen."

This sentiment is echoed by Ken Friesen, "Home recordists have to remember to keep it simple and musical, and not to get caught up in all the technicalities. You have to have a certain amount of know-how to effectively operate the thing to get the stuff done which needs to be done. But always keep it so it's more about the song that you are working on and less about technology."

Choosing Your Recording Device

The 4-Track Analog Recorder

The most affordable option is the 4-track cassette recorder. It has a built in mixer and pre-amps, meaning that a mic, a cable and a set of headphones are the only other things you will need. Lots of great work can be done, very inexpensively on these units, but you are limited to four tracks before you need to begin bouncing multiple tracks to single tracks.

If your home studio will be nothing but a songwriting tool, or a place to work out rudimentary arrangements, then this might be all you really need. Most of these units can't supply the phantom power that is need to run condenser mics, so an external power supply will be necessary if you want to use one. Basing your home studio around an analog 4-track is probably the only choice you could make where the weakest link in your signal path may very well be your recording device. Because of this, spending lots of money on nice mics, pre-amps and monitors may not benefit your recordings too much. You can probably pick up a basic machine for about \$200, and a good one for about \$500. There are a few companies manufacturing higher end 4-tracks, but if you start to feel like spending more than \$500, you should probably consider making the jump to a digital multitrack recorder instead.



Leroy's self-titled debut album.

The Multitrack Digital Hard-Disk Recorder

There are many of these on the market right now, and they offer 8 to 24 tracks of digital audio, depending on the make and model. Most of these are designed like a well-evolved cassette 4-track, with built-in mixer and pre-amps. Higher end models also feature bigger LCD displays, for waveform editing. The recordings are stored on an internal hard drive, an external drive or a removable media such as MiniDisc. Its benefits include some digital editing capability, digital sound quality. Most of these units are also quite portable. Its drawbacks are that digital editing with a small graphic interface can be quite cumbersome, and the more expensive models can't be upgraded like a computer based digital audio workstation.

There are more and more varieties of these on the market all the time. Deciding which one is right for you depends mostly on what features you need, how many tracks you want, and whether your ears are sensitive enough to tell the difference between 16-bit/44.1 kHz audio and 24-bit/96 kHz audio. If you want recordings that may be good enough for commercial release, and don't already own a mixer or computer, then you could get set up with a basic 8-track version of one of these machines for about \$1,000. More advanced models retail for as much as six times more.

The Tape-Based Digital Recorder

There are a number of these on the market, but the most common formats are the Alesis ADAT, and the Tascam DA-78, DA-88 and DA-98. To build a studio around these units you will also need a separate mixer. The biggest benefit of one of these machines is probably that they

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are handy if you will be taking projects you begin at home into a bigger studio for more work. You can also add more tracks simply by buying more machines, since syncing them to each other, or to other recording devices, is usually pretty straightforward. Most studios have access to these machines. The drawbacks are that, being tape-based, recording is linear, which makes editing a bit of a chore. Also, many people predict that the rise in digital hard-disk recording, with all of its benefits, will lead to the decline of tape-based digital. If you did want to go this route a single unit will cost \$1,500 or more and you will need a mixer as well before you start recording.

The Computer-Based Digital Audio Workstation

If you already have a reasonably fast computer, or plan on getting one anyway, and then getting into the world of computer-based hard-disk recording may not be as expensive an option as it seems. For the cost of an entry-level software package you could be recording in no time. To start getting professional results, you will need a small mixer and a great soundcard dedicated to audio recording. The sound quality is determined by the quality of analog to digital (A/D) converters in the soundcard you choose. The number of tracks available is limited by the speed of your computer and the kind of software you buy. Most of these software packages will allow you to do MIDI sequencing, as well as audio recording. With the higher end packages, such as Emagic's Logic Audio, Steinberg's Cubase, and Digidesign's ProTools the feature lists are extensive, and include very deep digital editing, effects plug-ins, and automated mixing. The biggest drawback is that



Ken Friesen, producer, engineer, studio designer.

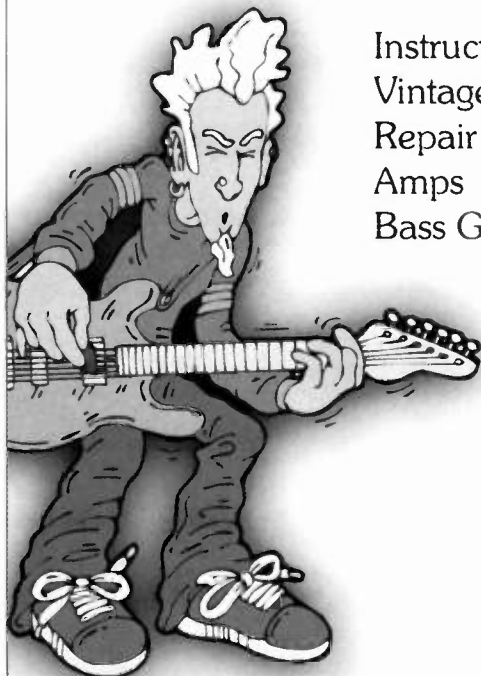
it's an expensive option if you don't already own a computer and a mixer. You will also need a secondary hard drive for storing your audio files. The software costs begin at under \$200 dollars for a basic package, and can be as much as \$1,000 for the more deluxe packages.

What The Panel Recommends

Jon Bartlett (Greenfield Main, founder of Kelp Records): The most important purchase most people mention, aside from a decent recording unit, is a Shure SM-57 microphone. They are relatively cheap and extremely diverse. It is unidirectional, but a great all-around mic for vocals, acoustic instruments as well as amplifiers.

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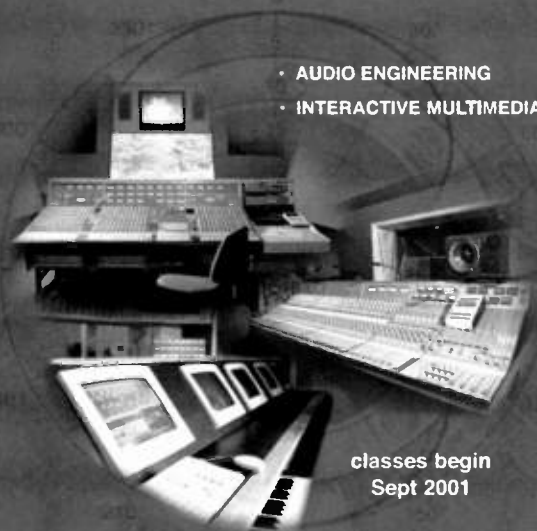
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Ken Friesen (Producer, engineer, studio designer): I have to recommend some kind of digital hard-disk recording. Whether it's Mackie or RADAR or Roland, or software on a computer like Logic or ProTools, or Nuendo. Tape-based digital is dying a very quick death, much faster than analog. Analog is a treat, and its nice if you can get it, but for effective bang for the buck, go with the computer – either disguised as a computer or not. **Kid Kut** (Producer, MC, with Universal recording artist Baby Blue Sounderew): If I were to start over today, doing what I was doing, I would buy a piece from Roland (the Roland VS 2480). It's a mixer and

hard-disk recorder, 24-track, all in one. It has a screen, where you can actually see the waves, and it has a sequencer in it. It's an instant studio. **Rob Laidlaw** (producer, composer, songwriter): I would recommend a basic set up to beginners i.e. 4-track or a small digital set up, to minimize the hassle and enable the user time to get a handle on a basic recording situation. I feel the most important piece of gear at first is your recording device, so don't kill yourself on a huge investment. Start small and see if you stay with it. **Leroy** (Hollywood Records recording artist): For me one of the most important things I ever bought was an AKAI MPC2000. You can sequence synths



Mark Vreeken, studio designer, producer and engineer.

and sample drums and do everything right off that one box, in fact you can do entire songs production with that and a DAT machine. It's quite inexpensive for how powerful it is.

Mark Makoway (producer, mixer, songwriter, author, guitarist for EMI recording artist Moist): I would recommend starting with a computer. Most households these days have a computer and you don't need to have the fastest computer going to get into home recording. You can start running 16 tracks no problem with a piece of software and a reasonable computer. Emagic, who make Logic, and Steinberg, who make Cubase, have different levels of software and you can get an introductory program that has a reduced feature set. But they will still give you so much more than an analog 4-track.

