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Norris-Whitney Communications Inc.
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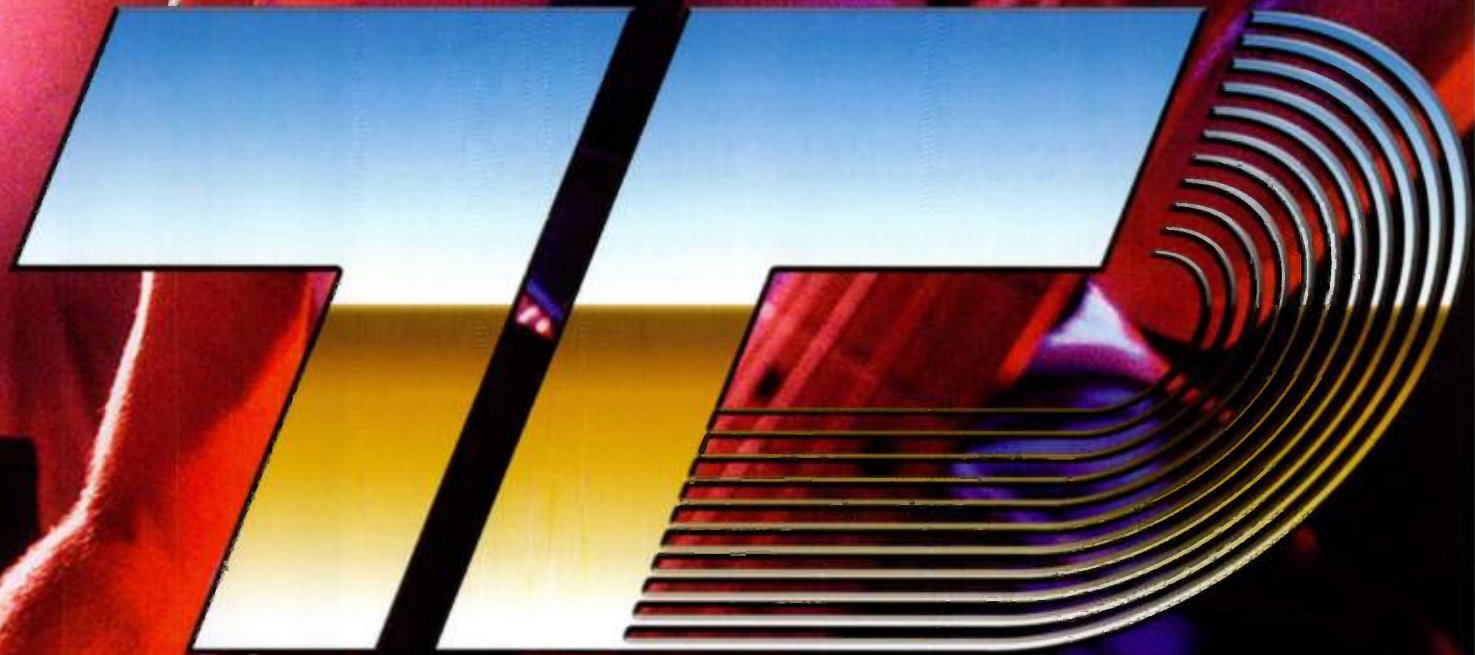


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Durham Region Rocks

Dear CM,

With the ever-growing list of musicians coming out of the Durham Region, like Sum 41, Not By Choice, Scratching Post, Snow and the stage musicians for Avril Lavigne, I believe it's in your best interest to research the Durham scene a little deeper and "predict" the next big bands...

Thanks

Dave Sheldon
Ajax, ON

**Ed. It's always hard to try to predict the new 'big artist' from any scene. Most readers can recall how quickly 'scenes' can fade. Wonder how Seattle's doing these days...? Regardless, your idea will be considered for a future issue. No guarantees though. I doubt it's something to do with Ajax's drinking water, on the other hand, maybe it could be.*

Headstones Love-in

Dear CM,

The Headstones on the cover of CM?!? Thanks! It's great to see these boys get some recognition for all the hard work they've done. Trent's classic Strat too! I've enjoyed their music for many years. It was an interesting read about how they prepared their latest CD. I caught some of their shows late last year and the band is certainly a force to be reckoned with! They know how to pull off a great rock show.

Thanks again CM!

Warren Smyth
Toronto, ON

**Ed. That Strat seems to have become a discussion topic on the Headstones Web site's bulletin board. (www.headstones.com) For those who are curious, the photo was shot in late November of 2002, and no, the guitar wasn't brought in for the shoot. That's Trent's guitar.*



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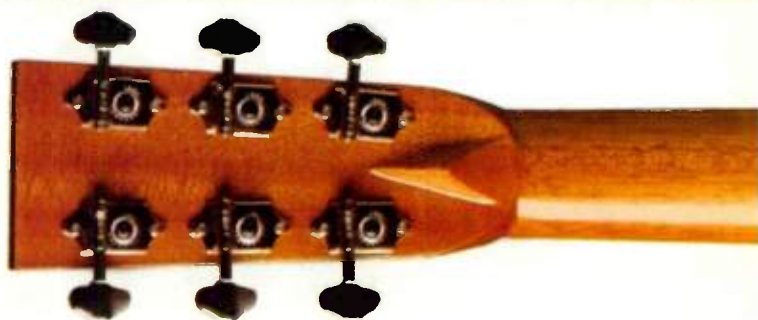
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Bands in Vans: Renting Vs. Buying

by Chris Taylor-Munro



Life as an independent band involves making decisions that will ultimately affect your chances of making headway in the often screwed-up world of music. If you have any hope of making a living at music you have to be mobile. For this you need a set of wheels. Oh sure, in the beginning you load your gear into a Honda Civic hatchback, your parents' minivan or even a combination of way too many vehicles to be convoying across the country. Hence the time comes to buy or rent a van. Each has their advantages, disadvantages, and of course, appeal.

Renting

Renting might seem to be the most logical option depending on the future longevity of the band. The vehicles are new or nearly new that come with piece of mind for several reasons. First and foremost is reliability. Nobody wants to be stuck roadside to be eaten by the small, or large fur-bearing creatures that roam the countryside in search of independent bands that make for fine, yet not so pleasant tasting, dining. Okay, it hasn't happened yet, but you get the picture. Whether it's on route to the show or heading home, the outcome is generally the same – crappy. Think winter! Even if the van does break down, all the major rental companies have roadside assistance or can bring you a replacement to get you back on the road, hopefully in time for the next show.

The second reason for renting is storage. Where do you park the *thing* and for how long? Most musicians don't have 20 x 10 feet worth

of vacant lot to keep full-size vans. And believe me, minivans are great for families of four, but make for cramped quarters on the road. The average drum set alone can fill the floor space of a Dodge Caravan. Things get worse by the mile when precious inches are lost to bulky equipment like bass cabinets or God forbid you have a keyboardist with 'vintage' gear. I once slept on the floor amongst the amplifiers with my legs straight up in the air from Sarnia, ON back to Toronto. Four hours later my band mates had to pull me out of the pile and carry me until the blood surged back to my limbs. Full-size is the way to go.