Craig Martin (composer, producer, songwriter): I love the digital desks (digital multitrack) and I would say that is the place to start, because it's like the new 4-track. But I would have to recommend ultimately moving to a computer system. Whether its Cakewalk, or Cubase or Logic or ProTools, just get it so you are on the screen and you can see the music right in front of you. For scoring for television it is indispensable.

Andrew Vincent (Kelp Records recording artist): Buy a good 4-track, a tube pre-amp and a good mic. Then find a soundman who is trying to do some recording stuff in his spare time and get him to do the mixdown and put it to DAT. You've got the ideas and you've got unlimited time.



Jeff Pearce is bassist and songwriter for Moist, and has 15 years experience scoring film, dance and multimedia presentations shown in Canada and internationally. Find Jeff online at www.vibradome.com.



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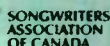
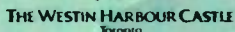
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W

exploring the writing process

with Rufus Wainwright

Having a very diverse background, ranging from folk to classical, how has that affected the style in which you create your songs?

It's deeply affected the way I write my songs. I was very, very lucky to have had, for a long time, a really varied musical education, and you know, it can only help I think. I think that basically any kind of music is worth investigating.

Can you take us through your writing process? What gets the song from your head to an album?

Usually what I do is that I have about four or five songs going at the same time. The way that I've figured out is that it's best to not work on one song too much. Even just to work 20 minutes on one song and 20 minutes on the other one just to give it a break I think it

works better. But usually I have four or five songs going and I'll kind of hack away at them all very sort of slightly, and I think in a weird way there kind of becomes a competition between the songs themselves, like they think they're in some kind of horseshoe or something. Then the ones that get finished first are usually the ones that get on record first and usually get preference. I think I'm really the only person who is filtering everything. It's the songs that have to write themselves in a lot of ways.

You've made comparisons of your latest album to a play; do you look at song writing as telling a story?

A really great song in my opinion has, kind of like a play, several dimensions. This is what I do with my work. I like there to be kind of a, you know, the song itself to take place in a time frame and then to also have sets in the song. I have like sort of visual flashes that one can relate to just with certain words sounding like something you see rather than understand right away, and to have different characters in the song that come and go and so forth. I try to do that with my song writing. I'm not sure if that's what everyone should do, but if it can be almost like a little play, it can be quite effective.

Do you think it helps to have a dark sense of humour?

I think it definitely helps to have a sense of humour, whether it's dark or not. But I think it helps to have humour in music, especially with my music because I can get so morose. I think as I said before it's like a play and a song. Like any great play should have the humorous moments, the sad moments, the whatever ... the sexy moments.

Your songs have a lot of abstract imagery, where do these pictures come from?

I would have to say the best imagery or the best lines that have popped into my head, for songs like that to express some sort of feeling, really do come without me knowing or come at moments maybe when I'm drunk or maybe when I'm walking around having not eaten any food. It's usually when I'm not thinking about it, or when I'm in some kind of state that they'll just pop into my head, and one should really write those moments down. I don't think you go out and get them, I think they come out and get you.

When you write a song and you put it down on paper, do you then take it to an

instrument or take it to somebody with an instrument?

I usually write it on the instrument, either piano or guitar. Guitar songs happen pretty fast for me, piano usually takes a lot longer. On guitar I'm more relaxed, because I just strum I don't really do many fancy noodling things. I do a couple of things that are interesting but it's not as intimidating. But piano, it's really from the piano that my style was born and I take it very ... whatever ... it's kind of a battle between me and the instrument, it's more intense.

When you've completed a song, is there a lot of revision, or do you mostly stick with what you have?

What I usually find is that I'll complete a song and then I'll be like 'this is great, this is finished.' I'll think 'awe it's fabulous,' but then I'll leave it alone, not look at it for two days, get back and realize that it's only like a quarter done. I do a lot of revisions myself, tons of them, not on anything that is recorded or released or anything like that, but I'll usually rewrite the lyrics about four or five times. It's interesting because it's either that or else it's like the first time I write it down, the first thing that comes to my head is the best thing, but if that doesn't work it takes about four or five times to write it down again.

Do you ever get in a lull while writing where you are hard pressed to come up with a new lyric or line for a song? How do you get past that?

I've been through a lot of that in the past and I still probably do get in that, but I've been slowly realizing that if you are in a lull just stop. One of the most interesting things that I've found is that even when you are not working on a song, let's say you are in a lull and you don't want to work on it and you don't touch it for about two weeks, it's amazing what'll happen when you come back to it. It's almost like the song could have written part of itself. I do think that there's such a thing as subconscious working, and that is sometimes the best thing to do for a song is just to leave it alone and not work on it at all.

Rufus Wainwright is a Montréal-raised singer/songwriter who has spent the better portion of his life developing his distinct chamber-pop style, which has earned him a nomination for both a Juno and a Genie as well as placement on numerous critics' 'Best Of' lists. Wainwright released his sophomore album, Poses, this past June on the Universal label, and is currently touring the continent in its support.

by Rufus Wainwright

writing



the process Of recording

R

demos

recording

You were taught in school at an early age that if you do your homework, you will get good grades and you can excel in the fields you enjoy. The studio world is similar. You have to do your homework, but we call it pre-production.

I've had the honour and privilege to work with some of the greatest producers of all time, to name a few Mick Ronson (David Bowie), Rodney Mills (Lynyrd Skynyrd), Paul A. Rothchild (The Doors), Jim Steinman (Meatloaf) and now most recently many great songwriter/producers in Nashville where I am a staff writer for Sony Tree Music.

Every time I stepped into a studio I've learned something new. I've realized from my many mistakes, and this is what I'll share with you.

You have probably read many articles on the recording process and other formulas to follow when it comes to tracking and recording, but I will cover in plain English the rights and wrongs behind that glass window.

First of all, the most important fact is to be ready! Not almost ready, not I think it will be fine, you have to have your parts figured out way before so the only thing you have to think about when the tape is rolling is performance, vibe and emotion. The three most important things that will go on tape and make you stick out from the other session. You can be a great vocalist with amazing pitch (well, these days now you have Autotune, vocals can be fixed up) but you might lack character and emotion. That's the only signature that you have. Every singer can sing. That's why he's a singer. Do you have a certain unique quality about you that will stand out? What I'm getting at is to try different arrangements, key signatures and tempos before you go in. Try playing to a live audience – play it for people – and most of all someone has to be the judge and that's where a producer steps in and says 'That's it guys. We're running with this version,' and you live with it.

Another simple topic that has been frustrating for guitarists in the studio is that they have a hard time getting their sound

in the studio. It sounds great on stage with a loud PA system with people dancing and screaming, but when they're in the studio it's like pulling teeth. Very simple solution – if you're looking for a Ronnie Wood sound, go find exactly what he uses – what guitar and amp. You're not stealing or copying his sound, you're just using his style of sound to create a new sound for your project.

Make sure you have players that are studio experienced or you will run into all kinds of trouble. You can buy a digital recorder these days and just keep performing into that machine. Make sure you get great at performing into that machine like you do in front of your sold out crowd.

The studio is a huge microscope that looks down at you and can hear and see every little thing. Remember that note that you were having trouble with on stage? In the studio it's gonna be big trouble. So again, learn every part inside out to the point that it's second nature, so that way you can focus on performance.

Also, the studio is where the clock is the master because it comes down to 'you get what you pay for!' A demo is basically a recording of your songs and it will cost basically whatever you can afford.

A master is a recording of your songs mostly funded by corporate money or rich relatives. Don't take advantage of this, because it adds up quickly. You are what you are and you ain't what you ain't, so if you're trying to ping these high A notes because your favourite singer can hit them, forget about it. If you can't do it by the time you're in the studio, change the key.

The best advice would be to record your entire CD onto some type of portable digital recorder, and then get it to a producer if you want to go that route. If there is a member in the band who is studio savvy and understands a lot of what is going on in the studio, let him take the majority of control. Usually there is someone in a band that has that quality.

I've recorded in studios in New York City, Toronto and Nashville and I'm still picking up things

every time I walk into these studios. You must let them know what you hear in your head and keep writing and recording those songs because the world would be a very dull, boring place without recorded music.

Rick Rose is now in his sixth year with Sony Tree Music Publishing in Nashville and has just over 200 songs in his catalogue that he's written with writers such as Desmond Child, Anton Fig, Monty Powell, Tom Douglas, Dave Gibson, Naisoe Sheridan, and many others. He also has cuts with artists such as Bill Medley, Atomic, Doc Walker, Robyn Scott, In Theory, Lennex, Perfect Affair, and his own CD Songs From the Studio B Sessions on Bandana Records, and he's managed by legendary manager Dec Anthony. For CD purchase info, check out www.rickrosemusic.com or e-mail him at rickrose.ent@banc.com.



by Rick Rose



live sound phasey like a

by James Yakabuski

Fox

One of the sinister threats to good sound is phasing problems. It's a drag to find you've been EQing and chasing your tail trying to discover why something (that is, two or more channels of something) doesn't sound quite right, and

then you reverse the phase on one of the two channels and find everything sounds like it should. Always be aware of this potential problem. The golden rule to remember is: Always check for it. It's tougher to do if you don't have phase

reverse buttons on the channels of your mixing board. If you do though, and you're dealing with two stereo lines of keyboards, or more than one source sound like bass DI and mic, snare top and bottom, put one out of phase and see what happens. If you don't have phase reverse buttons on your console, always have a phase reverse cable ready to insert in your console's channel input if you suspect you have a problem.

The telltale sign of things being out of phase is low-end decrease when the second channel is turned up. For example, if you're checking the bass and you're listening to just the DI sound and then you add the bass mic channel to it, you can suspect there's a problem if there is more bottom with just the one channel than with both turned on. Obviously, the best time to check this is when you are dialing up a mix for the first time. If you are going from console to console with the same band from day to day, using different mics and mic cables, the potential for a problem goes way up. Check this every day even if things start out sounding okay. You will catch yourself thinking things were all right and then find out they weren't in phase when you pop in that ol' button.

Beware of things like changed speakers within a guitar cabinet as well. Sometimes backline guys make a mistake and wire a replaced speaker out of phase, and you can be the one to catch this if the now thin sounding guitar rig gets magically better in your headphones or PA with a flipped phase button. You can then saunter up to the guitar tech and advise him of his problem. If you do it out of earshot of the guitar player he'll probably buy you a cocktail later. If you use the same rig every day with the same band gear, you may just remind yourself to do a periodic phasing maintenance check. You never know what might happen with people rooting around the innards of keyboard racks. Definitely have a check if something that usually sounded solid starts sounding thin. If you keep this in mind, you'll be the one resembling a fox.

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This article was taken from James Yakabuski's book entitled Professional Sound Reinforcement Techniques. The book is published by MixBooks, an imprint of artistpro.com. You can also find the book online at www.mixbooks.com and www.musicbooksplus.com.

VOX



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business

Albert Einstein once said that the power of compounding interest is the eighth wonder of the world. We hope to convey the importance of putting this powerful concept to work for you as soon as possible. Since most musicians are self-employed, you must do for yourselves what many employees are having done for them through their employers. An essential attitude to develop is to treat yourself as your own agent and to pay yourself a "commission" of 5 to 10% of your earnings to be used as your contribution to your own "pension fund." Before we move on let us take a moment to explain the "Rule of 72" and the magic of compound interest.

Simply stated, at a rate of 1% compounded annually – money doubles in 72 years. Based on this, one can calculate how fast money doubles at any interest rate by dividing the rate into 72. For example, at 3% money doubles in 24 years (72 divided by 3). So \$1,000 invested at 3% would double to \$2,000 in 24 years. At 6% the same \$1,000 would turn into \$4,000 in 24 years since it doubles every 12 years (72 divided by 6). At 12% the same \$1,000 grows to \$16,000 in 24 years since it doubles every six years! As you can see, the rate of compound return has a substantial impact on how your money grows and over time the difference can be staggering.

If you are hoping to retire with any form of financial dignity in the future, you probably should not rely on government support in your old age. We want to convey in this

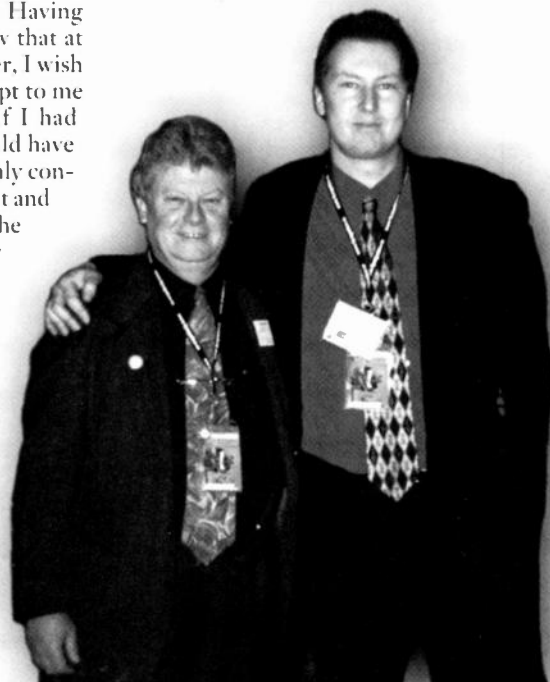
article the importance of getting started immediately to put something away so this magic of compounding can begin working for you. Whether you like it or not the reality is that you eventually will get to retirement age. What will you need to have a decent quality of life? By starting early, even smaller amounts will have the opportunity to grow to something substantial through the power of compounding.

Take an example of a 30-year-old professional musician making around \$20,000 per year. If this person were to pay themselves 5% or \$1,000 a year till age 65 at a compound rate of 10%, there would be over \$320,000 in their retirement fund! Having been a drummer all my life I know that at times money can be tight. However, I wish someone had explained this concept to me when I was starting out at 17. If I had understood the importance, I would have found a way to make a small monthly contribution. It needs to become a habit and paying yourself must carry at least the same priority as paying your rent or your phone bill.

If you acknowledge the importance of paying yourself first to build for your future, the next question is what to invest in? Where can you get good rates of return safely? These are issues we hope to be able to cover in future articles. It is a very exciting time to be investing. Major factors like the aging Baby Boomers, new technologies, and Globalization of

markets and economies all are combining to create extremely strong growth for at least the next 20 years. Stay tuned and we hope to hear from you.

Bill Kerr is partners with Roger Banks, working from the offices of Totally Diversified Financial Services. "Banks and Kerr" provide financial solutions for the Entertainment Industry and can be contacted at (905) 318-3300 or toll-free at 1-888-231-7577. E-mail addresses are kerr@bserv.com, or RBANKS2294@aol.com.



by **Bill Kerr & Roger Banks**

CM

BACK ISSUES



THE VERY BEST OF The Recent Years

1991

- January/February - Alias, Sneaky James, Bob's Your Uncle, Making Your Own Video, Music Education
- March/April - The Tragically Hip, Barney Bentall, Keyboards, Spotlight on Vancouver
- May/June - Neil Young: The Power And The Glory, Annihilator, Bootsauce, Home Recording
- July/August - Sue Medley, Roch Voisine, Wild T & The Spirit, Vintage Guitar Collecting, Canadian Guitarists

1992

- May/June - Rik Emmett, Sass Jordan, Spirit Of The West, Guitar And Bass Spotlight
- September/October - Bryan Adams, Prairie Oyster, Bourne & MacLeod, Focus on Live Sound
- November/December - Jeff Healey Band, Sloan, Leslie Spit Trio, Future Beat

1993

- May/June - Pure, Guitarmania, Montreal Jazz, The Pursuit Of Happiness
- September/October Home - Recording, Holly Cole Trio, Cassandra Vasik, The Boomers
- November/December - Bruce Cockburn, Doughboys, Charlie Major, Focus on Percussion