The first disadvantage of renting is cost. Twelve-passenger vans are anywhere between \$50 and \$90 per day. But wait! It doesn't stop there. On top of that you have to pay for the mileage. I have yet to rent a full-size passenger van with unlimited mileage. Most companies give you 50 free kilometres per day. Whoopee! The distance between gigs in Canada can be lengthy and therefore costly. Driving from Ottawa to Toronto is five hundred kilometres, give or take, each way. At 20 cents for every single rotation on the odometer you better have some room on that charge card.

Which brings me to the next hurdle in the rental industry: a valid credit card in the name of the person who is listed as the primary driver. Budget, for instance, will take an imprint of your card and hold \$300 as a deductible. Tack on another \$5 a day for each additional driver. This is a must if you're travelling long distances.

Buying

Once the band plans to do any extensive touring it may be time to take the plunge and scour your local newspaper, or my favourite, the *Truck Trader*. The limits to what you can buy are endless, but of course, determined by your cash flow situation. Some vans can be bought for next to nothing and that's what you'll get. The fact that your band is even pondering a major purchase should be an indication that it's best to spend enough dough on a decent specimen. A good starting point seems to be in the \$5,000 range. Maybe less if you're lucky. Maybe more if you're really lucky.

The initial cost will be the worst part of owning. Do your research and have the van checked out by a trust-worthy mechanic. The very first van purchased by my band at the time (Boywonder, later to be Hydrofoil) was checked by my mechanic *after* it was purchased. Duh! That van had so much bodywork done by the previous owner we nicknamed it 'James Bondo'. Upon further inspection my mechanic asked me if I would be riding in said vehicle. My response prompted him to advise me that I should follow in my Volkswagen Jetta as James would most likely end up in a "ball of flames somewhere in Bumble-hump, Manitoba." (Don't go looking for it; it doesn't exist.)

The second bumper of owning is insurance. If you tell your broker or insurance company the intended purpose they will most likely give you a commercial rate. After all, the van is used for company or business purposes. Whether or

not you can come up with a valid reason for the van's personal use (i.e. motor home) is entirely up to you. The cost of commercial insurance is double, if not triple, that of personal use. Once again, do your research and get as many quotes as possible.

Because your band is the proud owner of your 'vehicle to the stars' you have to fix what breaks down which always comes at the most inappropriate of times. The best way to avoid expensive repair bills like your engine seizing because nobody checked the oil, or a tire blowout at 100 KM per hour, is constant maintenance. You can give the money to your mechanic now or later, your choice. Later usually means the local garage gets more of it. Do yourselves a favour and get some extra insurance such as CAA as long as it covers the territory you're travelling in. Flatbeds are needed for large vans and once cost my band 85 bucks for an 18 KM lift. Better yet, someone in the band can take a small engine repair course and do it themselves. Yah right!

The best reason for owning is what you can do to make the van more suitable for your needs. Customizing the seating, or even better, sleeping arrangements, can give you a small slice of heaven before embarking on that two-month tour. Ultimately the van will end up being your home away from home, or maybe just your home, and a welcome place to relax and count the telephone poles for hours on end.

The second van my band purchased, affectionately named Moby, was an ideal fit for our living and equipment needs. It was a big, blue 1985 extended passenger van that was professionally outfitted with a sink, two-burner stove, dinette (that's table for you non-RVers out there) that folded into a two (well one and a half) person bed. It even had a raised roof so you could stand up to fully stretch your legs at any time. The roof also allowed for a pullout double bunk above the driver and passenger seats. The bass player and I slept in the van in our own driveway the first night we brought it home. I guess you could say we were kind of excited at the prospect of touring in our mini motor home or class 'B' if you will.

We did make some modifications to make room for the gear. One of which was removing the 'porta-potty' to allow room for the bass drum, which would later prove to be the rookie mistake of the year. You see, there are no bushes in the Upper East Side of New York, and at four in the morning no doorman in his right mind lets you into a building after watching you crawl out of a parked van. But hey, live and learn! We methodically rearranged the layout so all the gear was able to fit and be fastened down into place in the event of a sudden stop or impact. Bungee cords and 'L' brackets secured to the floor, keeping most items from crushing toes and bruising knees. The fact we had room for all four members to

slumber the night away made pulling over at truck stops, rest stops, friends' driveways, city streets, camp grounds and anywhere else we could get way with, feasible and easier on our wallets. The van was even equipped with a gas furnace that kept us toasty in the winter and a fridge to keep our groceries cool in the summer. It was perfect! I wonder who's driving Moby now?

Yes, the cost of ownership is high, but renting for anything longer than a couple of weeks, for which you have nothing to show in the end, can quickly amount to more. Besides,

if your band breaks up you can sell the van to the next 'hottest band in the world'. Whatever you decide is best for your transportation needs, drive safe and RAWK ON! Long live BANDS IN VANS.

Chris Taylor-Munro is a Toronto-based drummer, who is best-known for his playing with Hydrofoil, and now David Usher. He can be reached by e-mail at needoman@hotmail.com.



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Rearview Mirror
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Damien Fontana
New Jersey songwriter scored a publishing deal with Warner/Chappell Music Publishing



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Changes

The Fiery Fiddler Returns

The much acclaimed Nova Scotian fiddler Ashley MacIsaac, best known for his platinum debut album *Hi, How Are You Today?*, is back with a new album, a new label and a series of new Canadian tour dates – which kicked off at this year's East Coast Music Awards on February 16th.

Recently signed to Decca Records, the Cape Breton-born MacIsaac's new album is packed with 13 tracks of both original and quasi-traditional music. Fans will be happy to hear that MacIsaac is making his vocal debut on the new disc, with many tracks featuring both his fiddle and his pipes. Guest appearances include Default's Dallas Smith, Mary Jane Lamond, Lara Gray, Terry Radigan and his sister, Lisa MacIsaac.

Dates:

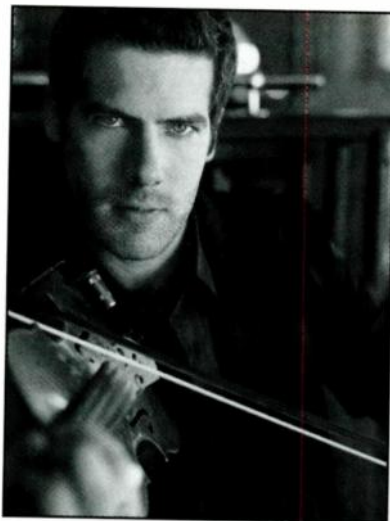
March 22 – Heritage Theatre – Brampton, ON

March 23 – Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts – Oakville, ON

March 30 – Capitol Theatre – Port Hope, ON

August 30 – Access Transit Summer Festival – Iroquois Falls, ON

Bookmark www.ashley-macisaac.com/schedule.html to keep track of additional dates as they are announced.



Great Canadian Talent Search Exposes Indie Artists

It wasn't long ago that *Canadian Musician*, teamed with Ball Media, launched The Great Canadian Talent Search and began the quest of seeking out Canada's greatest unsigned musical talents, something, it was discovered, there is no shortage of. The contest was initiated to help bring exposure to Canada's independent artists and the music they produce.

From the hundreds of entries that were received a panel of industry professionals chose the best 16 songs to appear on a compilation CD that is being distributed to Canada's top record companies, music publishers, radio stations, booking agents and music producers as well as being available at a number of international music events.

Artists appearing on the album include: KROME (Toronto, ON), Chris Colepaugh and The Cosmic Crew (Dieppe, NB), Melanie Dekker (Vancouver, BC), RASA (St. John's, NF), Gemini Dream (Gravenhurst, ON), Hemitone (Mississauga, ON), Linda M. (Toronto, ON), Shane Simpson (Ottawa, ON), Rose Ranger (Vancouver, BC), Meraudio (Windsor, ON), AITI MAA (Toronto, ON), Delica (Toronto, ON), Rainmaker (Ottawa, ON), Lori Morrison (Toronto, ON), Mocking Shadows (Calgary, AB) and One Cross (Mississauga, ON).

Canadian Musician would like to congratulate the winners of the competition and thank all those that submitted entries. For additional information on the contest and the artists, please visit www.canadianmusician.com.

The Guitar Workshop Plus Shows Canadians How To Play

This summer musicians of all ages, styles and abilities can get a boost in their musical education with the Guitar Workshop Plus courses being offered at Appleby College in Oakville, ON from July 20 to 25, 2003.

Guitar classes are available in rock, jazz, blues, acoustic and classical, while classes in bass, drums and keyboards are being offered as well. The program features special seminars ("The Versatile Guitarist" and "Jazz Styles") as well as daily clinics such as songwriting, improvisation, slide guitar, percussion and more. Additionally, Guitar Workshop Plus has arranged for special world-class players to perform clinics, seminars and concerts. This year's confirmed guests include the legendary Rik Emmett and jazz extraordinaire Lorne Lofsky.

To get additional information on the program, or to register, visit www.guitarworkshopplus.com or call (905) 785-7087.

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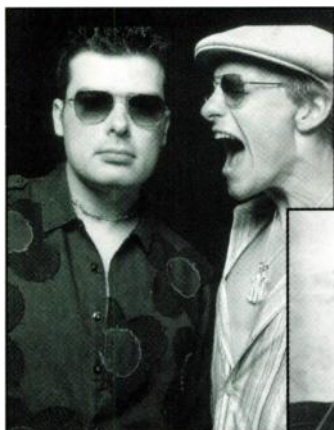
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Canucks Recognized in USA Songwriting Competition



Craig McConnell (left) and Chad Richardson



Bill Colgate

Not in its eight-year history has the USA Songwriting Competition awarded so many prizes to Canadians. The 2002 edition of the annual competition saw five Canadians win prizes, including three firsts and two honourable mentions.

Juno award-winning James Keelghan, of Winnipeg, MB, took home the first place prize in the Folk category; singer/actor Bill Colgate, of Etobicoke, ON, won first place in the Gospel category as well as second place overall (the first Canadian to ever place Overall Top Three in the competition); producer/songwriter team Chad Richardson and Craig McConnell, from Newfoundland and Toronto respectively, snagged top honours in the R&B category; and Steve Holt of Toronto and Deesha Sarai of Thornhill, ON, both won honourable mention awards.

Entries for the 2003 competition are currently being accepted, with winners scoring the opportunity to receive airplay on a nationally syndicated radio program serving over 60 cities in North America and Canada. This year's competition will be the first year the competition has awarded airtime to the winning songs, and is in addition to the over \$50,000 US being offered in cash, merchandise and exposure. Entries are being accepted until May 30, 2003. To get more info, check out www.songwriting.net or call (954) 776-1577.



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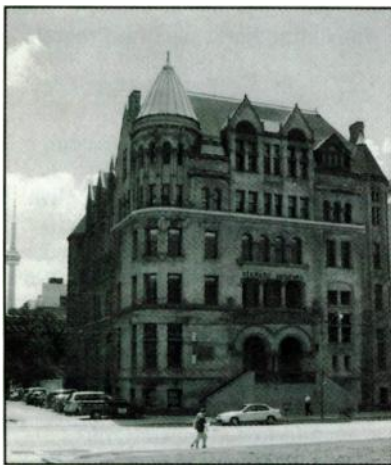
With 7,000 entries from 40 different countries, the International Songwriting Competition's annual agenda is to seek out the best songs from aspiring and established songwriters and showcase them in a professional, international arena.

This year's competition saw our country comfortably at the top of the list in many categories. Canadian winners included: Alroy Dias/Charisma (Scarborough, ON) – 1st Place Rap/Hip-Hop for "Father Forgive Me"; Andrew Yankiwski, Neal Cornish and Chris Wiebe (Winnipeg, MB) – 2nd Place R&B/Blues for "555-EXTC"; Bryan Cote and Ryan Leclair (Bolton, ON) – 2nd Place Rock/Alternative for "Mother"; Stephen Stohn, Jody Colero, Evren Ozdemir and Jim McGrath (Toronto, ON) – Peoples' Voice winner for "Whatever It Takes"; Kat Goldman (Toronto, ON) – Honourable Mention for "The Great Disappearing Act"; Gordie Sampson (Cape Breton, NS) – Honourable Mention for "Don't Shoot The Messenger".

Contestants were judged by a panel that included Rob Thomas (Matchbox 20), Andy Summers (The Police), Eddie Kramer (Producer/Engineer, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, etc.), Kim Stephens (VP of A&R Atlantic Records), David Bendeth (VP of A&R RCA Records), Arif Mardin (VP of Manhattan Records), Jeff Fenster (VP of A&R Island/Def Jam Records) and Monte Lippman (President of Universal Records).

Prizes awarded totalled \$65,000 US in cash and merchandise, and are shared by the 38 winners in eight categories. For the complete listing of winners, and more information on the annual competition, check out www.songwritingcompetition.com.

Trebas Relocates



The Stewart Building: Trebas Institute's New Toronto HQ.

One of Canada's premier media design colleges, Trebas Institute, recently made the move from their Dundas St. E. locale to the historic Stewart Building at 149 College St. in downtown Toronto.

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Kelly Embleton is Computer Services Coordinator for Norris-Whitney Communications.