1994

- January/February - Rush, Careers in Music, Joan Kennedy, I Mother Earth
- March/April - 15th Anniversary Issue, 15 Years of Great Music
- May/June - West Coast Music, Guitar Mania, Loreena McKennitt, Maestro Fresh-Wes
- July/August - Barenaked Ladies, The Celine Dion Band, Ben Mink, Focus on Bass
- September/October - Creative Recording, Rheostatics, The Musician's Guide to Nashville, Industrial Music

1995

- March/April - How To Make & Sell Your Own Record, Sebastian Bach, Susan Aglukark, The Waltons
- May/June - 54•40, The Tea Party, Odds, Guitarmania
- July/August - The Care & Feeding of Your Manager, Devin Townsend, Bourbon Tabernacle Choir, Music Software Roundup
- September/October - Home Recording, Tom Cochrane, Barney Bentall, Alanis Morissette, Canadian Blues
- November/December - Jane Siberry, Alannah Myles, Bass is Bass, Drum Explosion '95

1996

- January/February - Junkhouse, Ashley MacIsaac, Alex Lifeson, Music Education
- March/April - Blue Rodeo, Cowboy Junkies, Jazz in Canada, Bass Solos '96
- May/June - Alanis Morissette, The Sattalites, Megan Metcalfe, Focus On Guitar
- September/October - Moist, Sloan, AMPS De-Mystified!, Tom Wilson, Colin Linden, Stephen Fearing, Salute Willie P. Bennett
- November/December - Rush, I Mother Earth, Crash Test Dummies, World Percussion

1997

- January/February - The Tragically Hip, Odds, Dalbello, Hayden on Songwriting, Music Education
- July/August - Daniel Lanois, k.d. lang, Big Sugar, Producing & Marketing Your Own Record
- November/December - Loreena McKennitt, Jann Arden, Econoline Crush, Percussion

1998

- January/February - Crashing The Border, Terri Clark, the gandharvas, Music Education
- March/April - The Killjoys, Shania Twain, Songwriting, Recording Studio Guide
- May/June - Keeping Your Band Together, Wide Mouth Mason, Holly McNarland, The Future of Guitar
- July/August - How To Survive A Tour, Sloan, The Wild Strawberries, How To Break Into Nashville
- September/October - 54•40, The Rankins, How To Get Your Music To The Right People, Live Sound - Everything You Need To Know
- November/December - Alanis Morissette, Julian Austin, Building Your Team, Percussion

1999

- January/February - The Tragically Hip, BTK, Media 101, Music Education
- March/April - 20th Anniversary Issue
- May/June - Wide Mouth Mason, Sky, Kim Stockwood, Guitar '99
- July/August - I Mother Earth, Amanda Marshall, Open Mike's House Band, Software Review
- September/October - Cirque du Soleil, Moist, Jim Witter, The Realities of Home Recording
- November/December - Our Lady Peace, Scratching Post, Renee Rosnes, Focus on Percussion '99

2000

- January/February - Matthew Good Band, Chantal Kreviazuk, Rascalz, Music Education
- March/April - Jane Siberry, See Spot Run, Finger Eleven, Recording Studio Guide
- May/June - Headstones, Damhnait Doyle, Limblifter, Guitar Summit 2000
- July/August - Wide Mouth Mason, Danko Jones, Natalie MacMaster, Software Review 2000
- September/October - Geddy Lee, Lara Fabian, Nickelback, Bass 2000
- November/December - Songwriting, treble charger, Kittie, Percussion - Advice from the Pros

2001

- January/February - Our Lady Peace, gob, Nelly Furtado, Music Education

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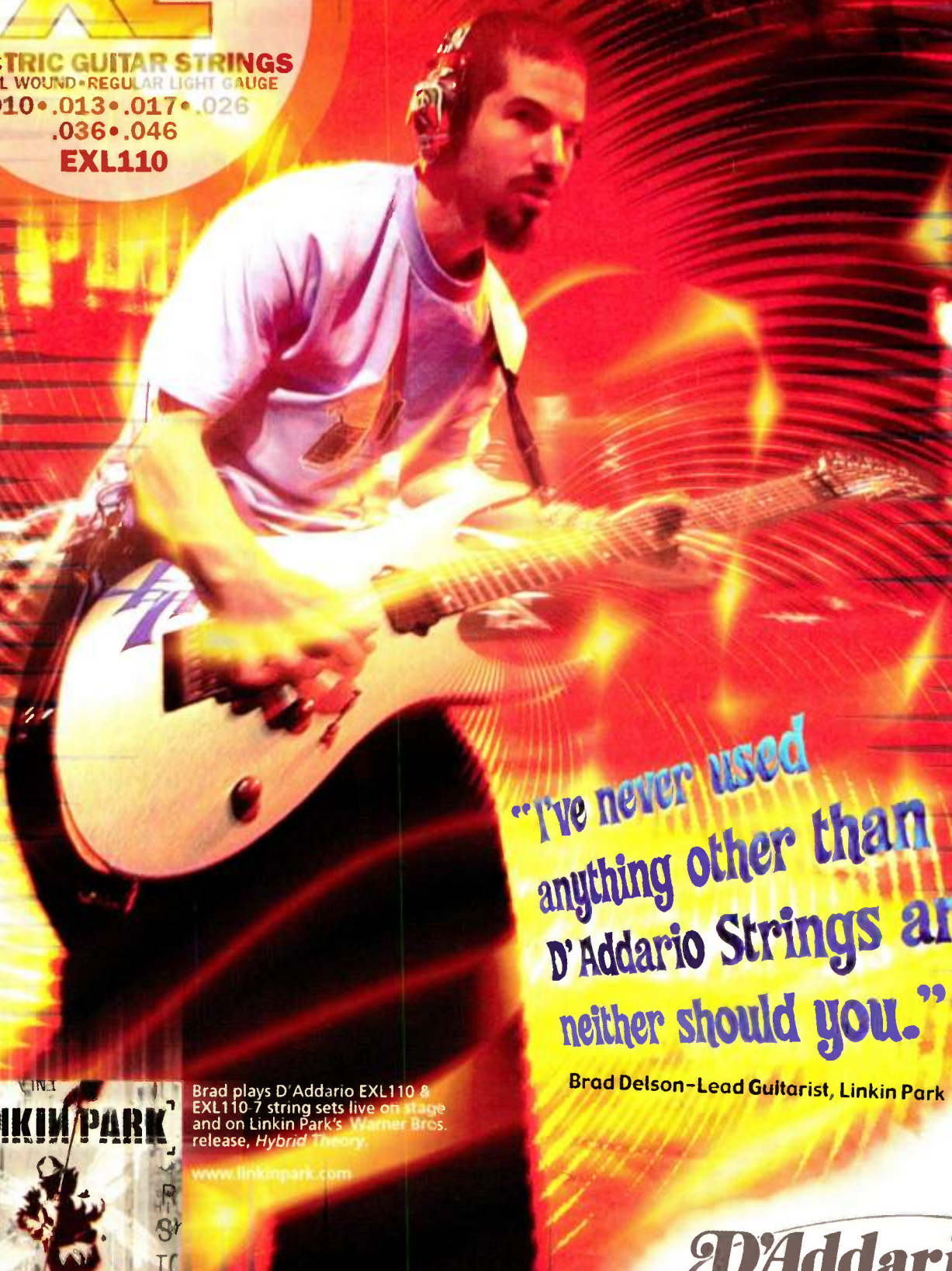
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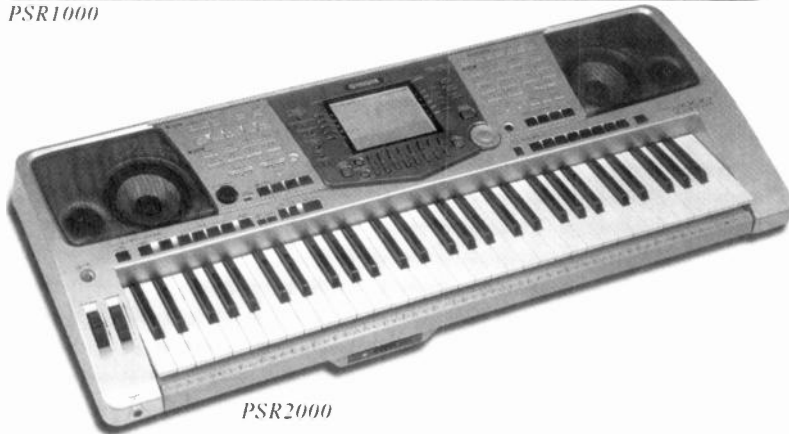
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Yamaha PSR1000 and PSR2000 Keyboards



PSR1000



PSR2000

Yamaha has announced the release of two new models in their PSR line of portable keyboards, the PSR1000 and the PSR2000.