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ROAD test

KORG microKORG Synthesizer/Vocoder

by Kevin Young



At first glance the Korg microKORG Synthesizer/Vocoder is one of those units you can't help but take a closer look at. Compact, with vintage details and a slim gooseneck microphone sticking out dead centre at the rear of the front panel – you want to know what it is, what it does and if it does it at a price you can justify paying right then and there. Still, given its small keys and maximum 4-voice polyphony, you might yet make the mistake of dismissing it without taking it around the block for a spin. Don't be misled. Korg routinely packs a lot of power into small packages and the microKORG is no exception.

For those unfamiliar with them, as described in the microKORG's manual, a Vocoder is "a device that imposes the spectral character of a voice (or other audio signal) on the sound of an oscillator, producing the impression that the oscillator is speaking." Using the microphone included with the unit connecting another mic or external audio source to Audio In 1 or Audio In 2 on the microKORG's rear panel, the vocoder's programs can be used to reproduce both recognizable familiar vocoders as well as create compelling new sounds alone or in tandem with the arpeggiator and the machine's modulation effects, delay effects and EQ.

If that was all there was to it this would still be a wild piece of gear, but with 112, easy to edit classic synth programs (which include excellent clav, electric piano and basic organ sounds) organized by genre into seven banks, Trance, Techno/House, Electronica, D'n'B Breaks, Hip-Hop/Vintage, Retro and S.E./Hit, there is a lot to play with even before you get into the machine's more unique features. Those features include 16 vocoder programs, virtual patching capabilities (four virtual patch routes allow the user a large degree of control over how a particular sound modulates over time), a versatile and intuitive arpeggiator and the ability to process the sound from an external device using the microKORG controllers makes for a wealth of rhythmic and sound creation possibilities.

Front Panel controls include arpeggiator on/off, octave shift (3 up/3 down), a large bank select knob, an A/B button to access each half of a given bank's 16 sounds via eight program select buttons and separate pitch and modulation wheels and five knobs that control cutoff, resonance, EG attack, EG release and Tempo as well as a variety of other parameters (including global and MIDI settings) depending on the position of two edit select knobs. Although the interface is fairly intuitive and a variety

of sonic possibilities can be exploited quickly, it is economical in that relatively few controllers control a large amount of functionality. That being the case, in-depth, effective use of the interface can be a bit tricky at first if you're unfamiliar with analog synthesis. But with a quick look at the manual and some practice, the interface becomes transparent fairly quickly and the incredible flexibility of the microKORG becomes readily apparent. Also, as usual, Korg includes as much information in text on the front panel as possible, making it difficult for the user to lose their way when editing in on the fly in real-time.

As is also usual the designers seem committed to including small, but impressive, user-friendly details. For example, when using the five aforementioned knobs to tweak a given parameter the original value blinks in the LED screen until it has been crossed, providing the user with a roadmap back to where they started with each incremental change. Another nice touch is that when the arpeggiator is on and the Edit Select 2 knob is set to ARPEG.A or ARPEG.B, the eight program select buttons can be used to add or delete steps from the arpeggiator sequence to create a large variety of rhythms quickly and intuitively in real-time.

Whether you're using the microKORG as a stand-alone unit or with a controller it would make an impressive addition to any live or studio rig and regardless of the style of music or type of performance you specialize in, you'll no doubt find a number of applications for this machine.

The microKORG's Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price is \$799. Worth every penny and more fun than you can imagine.

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

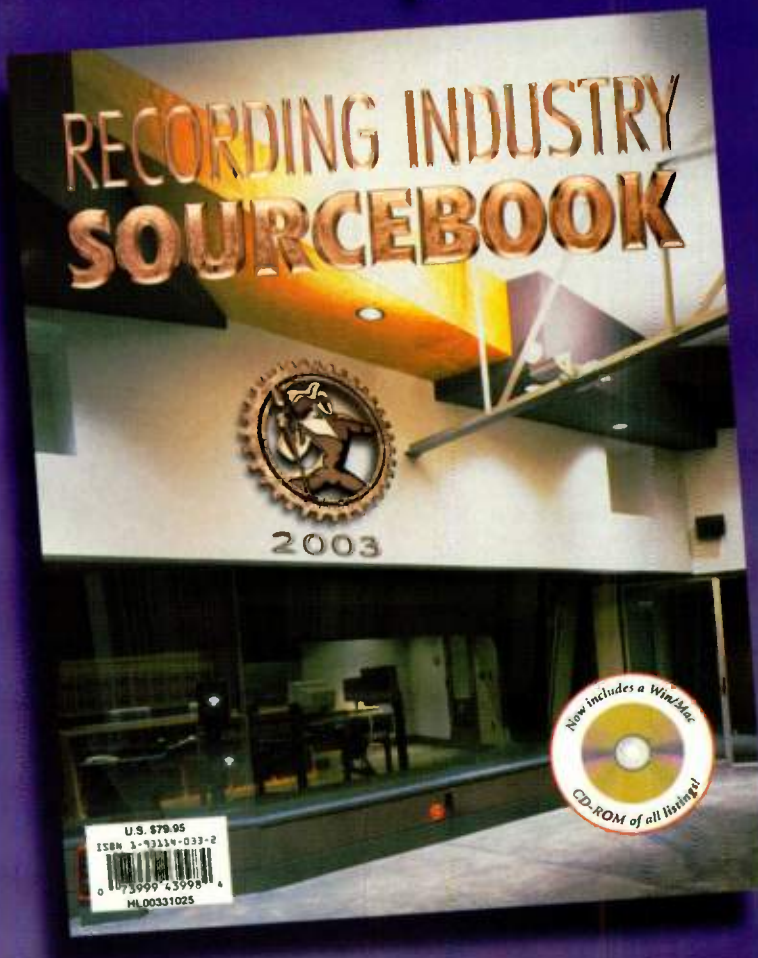
Kevin Young is keyboardist for David Usher and Moist.

Distributor's Comments:

Our thanks to Kevin for a great review. Your readers should know that Korg has a Web site to offer musicians free microKORG Sound Editing software available online at www.korg.com/service/downloadinfo.asp?DID=435.

– Steve Knowles, Product Support, Korg Canada

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Godin Flat Five X

by Mike Turner

For quite a while now the folks at Godin have been quietly making some really great instruments and they're not really the type to rely on flash. (Although their Radiator model is pretty cool looking!) They build exceptional instruments out of top-grade woods and great components.

Their latest offerings are the Flat Five and Flat Five X. The Flat Five itself is a fairly typical semi-hollow body, two-humbucker guitar. The X stands for the optional L.R. Baggs Piezo pickup system, which features six transducers that replace the saddles, and an onboard pre-amp. The body is Silverleaf maple with a multi-channelled centre block and the top is AAA Grade Flame Maple while the sides are Poplar. The Flat Five X that I tested was finished in a high gloss lightburst with black chrome pickups and plain black controls giving it a very sophisticated vibe. I'd have to say that the overall construction is wonderful but I do have one small complaint. Anywhere there are recesses on the guitar, like the holes for the neck bolts, around the control cavities and most noticeably inside the F-Holes; there are noticeable traces of rubbing compound and serious irregularities in the finish. I know this is being really picky, but at \$2,295 I think this kind of stuff just isn't acceptable.

The 24 3/4" scale satin finished mahogany neck is a beefy 1 11/16" at the nut, has 24 frets and a 16" radius, plenty wide and flat enough to facilitate the most heroic string bends you might feel the need for. Size aside, the neck still feels really comfortable due to the shape of the edges of the fingerboard. Godin calls this finishing method their 'Ergocut' shaping technique and it involves the fingerboard and frets bevelled back towards the centre of the neck. To me it feels like the edges that are in the way have been worn off by countless hours of play, a nice feature on a new guitar! The neck to body joint is impeccable, resulting in a loud and lively acoustic sound before you even plug in the guitar. One detail that took a bit of getting used to is the fact that there's no pitch angle between the neck and body. Whereas this isn't at all uncommon for Teles and Strats, the various Gibson semi-hollow bodies that the Flat Five resembles most do have a few degrees of pitch. The result is that without the pitch the strings feel strangely close to the body at the bridge. I got over this pretty soon but it did give me a bit of a pause while getting to know the guitar.

When it is time to plug in you have options galore! The Flat Five X has 3 1/4" outputs, one each for the magnetic pickups and the L.R. Baggs system and one that's a blend of the two. The Flat 5 and Flat Five X both feature two Godin Humbuckers. The neck position is a Duncan Custom Custom with a new magnet (I guess that makes it a custom custom...) and the neck position is a Jazz II. A 5-way switch handles pickup selection and offers a coil tap of either pickup while at the in-between positions and the normal choice of neck, bridge or both at the other three positions. Single volume and tone controls keep things simple at the output stage,

but remove the option of blending the levels of each pickup when using both; if they're both on, they're both full on. That being said, with the broad palette of tones at your disposal, I doubt you'll find yourself really needing to blend. The L.R. Baggs system is based around six transducer saddles and an onboard preamp. The controls for the preamp are located on the bass side of the neck and consist of three EQ sliders and one for volume. The EQ has quite a bit of grunt to it so discretion is advisable! I've never felt that any of these systems truly sounds like an acoustic guitar but you can certainly get a good substitute out of this one. Add to this the fact that you can have it in parallel with the sound of the humbuckers and I have to admit it's a great idea. With the multi-voice outputs you have the option of sending both signals to the same amp, or sending the acoustic through a volume pedal (to add as much or as little of it as you need) and DI box to a PA or even to a dedicated acoustic amplifier. The Flat Five X has a 3-way selector to choose between the magnetic pickups, the L.R. Baggs, or both and a master volume to control the level of everything.

Apart from some very minor details, this is a great guitar that is at home in pretty much any situation. It sounds great as a Rock Beast or a real smooth cat (Nashville or Jazz – your call) so that if you have a split personality, now your guitar can as well.

For more information, contact: Godin Guitars, 19420 Clark Graham Ave., Baie D'Urfe, PQ H9X 3R8 (514) 457-7977, FAX (514) 457-5774, sales@lasido.com, www.lasido.com.

Mike Turner is a Toronto-based musician who is best known for his previous role as guitarist for Our Lady Peace.

Manufacturer's Comments:

Our initial reaction to Mike's review was to simply say; "thanks". Having said that, we can't resist the opportunity to throw in our two cents on the Flat Five because we consider it to be among our coolest-ever guitars and we'd like to boast about it. From a distance, the Flat Five may seem like a typical semi-hollow body. However, there was nothing "me-too" about our design goals with this guitar. The use of all solid wood, multi-chambered body, scale, pick-up placement and 5-way pickup switching allows the Flat Five to produce an exceptional variety of humbucker and single coil sounds. We would also like to point out that the Flat Five and Flat FiveX are available with solid maple (as with the review guitar) or solid spruce tops. This top option actually makes a dramatic difference in the guitar with the maple version producing a more aggressive tone and the spruce version lending itself more to Jazzier musical settings.

– Brian McConnell, Godin Guitars



Yamaha Steve Jordan Snare Drum

by Chris Taylor-Munro

Yamaha continues adding to its arsenal of signature snare drums, the latest being co-developed with two-time Grammy award winning producer/artist, Steve Jordan. Steve has been a prominent fixture in the music world since joining the original *Saturday Night Live* Band (1975) at the impressive age of 18. This gig spawned countless recordings and live performances for Steve with artists such as the Brecker Bros., Blues Brothers (first #1 hit record), James Taylor, Keith Richards, Neil Young and most recently Sheryl Crow, the late Joey Ramone and the Jon Spencer Blues Band. When asked why he's been so successful Steve replies, "For the love of music." His love for the environment is also apparent in the manufacturing process of his "special" snare drum.

The MSD1365SJ is the official model number given to Yamaha's 24th signature snare drum. The 'M' stands for maple, but this time it's what Yamaha calls 'smart maple' because of the new harvesting techniques. For every tree cut down a new one is immediately planted in its place, therefore reducing the time for re-growth and the effects to the surrounding environment. This shows good corporate policy and responsibility on behalf of the company *and* the artist. But simply exercising good ecological practice with the woodcutting was not enough. The only finish available is matte natural thereby eliminating any toxins associated with paint or lacquer. This drum is beginning to take on inklings of Greenpeace and that's a good thing. Many people in the industry know as time goes by wood will be used less (not by choice) for drum manufacturing.

All of this would be for nothing if the drum didn't sound good, but this baby can pack a wallop, especially when hit rim and centre. Its 13" diameter and 6.5" depth give it a nicely balanced, low-down pop instead of a sharp crack and I quite like it! The maple is perfect for the power needed on hard-hitting backbeats and rings more freely with its 4-ply shell and 6-ply reinforcement hoops than thicker shelled snare drums. This is only the second drum sold by Yamaha to use reinforcement hoops and is done so for sonic reasons (larger bearing edge surface) and not for strengthening purposes. The crisp highs remain throughout the tuning spectrum giving the drum its most prominent characteristic: clarity. Tuning is easy, but some head tensions exude more ringing overtones than others. A ¼" dampening ring will take care of those in a jiffy, but it's nice to know you have the option for when the music calls for some extra attitude.

When played softly the lower tones are all but gone making this drum as versatile as the man



whose name is on it. (Steve has been known for changing snare drums during live performances for each song in a given set.) Ghost notes and rudiments of the lightest touch are wonderfully clear and dynamic with the coated ambassador head installed at the factory. This drum is equally at home on a small stage in a jazz club or a stadium sized stage *rawkin' out* at the Skydome.