Built with the affordability of a hobbyist in mind, but loaded with features that will keep a professional busy, the two new models have something for everyone.

Using a large bit-mapped LCD screen, users can quickly see graphic representations of functions; computer-like folders showing song, style and function lists; animated help screens; song lyrics; music notation and more.

The new keyboards use Yamaha's Advanced Wave Memory (AWM) tone generation, Yamaha's XG MIDI compatibility, a newly designed bass reflex sound system with two-way stereo speakers and enhanced, multi-effect DSP. Also offered in the PSR1000 and PSR2000 is Yamaha's exclusive Sweet, Cool and Live voices taken straight from the PSR9000, producing realistic instrument sounds that imitate natural timbres.

Connecting to a PC or Macintosh is a snap using a single cable and the units' TO HOST port, a feature that effectively eliminates the need for a MIDI interface card or box.

For more information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 135 Milner Ave., Toronto, ON M1S 3R1 (416) 298-1311, FAX (416) 292-0732, www.yamaha.ca.

Sabine BackTrak Riff Decoder and Sampler

Intimidated by fancy guitar riffs that scream past you so fast that you could never possibly learn them?

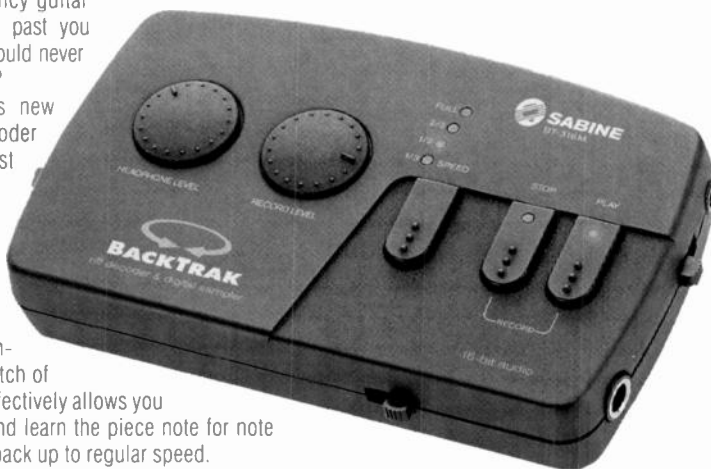
Well Sabine's new BackTrak Riff Decoder and Sampler is just the tool for you.

The BackTrak allows you to take 30 seconds of your favourite piece of music and slow down the tempo without changing the pitch of the riff at all. This effectively allows you to take your time and learn the piece note for note before speeding it back up to regular speed.

With three speeds to choose from and the ability to save your sample after you've turned the unit off, learning complex riffs is a breeze. The BT-316M also offers a line out to plug into an amplifier for sound, a split/mixed switch allowing the user to hear the sampled music in one channel and what is being played in the other while listening with headphones.

The BackTrak is also available in the BT-300 model which has all the same features as the BT-316M minus the power-off memory and with 8-bit digital audio opposed to the BT-316M's 16-bit high quality audio.

For more information, contact: Efkay Music Group, 2165 46th Ave., Lachine, PQ H8T 2P1 (514) 633-8877, FAX (514) 633-8872, www.efkaymusic.com.



Hofner Steel String Acoustic Guitars

Hofner has announced the release of three new steel string acoustic guitars, the first in its new Sienna series guitar line.

All three models are of a dreadnought body style with scalloped bracing. The HAS-1 offers a laminate spruce top with Catalpa back and sides, while the HAS-3 features a solid spruce top with Mahogany back and sides, and also contains gold-plated machine heads and shell pickguard.

Rounding out the new models is the HAS-7 which features a solid spruce top with Indian rosewood back and sides, as well as gold-plated machine heads and a shell pickguard.

For more information, contact: Boosey and Hawkes Musical Instrument Inc., 10949 Pendleton St., Sun Valley, CA 91352 (818) 252-6305, FAX (818) 252-6351, marketing.na@boosey.com, www.boosey.com.

hot gear

Morley Dual Bass Wah

Morley has introduced its new Dual Bass Wah PBA-2, complete with Traditional Wah and Funk Wah sounds. With a level control for wah output adjustment in either wah mode, the pedal's Electro-Optical circuitry offers wailing wah tone and noise-free long lasting operation.

Using Morley's switchless technology, players need only to step on the wah to engage and step off to bypass the pedal, as well, the unit is equipped with a cool blue LED indication and easily accessible battery compartment.

Housed in a heavy-duty metal chassis, the Dual Bass Wah comes with Morley's hassle-free two-year warranty.

For more information, contact: Efkay Music Group, 2165 46th Ave., Lachine, PQ H8T 2P1 (514) 633-8877, FAX (514) 633-8872, www.efkaymusic.com.



Line 6 Vetta Guitar Amplifier

Line 6 recently released the new Vetta guitar amplifier, featuring Point to Point Interactive Modeling technology.

The amp is capable of recreating the sonic effects and feel of aged components such as transformers and filter caps. As well the unit features new versions of many of the models from POD and FlexTone, and also contains new models based on a Hiwatt 100, Supro S6616 and both the Line 6 Class A Drive and Line 6 Sparkle.

The Vetta also offers the ability to produce the sound of two completely independent amps at the same time, as well as Line 6's new Double Tracker, independently assignable and routable stompbox effects, a routable effects loop, independent XLR balanced direct outs and a dual power amp.

Also available is the optional FBX Foot Controller, which offers independent switching for changing programs and effects, wah and volume pedals, tap tempo and tuner command.

The Vetta is available in a 50 W per side, 2 x 12 Vetta Combo version complete with custom Celestion speakers or a 100 W per side Vetta HD head.

For more information, contact: Power Group Ltd., 6415 Northwest Dr., #22, Mississauga, ON L4V 1X1 (905) 405-1229, FAX (905) 405-1885, sales@power-music.com, www.power-music.com.

Rocco Prestia Bass Strings

Dean Markley Strings has recently announced the release of their Rocco Prestia NPS Round Core Bass Strings. With more mass than ordinary hex-core strings these strings produce a warm sound and a comfortable feel.

Wound on a round core using the swedging technique, the Rocco Prestia strings have a tight anchoring between wire and core, which provides security against string unravelling while assuring total contact between the core wire and the outer wrap providing a fuller sounding, longer lasting string.

Available in 4- and 5-string configurations in light, medium light and medium gauge sets.

For more information, contact: Dean Markley Strings Inc., 3350 Scott Blvd., #45, Santa Clara, CA 95050 (408) 988-2456, FAX (408) 988-0441, info@deanmarkley.com, www.deanmarkley.com.

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Zildjian Vintage Cymbals

The Avedis Zildjian Company has recently released three new cymbals designed by none other than Armand Zildjian, himself. Recreating the sound of vintage cymbals from the '30s and '40s, the new crash, hi-hat and ride cymbals give a classic 'A. Zildjian' sound.

The 14" Hi-Hats have perfectly matched tops and bottoms for fast response, and their hammered form gives their sound body and personality. The 18" vintage crash joins the 14", 15" and 16" models that were released last year, and because of a unique creation process, only about 40 can be made at a time, which will make these cymbals in extremely limited release. The 20" ride possesses a bright, solid stick sound that works with the broadest range of dynamics, it responds equally well to gentle strokes as it does to powerful band driving hits.

For more information, contact: Avedis Zildjian Company, 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061 (781) 871-2200, robertf@zildjian.com, www.zildjian.com.



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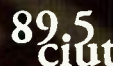
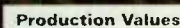
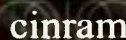
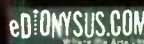
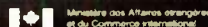
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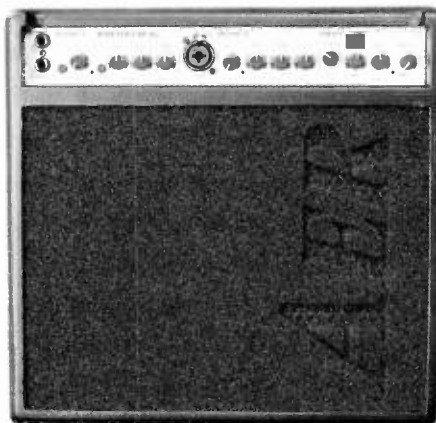
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hot gear

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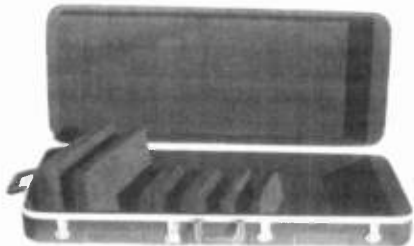


Windsor, ON-based FireWire Strings has announced the release of their new line of guitar strings. The new strings feature pre-stretched hex-core wire to help avoid wrap wire from being pulled apart, which coupled with the string's exotic micro-grain wrap wire greatly reduces dirt and grime getting on the strings and creating fret buzz and dulling tonal equilibrium.

FireWire has also pioneered a new Magnetic Enhancement Process in which they subject their strings to a magnetic pulse of reversing magnetic fields which allows the strings to transmit a higher quality of pure sound. The strings are available in acoustic, electric, electric bass and classical styles.

For more information, contact: FireWire Strings, 1540 Matthew Brady Blvd., Windsor, ON N8S 3K6 (519) 977-2188, FAX (519) 948-4362, info@firewirestrings.com, www.firewirestrings.com.

Gator ABS Keyboard Case with Wheels



Gator Cases has announced the release of its new ABS Keyboard Case with wheels. The new case offers all the features of a regular hard shell keyboard case, including thick padding and adjustable interior, with the addition of Gator's durable hard shell and, the real innovation, wheels.

The in-line skate style wheels make it easy to cart your instrument around. And with wheel guards, going up and down stairs is a breeze. Adjacent to the wheels is a set of legs, so that you can stand the case upright when you are not in transport.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 21000 TransCanada Hwy, Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555, FAX (514) 457-0055, info@eriksonmusic.com, www.eriksonmusic.com.

Electro-Harmonix Tube Zipper



Electro-Harmonix recently announced the release of its new Tube Zipper guitar effects pedal. Using two 12AX7EH tubes, the Tube Zipper takes a guitar signal and pushes it through a complex set of filters in a maze of tubes. Controlled analog harmonics are added to the signal, which is then processed by a patented moving filter gang.

Like all Electro-Harmonix controls, the Tube Zipper's settings can all be pushed over the edge, giving the user the ability to create a number of unique tones.

For more information, contact: Electro-Harmonix, 20 Cooper Sq., New York, NY 10003 (212) 529-0466, FAX (212) 529-0486, info@ehx.com, www.ehx.com.

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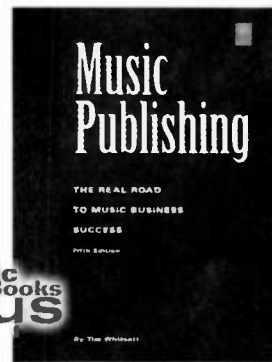
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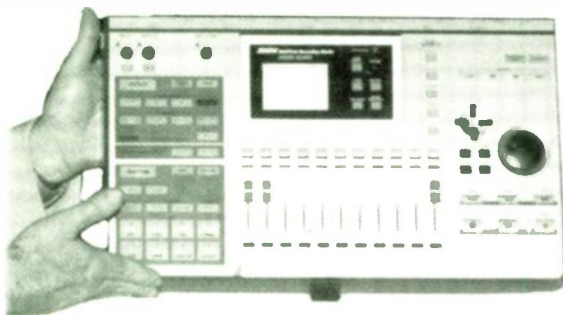
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Zoom MRS 1044 MultiTrak Recording Studio



Zoom has recently unveiled the new MRS 1044 MultiTrak Recording Studio, a hard-disk recorder and a fully integrated digital workstation in one compact package.

The MRS 1044 offers 13 tracks split into 10 audio tracks (backed up by 80 virtual takes), a programmable stereo drum track and a dedicated programmable bass track. Storing up to 44 hours of recording time on an internal 15 GB hard-disk, the unit has 24-bit A/D and D/A converters and samples at 44.1 kHz (with no compression).

Using the unit's built-in 24-bit DPS, users have Zoom's Modeling Guitar effects and studio effects such as Chorus, Reverb, Modulation, Delay, Compression, Equalization and Mastering at the touch of a button.

The MRS 1044's mixer includes dedicated EQ and faders for each of the 10 audio channels, and with a large back-lit LCD screen, editing is a snap.

Additionally, it also offers realistic drum sounds from Zoom's RhythmTrak series of drum machines. The rhythm section contains eight touch sensitive pads times three banks giving 24 sounds per drum kit. The bass department gives a user every style from slap to synth.

For connectivity the MRS 1044 has 2 phantom powered XLR inputs, 2 1/4 unbalanced inputs, stereo RCA outputs, S/P DIF Optical Digital output and MIDI in/out as well as an optional SCSI and USB add-in card slot.

For more information, contact: Omnimedia Inc., 1875 55th Ave., Dorval, PQ H9P 2W3 (514) 636-9971, FAX (514) 636-5347.

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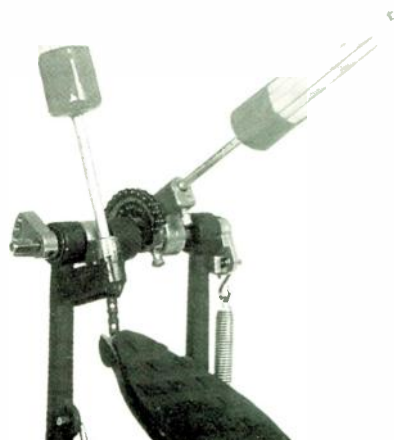
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Unigrip Kickstick Bass Drum Mallet

Unigrip has released the newest version of their unique Kickstick bass drum mallet.

Made of wood and Bamboo rods surrounding a shaft, the Kickstick creates a softer sound without losing the attack. An inch shorter than its predecessor, the New Kickstick is louder but still great for unplugged gigs and for brush players. The new and old Kicksticks can be used together to give drummers on a double bass more sound versatility.

For more information, contact: Unigrip, 1646 N. Lincoln St., Burbank, CA 91506 (800) 474-7068, info@unigrip2000.com, www.unigrip2000.com.



Ludwig Gig-Lite Drum Outfit



Ludwig has recently released its Classic Birch Gig-Lite Outfit, for drummers who require a kit that offers easy transport or quick setup in tight spaces. The four-piece outfit includes a bass drum and toms that are half the size in depth of a regular kit, without compromising sound. The set features double silver Keystone badges, half-size Classic Birch shells, mini lugs, modular pedal, Ludwig mounting system, coated drumheads and Accent folding spurs.

The outfit contains an 8" x 20" bass, 6" x 13" floor (hanging), 5 x 10" tom, 3 x 13" snare drum and the 800 Series cymbal and hi-hat stands as well as a 600 Series snare stand.

The outfit is only available in Sparkle wrapped finish and can be ordered with or without the stands.

For more information, contact: The Selmer Company, PO Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515 (219) 522-1675, FAX 9219) 297-5405, www.ludwig-drums.com.

Pete Townshend Signature SG

Gibson Guitars has honoured legendary The Who guitarist, and long-time SG supporter, Pete Townshend with a Gibson SG bearing his name. The instrument features Dual P-90 pickups with chrome hardware, and is 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ " in length. Its body is made of Mahogany, with a 22-fret Rosewood Fingerboard. Finished in satin Mahogany red, the guitar is graced with a Townshend signature decal on the back of the peghead.

Coming complete with a Pete Townshend Signature SG Deluxe hard-shell case, a portion of each sale will be donated to the Double O Charity to benefit youth globally.