Yamaha's quality and attention to detail with the hardware is second to none and continues to be made in the same Indonesian factory that builds the engines for its motorcycles. Then it gets sent to the Japanese factory where shell plying, cutting, drilling, finishing and final assembly is all done by hand. The 'H' strainer is attached with minimal contact to the shell and glides smoothly, but is chrome plated instead of the smoked metal theme the rest of the hardware is treated with. The triple flanged rims are time-tested, proven to be strong and look great with the bullet style lug mounts. The 20 strand snares are non-plated, easily adjusted and held up with durable nylon chord, but plastic strips can be substituted if you're caught in a pinch. The finishing touch is the two-tone (gold and smoked), engraved badge autographed and numbered beside a silhouetted maple tree. The overall appearance is subdued yet classy with nice contrast between the natural wood and hardware.

Yamaha and Steve should be proud of their collaboration. Adding this snare drum to *your* arsenal would replace two (maybe three) drums lacking the chameleonic personality it offers. While many companies claim to be making conscious efforts regarding the environment, Yamaha does so while offering boutique-like craftsmanship at a price hundreds below some of its competitors.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the Yamaha Steve Jordan Snare Drum is \$850.

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

Chris Taylor-Munro is a Toronto-based musician who drums for David Usher.

Manufacturer's Comments:

We agree with Chris' review and feel that he has captured the essence of what Steve Jordan and Yamaha have attempted to create with this drum. 'Kokeomundai' (Japanese word for dedication to the environment) is a cornerstone of our instrument development. At the current consumption rate of materials such as maple and birch (to say nothing of rain forest woods such as Mahogany and Bubinga), there will certainly be world shortages in the coming decades. Bamboo and Fibreglass are two alternative materials that we have had success with thus far and with re-planting practices like "Smart Maple", we are doing our bit to ensure that the environmental hemorrhaging stops. Yamaha is also committed to the notion that our instruments should last and that achieving the lowest price point by making 'self destructing' products is a goal not worthwhile pursuing. This serves to keep our product out of the landfill sites anyway ... We hope that consumer awareness of these issues will ultimately have a positive effect on the global environment.

— Sean Browne, Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.

EXPRESS Yourself

What top guitar players and techs are saying about EXP strings

"D'Addario EXP strings provide insurance against corrosion and tarnish. The coating helps preserve the crisp tone that Dave prefers." **Monk**

Dave Matthews guitar technician

"I like the new EXP strings. I can get through 2 to 3 more shows on the same set of strings than I could on typical phosphor bronze strings. All around, they're the best acoustic string, period."

Alex Alvarez

Lenny Kravitz guitar technician

"I really like the EXP strings. I don't notice much difference in tone from the regular phosphor bronze, but they last longer. I think the EXPs are a far superior string."

David Grissom

session and touring guitarist

"The EXP coated strings ring above the rest. They really have a clear tone and they stay brighter longer than any other acoustic strings we've tried."

3 Doors Down



EXP strings are available in
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touring

G
touring
guitar

Following are my revelations of being part of a touring band specifically formed to support a solo artist in this case Peter Murphy (of Bauhaus fame) to promote his new *Dust* CD.

Individual Prep Work Is Essential

Within days for the call from Peter's management company, I had two CDs in hand with 16 songs to shed. Thankfully the rest of the band was from Toronto as well. This made it easy to converse as individually we had known/played together in other situations over the years. The band members were Mark Kelso (drums), Hugh Marsh (electric violin), Fergus Marsh (Chapman stick, fretted and fretless bass), Rob Piltch (guitars – North American tour) and Kurt Swinghammer (guitars – European tour). I had discussions with Rob and Kurt with respect to sharing multiple guitar parts from the recordings, as I had to blend them with my parts on the oud, banjitar and Godin multiac fretless guitar, aside from my electric guitars.

Music/Tech Rehearsals – The Key To Creating A Good Show

We had two weeks of rehearsals, which included reviewing the songs, the set list, stage and lighting design, sound design and all the technical requirements of our equipment. The fine-tuning involved getting the arrangements down, memorizing the songs, smoothening the transitions between switching instruments (as I had to do this in many of the tunes) and getting accustomed to playing with in-ear monitors as opposed to stage monitors. The beauty of the system was that it enabled me to always have my own mix with pretty good consistency throughout the tour, and since everything was programmed, I could alter the mixes as we went along. This also allowed for short soundchecks!

Make Sure Your Gear Is In Excellent Condition And Properly Cased

To get ready for a long trip like this (we were going to be on the road for six weeks, in 30 different cities throughout Canada and the US, followed by a short stint in Europe the following month) all my instruments had to be set up and have proper road cases. I had to custom-configure my effects pedal board, and add a mixer to it for monitoring all my instruments through my amp. Discussing the whole process and constantly making changes with the technician, Brian Clairmont, achieved this ideal set up.

Take Care Of Your Body, Mind & Spirit

Rehearsals behind us, the new touring band was musically ready, and all my equipment in tiptop shape and properly cased. Let the tour begin! When touring, it is crucial to be in tune with your mental and physical health. I achieved this by keeping a very positive outlook (this was easy as I was travelling with a great bunch of caring people and phenomenal musicians) and really experiencing the buzz of cities we played, the people, food and overall amenities. For my physical health, I made sure that I ate properly and went for long walks almost every day. Since the tour allowed us a day off every two days, I took the time to practice in the day and take part in some local traditions in the evening, like the festive nightlife of New Orleans and to eat local specialties (sushi in Miami, ribs in Houston).

Don't Forget Your Family, Friends And Business

Thanks to the Internet and long distance cell phone plans, I was able to stay in touch with my family, friends and business constantly. I also kept in touch with my endorsement companies to let them know that I would be on the road. On a few occasions, I needed some stuff, and they courier them directly to my hotel even though I had taken a survival kit of extra strings, cables and pick-ups.

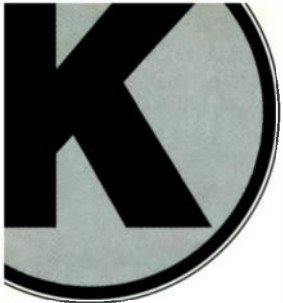
Enjoy All The Moments On The Tour

Tours can be a very rewarding experience in many ways. We had the opportunity to play for new audiences, play at landmarks (such as the Fillmore in San Francisco), or for lifetime experience events (30,000 people in Odemira, Portugal, sharing the bill with Alanis Morissette). But before you know it, the last gig comes. When we finished our last concert in New Jersey, we couldn't believe that all that time flew by that fast.

Hopefully some of these tips can come in handy for you. Touring can be a great experience, with the right prep work and a positive mental attitude.

Levon Ichkhanian is a multi-instrumentalist. He plays guitars, oud, bouzouki and banjitar. Levon is an active D'Addario clinician. His follow up release to After Hours, which featured John Patitucci and Paquito D'rivera, is Travels featuring Alain Caron. For more information contact Levon through www.levonmusic.com.





selecting the right keyboard

Keyboards

Want to buy a keyboard to learn to play on, but you're not sure what to get?