For more information, contact: Yorkville Sound, 550 Granite Ct., Pickering, ON L1W 3Y8 (905) 837-8481, FAX (905) 839-5776, info@yorkville.com, www.yorkville.com.



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on music innovation

Not too long ago, the design engineers and product developers at Superscope Technologies Inc. set out to create the ideal music practice device. This would be a stand-alone solution for anyone who practices using prerecorded music. The solution wouldn't require software or computers. It would be easy for anyone to use **and it would work great!**

They talked to numerous music educators. They refined their ideas. They developed innovative technology. The result was a portable CD player unlike anything that has come before and an "all-in-one" sound system with the same CD player built-in. Both products have significantly increased the effectiveness and success of musical education and proficiency by what they do.

If you consider yourself a true musician, these products demand your consideration.

Simply put, the Superscope PSD Series of CD players and PAC Series of sound systems do two of the most fundamental manipulations of music:

- **Change the pitch without altering the tempo.** That means you can transpose any passage to a key best suited for an instrument or musician.
- **Alter the tempo without changing the pitch.** Slow down any passage to allow comprehension and therefore replication.

One can never learn a song fast enough! These units can advance a musician's technique and comprehension better than anything else. At the same time their simplicity does not distract the focus of playing the instrument. Imagine teaching students complicated songs at an extremely accelerated rate!



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Musser Rolling Educational Bell Kit Bag

Musser has recently introduced a new sturdy bag for educational bell kits. This easy to transport bag features hard plastic wheels and a telescoping handle.

Made from padded vinyl with a moulded plastic base, the bag is designed for Musser M651 Bell Pak educational bell kits which include 2-½ octave bells, bell stand, practice pad, sticks, mallets and music rack.

Fiberboard supports are sewn into the lining for added strength, and the bag also includes a luggage tag with an identification window for use when travelling.

For more information, contact: The Selmer Company, PO Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515 (219) 522-1675. FAX (219) 295-5405. www.selmer.com.



Getting Started On Drums Videos and DVD

Hudson Music and Hal Leonard Corporation have recently released a new video/DVD series featuring top drummer/educator Tommy Igoe, entitled *Getting Started on Drums*.

The series, which is available on two videocassettes or one DVD, is the first title in Hudson's series of beginning music methods for the 21st Century. *Setting Up!*, the first part of *Getting Started On Drums* is an extensively informative piece on selecting and setting-up a drumset, covering assembly, tuning and ergonomic positioning of drums, pedals and stands. The second part, *Start Playing!*, gives a series of lessons on drumming technique as well as discussion on the role of the drummer.

The 140-minute instructional video includes a final section with play-along examples complete with instrumental tracks and printable sheet music available as downloads from the Hudson Web site.

For more information, contact: Hal Leonard Publications, 7777 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53213 (414) 774-3630. FAX (414) 774-3259. www.halleonard.com.

Meinl Byzance Cast Cymbal

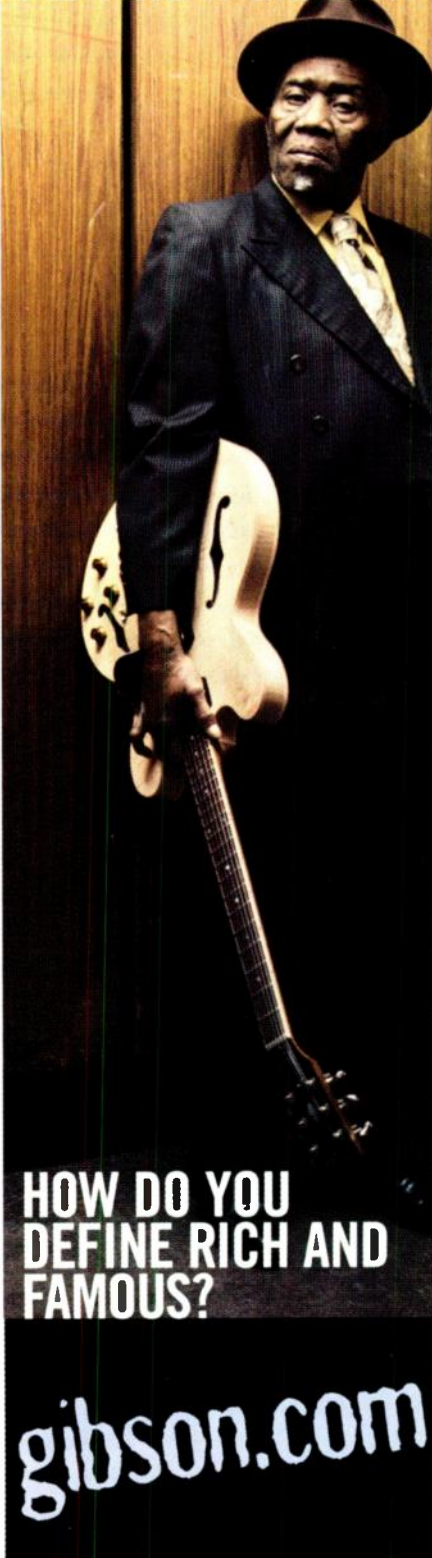


Meinl has recently introduced the Byzance series of cymbals. Each cymbal is manufactured using the Cast Cymbal procedure, meaning the bronze alloy of every cymbal is separately poured into individual castings.

Completely hand-made, the Byzance cymbals consist of cymbal-bronze in an 80%/20% copper to tin ratio. Using an extensive process, each cymbal is individually hand-hammered and lathed to create unique sound and precise fine-tuning.

For more information, contact: Meinl Percussion, 8400 NW 30th Terrace, Miami, FL 33122 (305) 418-4520. FAX (305) 418-4771. gomeinl@aol.com.

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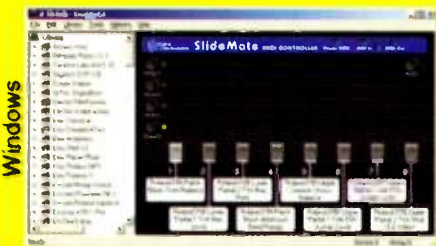
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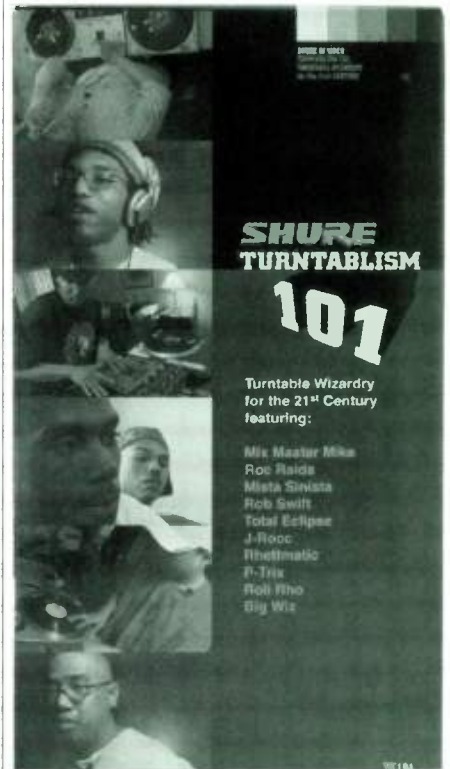
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what's right for music

Shure Incorporated has compiled a virtual who's who of legendary turntablists for their new educational video, *Turntablism 101*.

Offering a peek inside the minds of 10 leading DJs, the video gives viewers an outline of the history and philosophy of DJing as well as giving advice on the basics of building a routine.

Featured DJs include Mixmaster Mike of the Beastie Boys, Grand Master Roc Raida, Mista Sinista, Rob Swift and Total Eclipse of the X-ecutioners, J-Rocc and Rhetmatic of the Beat Junkies, P-Trix from the Immortal Fader Flyers, Roli Rho of Fifth Platoon and Big Wiz of the Steelworkers.

The video provides information for all skill levels touching on scratching, beat juggling, body tricks, team routines and turntable techniques, as well as equipment advice.