As both a teacher and performer, over time I think the question I've been asked the most by students, fans and parents has been: What is the best piece of equipment I can buy to learn on? This column is aimed primarily at these people.

I still believe the best way to learn is to start with the basics and recommend an acoustic piano. If a piano is what you want and you have little interest beyond that then there's nothing quite like the real thing, unless it's a high-quality digital substitute. However they can be expensive and aren't always practical for any number of reasons. Realistically, the quality and feel of modern digital pianos make them, in some ways, preferable to the real thing.

Still, either way, quality costs and you have to balance the cash outlay against what kind of use you think the instrument is going to get.

Whether you're a first-time buyer looking for a keyboard to learn on, or have only played acoustic piano in the past and are looking at buying something electronic for the first time, sifting through the huge variety of technology out there can be a bit confusing. Either way, chances are you don't have to buy the latest, greatest music workstation to get by and if there is any chance that your purchase might swiftly become little more than an expensive coffee table; it's best to keep the cost of the purchase reasonable. Granted, you want to get a quality machine that does everything you need it to, but sometimes, particularly when there are so many options available, there's a temptation to get a machine that seems to do everything you could ever want it to. But if cost and space are concerns, however, and one or both probably are, you may have to look around a bit.

Here are some things to keep in mind when you're looking...

• Check out all your options, looking for both used and new keyboards online, in local music stores and for private sale. Don't completely discount an acoustic piano during your search. You never know what you might find. Keyboards depreciate in value fairly quickly, but not to the same extent that computers do. You should know what a similar, newer keyboard retails for. When buying used in a private sale – the simpler the keyboard, the easier to tell if it still does all of what it did when it was new. Regardless of whether you ultimately decide to go for something electronic or acoustic try to

bring someone with you that knows a bit about keyboards or pianos when you're making the final decision.

• Focus primarily on the quality of the acoustic piano sound or sounds available as well as the action of the keyboard. How much does it sound and feel like the real thing?

• Pay attention to small details and decide what is important to you. Do you need a piano bench? A stand to place sheet music? Space on top of the piano for a light? Will you amplify the unit using an external source or do you prefer built-in speakers? Small considerations perhaps, but posture, comfort and making practice as easy as possible are important to developing and maintaining a regular practice regimen.

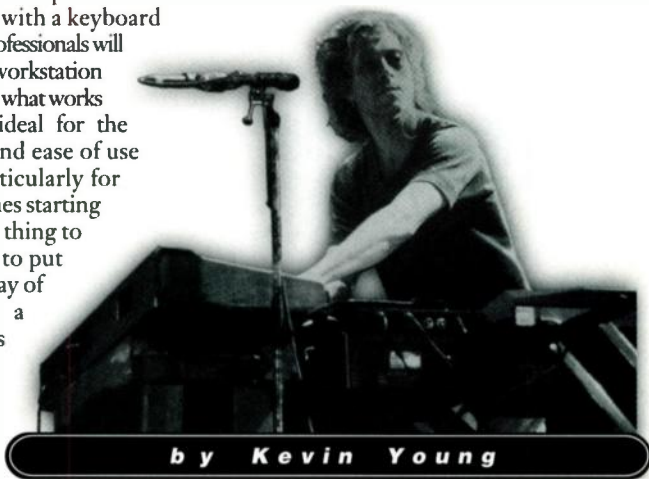
• Decide what your specific needs will be. Do you want a simple machine that most closely approximates a piano or something that comes with a variety of other options geared specifically towards beginners? If you plan to teach yourself, make sure you'll actually use these options. If you intend to hire a teacher, seek out their opinion. Anything that legitimately helps a student to learn is a valuable function, but avoid being seduced into dropping more money on a machine, or sacrificing sound quality and feel for something cheaper based on increased functionality. The most important factor to the success of your attempt to learn or inspire another to learn is their level of enjoyment during the process and their will to learn.

• Depending on how much you have to spend you have the option of buying a single keyboard, a keyboard controller and sound module, or opting for a combination of software for your home computer that can be used in combination with a keyboard controller. While most professionals will often opt for a high-end workstation or a variety of components, what works for them may not be ideal for the beginner. Again, setup and ease of use are very important, particularly for a young player. Sometimes starting to practice is the hardest thing to do and you might want to put as few obstacles in the way of that as possible. For a beginner it's best if it's no more difficult than flicking a switch and putting fingers to keyboard. The first option is the simplest

and most basic digital pianos have reasonable action and good sound quality while also offering a number of other sounds and performance options as well.

Keep it simple. The bottom line is that the machine that best fits your price and feels and sounds most like the real thing is what you should get. Period. Even for people who wish to learn to play who are also looking to augment their home studio with a keyboard of some variety, ideally the best place to start is with a fairly basic MIDI compatible controller, with a keyboard as close to full size as space and cost allow, a few quality on-board sounds and full size keys. If you do need greater versatility you can expand with software and hardware sound modules and keep the same keyboard. And if you do want a change, a good controller will retain a fair bit of its value should you wish to sell it or trade up.

Kevin Young is keyboardist for David Usber and Moist.



by Kevin Young

Day in the life of a **bass tech**



Part II

bass

Below is the second part of a behind-the-scenes look at a Matthew Good concert with Steeve Hennessy, who handles bass, keyboard and drum backline duties from night to night.

What's the worst thing that's ever happened to you as a tech? What's the worst thing that COULD happen?

Fortunately for me, nothing stands out as "the worst thing." Small things seem really bad at the time they happen. Like last year I was doing guitars, drums, bass and loading sampler for Econoline Crush. One day, just as we brought the band on stage, the drummer went to start the show with a trigger/sample that wasn't there. Everyone looks at you. Dead air ... silence, run out on stage, troubleshoot the line it should have been heard through, then I realized from the time we did line check to bringing the band on, someone had unplugged the stage power for only a second. When doing so, you reset the sampler to factory settings so it needed to be re-loaded and a couple guitar pedals needed to be reset. During this time, the band started anyway and by the second song, everything was back to normal. Nobody noticed but the band. But there were a few minutes of sheer panic before I realized what happened and what I had to do to fix the problem. Always expect the unexpected. Like the worst thing that could ever happen to any band, happened to me in Rymes With Orange, on a sunny Sunday morning in downtown Winnipeg just moments before checking out, in the parking lot outside my window, someone broke into our van and drove off with all our equipment. Everything was gone. I tell you, that literally stops you dead in your tracks. I don't wish it upon my worst enemy. Eventually we got some of it back, I guess you could say we were lucky.

What's the most enjoyable part of your job as a tech, what makes the job worth it?