For more information, contact SF Marketing Inc., 6161 Cypriot, St. Laurent, PQ H4S 1R3 (514) 856-1919. FAX (514) 856-1920. info@sfm.ca. www.sfm.ca.

Korg Electribe EM•1 Music Production Station



Korg has introduced the fourth member of their Electribe Series, the EM•1 Music Production station. Featuring two synth and eight drum parts, 11 insert effects, a user-friendly interface, real-time and step sequencing and Korg's proprietary motion sequencing.

The EM•1's sound engine offers 144 drum sounds, ranging from vintage kick drums and snares to classic and techno electronic drum sounds. Additionally, 50 synth waveforms are included, offering deep bass tones, vintage analog synth waves, moving modulation timbres like sync and PWM, chord tones, as well as various hits and sounds effects.

The EM•1 also contains the new Drive effect that can add more bite to synth and drum sounds. As well, the unit contains all the standard effects such as Reverb and Chorus and more extreme effects like Resonator and Ring Modulator.

The unit features 192 fully-editable patterns covering all the latest dance genres, including house, techno, trance, 2-Step, UK Garage, rap and hip-hop. Users can also create their own songs (up to 16) using 256 patterns and 35,700 events in each.

The EM•1 can easily interface with the Electribe•A, Electribe•R or the Electribe•S via MIDI In, Out and Thru ports. It can also be connected to a computer to be used with software-based sequencers and tone modules, or to an external module for use as a step sequencer.

For more information, contact: Korg Canada, 21000 TransCanada Hwy, Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555. FAX (514) 457-0055. korgcanada@jam-ind.com. www.jam-ind.com.

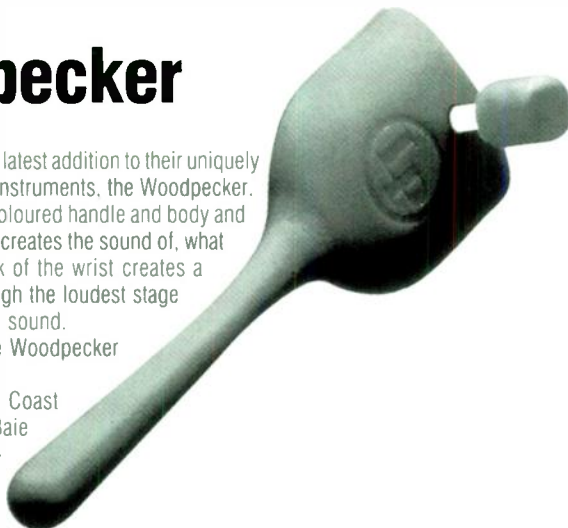
LP Woodpecker

Latin Percussion has released the latest addition to their uniquely designed series of percussive instruments, the Woodpecker.

With an easy-to-grip, smoke-coloured handle and body and a bright red striker, the Woodpecker creates the sound of, what else, a Woodpecker. A simple flick of the wrist creates a pecking sound, which can cut through the loudest stage mix or be played softly for a tropical sound.

Made of lightweight plastic, the Woodpecker is durable and easy to transport.

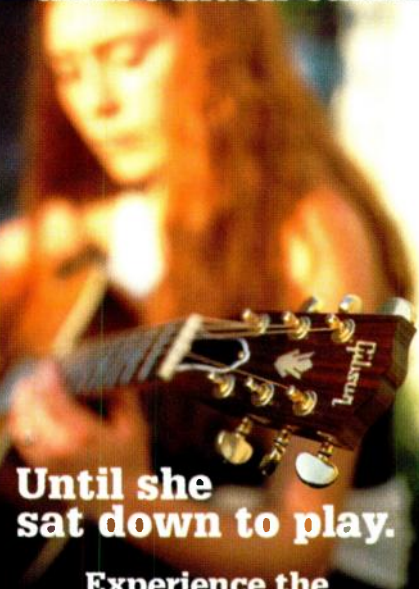
For more information, contact: Coast Music, 21000 TransCanada Hwy, Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 4B7 (514) 457-2555. FAX (514) 457-0055. info@coastmusic.ca. www.coastmusic.ca.



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SHOWCASE

by Jim Kelly

If my job is to shine a light on diamonds in the rough, then you'd better put on your shades because Jason Collett is set to sparkle. After a stint in the mid-'90s in the short-lived indie band Ursula (also featuring Andrew Cash), Collett recorded his debut solo CD, *Chrome Reflection*, a set of smart, oblique pop-rock wonders released under the band name Bird. Now he's recorded a follow-up called *Bitter Beauty*, to be released this fall under his own name – and it's a fine, fine record. The songs are lean and focused without being sonically austere. The title track is a three-and-a-half-minute country-rock-ish epiphany centred on an irresistible chorus ("You're dreamin' with eyes wide open/Your heart has spoken/For the first time"). Blast this from your car on a sunny afternoon, and you will believe. "Runaway" chronicles the teenage quest for signs of life in 1980s suburbia, and "Revolution Style" is a churning, acoustic rocker, driven by Collett's percussive guitar thrashing and a vocal that's Donovan-cool. Westerberg-urgent and *Blonde-On-Blonde*-Dylan-sharp. His affinity to songwriting is such that even when he tried to stop doing it and "settle down and do some other things," he simply couldn't turn off the taps. "It drove me crazy. It's something I just have to do," Collett says. "There's no better high in the world for me than finishing a song." For our sake, I sincerely hope he never finds help for his addiction. Try some *Bitter Beauty*, and you'll be a Jason-junkie too.



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Jason Collett



Who: Greg Wyard
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What: Melodic pop-rock of the first degree
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Greg Wyard

If your goal is to graduate from the University of Melodic Pop-Rock, the professors you want to study with are obvious: The Beatles, of course, and other tune-scholars like Crowded House's Neil Finn. These are the melody-masters Greg Wyard has obviously been studying, and by the sound of things, he's been getting straight A's. Originally from southern England, Wyard moved to Ottawa as a teenager and has spent the past 20 years becoming a fixture on the local music scene. In 1995 he formed a band and released his debut CD, appropriately titled *The First*. Very favourable press and local radio airplay soon followed, with songs placing first and third respectively in Ottawa and Toronto radio station-sponsored songwriting competitions. Relocating to Toronto, Wyard released his second album, *Something I Made Up*, in the spring of 2001. Taking a page from Professor Neil Finn's text, Wyard excels in writing melodies that are extremely catchy, yet sound completely natural amidst some wonderfully wily song structures, as found on the lead-off track, "Leave It Like That" and "Ready To Come Back Home". For Wyard, melody is king. "It's always the first thing when I'm working on songs," he says. "Usually the words come last, and it's usually just something that sounds like it fits the melody." No doubt he's heard all the puns: "Wyard for sound", "A Wyard World", etc. But that's okay, because now he can call himself Greg Wyard, TS.d. – Doctor of Tunessmithology.

Described as "Fred Astaire on the fretboard," Ottawa's Shane Simpson has been tripping the strings fantastic for more than 15 years. Although a trained jazz-head, his penchant for stylistic exploration led to the recording of his new CD, *Sketches*, a rootsy, bluesy acoustic rock departure. The switch was initially driven more by hardware than anything else. "I changed guitars. I bought a beautiful acoustic guitar and started strumming songs out on the patio," explains Simpson. "And I thought if I'm such a smarty-pants jazz guy, I should be able to write some rock tunes. But it's very difficult to write convincing rock tunes. So it was a challenge, and the band grew out of that." The band is the Shane Simpson Band, which he formed in the summer of 1999 to follow his new muse. It consists of Lynne Hanson (guitar/vocals), Craig Dougherty (bass/vocals) and Chris Brookes (drums). Though he was humbled by the experience, Simpson nevertheless rose to the challenge. "Last Patio Song" jogs along on a rhythmic acoustic guitar pattern a la Dave Matthews, a searing electric lead guitar worthy of any hair band, and Simpson's smoky voice closing the deal. On "Bet On Me Long", a tortured vocal rides a bluesy-acoustic open tuning that'll have you foot-stomping along. And "Kid In The Puddle" supplies some nifty finger picking. With tunes this satisfying and musicianship this good, Shane Simpson's dance card should be filling up before too long.



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Shane Simpson

Jim Kelly is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

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