The best part of the job for me is being part of a team – hopefully a team that has a collective goal of making every show the best. Everyone involved has a role to play. The artists are there to perform and bring their songs to the fans, the crew puts it all together and the drivers get you there safe. Like one big family, it's not always perfect, but when you can pull off a show with little to no sleep, a stage with no room to move around or a buzz in your guitar you couldn't get rid of, that's when you know you did it as a team. All that matters in the end is that every person who came to see the show got a great show.

How do you split your time/attention between three instruments (bass/keyboards/drums)? Do you find yourself run ragged at the end of a show?

You have to prioritize your duties. Things like keyboards, as long as there are no technical problems with the keyboards themselves, you can usually set them up and not worry about them too much. The daily maintenance falls more within the cabling, the connectors, the stands etc. With drums, the maintenance is constant. There are a lot of moving parts, little nuts and bolts that come off and get lost or break off. Drum heads need to be inspected upon every set up to make sure they are good enough to make it through the set. I make sure there are no cracks in the cymbals and plenty of spare drum sticks within the drummer's reach. Once keys and drums are out of the way, all of my time is spent in the bass department. Changing strings daily, checking the intonation, making sure strap locks are on tight, batteries are fresh in wireless packs and stomp pedals and cables and jacks are all making good contact. And the tone and signal of the bass is consistent all the way through to the speaker cab. Then, when the show is on, I position myself on stage left so I can do bass changes, and keep an eye on the guys. To do so, I look at each musician for about two seconds and then move on. In the unfortunate event of a technical problem in each one of three instruments, one can end up pretty frazzled by the end of a show. But that's life in the trenches.

Specifically, what's the most important thing to watch for with the three instruments that you handle?

Do as much pre-production as you can. By this I mean do your homework and get to know the gear you're going to be working with. Find out what kind of fuses and tubes it takes, so you can keep some spares on hand in your "work box". Set it all up and test everything. Label every cable and where it gets plugged into as you go. With keyboards I cover up, with black tape, all jacks you won't be using on the tour. That way, when in a hurry, you eliminate potential mistakes. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Sometimes a musician knows something quirky about their instrument that you should be aware of. And that's it. Make the experience on stage for the musician as pleasurable and painless as possible and you've done your job.

Steeve Hennessy is an instrument/backline tech for Matt Good specifically bass, keyboards and drums. He also plays guitar/keyboards in his own band, Rymes with Orange. Fine Steeve online at steevehennessy@hotmail.com or www.rymes.com.



with Steeve Hennessy

P

a little drumming in everyone – drum circles

Greetings fellow drummers. Who remembers the '70s sitcom show *The Brady Bunch*? Do you remember the episode where Bobby Brady gets a set of drums? It was a classic. He couldn't play the instrument, however he sure did have fun giving it a try. The reason I am mentioning this is that I believe everyone has a little drumming in him or her. I'm sure at some point you all wanted to sit behind a set of drums, grab a set of bongos or even just shake a tambourine and express some of your rhythmical abilities.

In this column, I'll be talking about the popularity of community drum circles and how to get involved or form your own.

What Is A Drum Circle?

A drum circle is a group of people getting together with various percussion instruments to create rhythmical music together. I know this all sounds very simple and it is. Many people are shy and say they have no sense of rhythm. **WRONG!** We all have a heartbeat. We all walk at a pretty consistent pace, which is a sense of time and rhythm.

Who Can Participate In The Circle?

Drum circles have no limit to the size of the group. People of all ages, males and females can participate. Most people find this to be a great way to relieve stress, relax and most important of all, have fun.

Location

Anywhere you can make noise without anyone complaining. They are quite common outdoors in parks.

Instruments

I like to divide this up into three groups of percussion instruments.

Hand Drums

Djembes, ashikos, congas, bongos and many other similar types of drums fall into the hand drum category. (The djembes are the most popular.) This is the group of instruments that creates various tones and pitches. Melodic rhythms are developed.

Time Keeping Instruments

This group includes claves, various cowbells and woodblocks. These are the instruments that will carry and set the pulse of the circle.

Fillers

This group includes shakers, maracas, tambourines and many other variations of these instruments. They add the icing on the cake. They fill in the space between the time keeping instruments and hand drums.

Getting Started

Whether you have 10-50 people. The size doesn't matter. To create a nice balance of sound you should divide the group evenly using the three various groups of instruments.

Timing

The most important thing is to know where the pulse is and as most musicians would say "Where's the one?" Most common music is written in a pulse of four counts, referred to 4/4 time. Always try to know where the one falls. Practice counting "1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4," accenting the one. This will help with your timing and help prevent you from getting lost.

Facilitating

Once you have your group of people ready to participate, it's important to have somebody facilitate the circle (take control and direction). Usually the facilitator will perform among the circle and when it's time to change something within the group, he or she will enter to the centre of the circle and give a signal.

Communicating With Signals

We all have various ways to communicate with others. In many of the circles I have facilitated or observed, here are some basic common signals that are used:

Thumbs Up: increase the tempo gradually

Thumbs Down: slow the tempo down gradually

Pointing And Rolling Your Hands: this tells the person to keep on playing.

Raising Both Arms Up: increase the volume

Lowering Both Arms Down: decrease the volume

Complete Stops: the facilitator motions a baseball umpire's "safe" signal where you slide both arms across each other giving a quick stop cut.

Sculpting: this is when the facilitator will use his or her entire arm to point at a certain instrument, slide their

arm either going left or right to another instrument and cutting that group out of the circle until you are counted back in.

Most signals are non-verbal. A common verbal one to bring in a group after they have been cut out is to say "One two, let's all play."

Games And Ideas

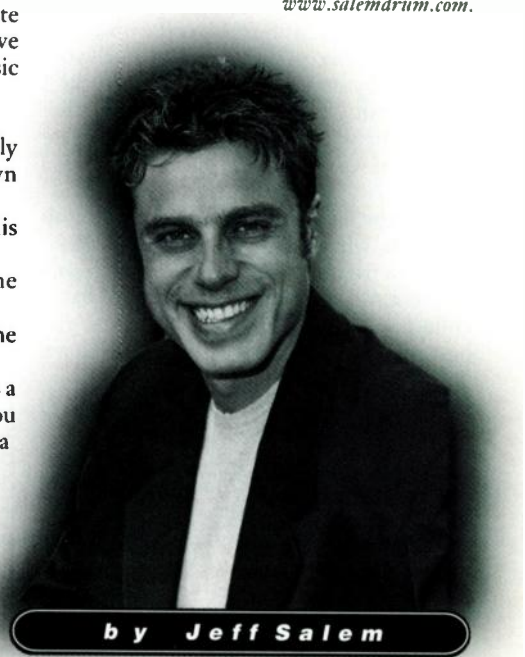
Call & Response: The facilitator will play a rhythm on their instrument and will get the whole group to respond back playing the same rhythm.

Assigning Out Parts: this can be really fun, just be careful to only assign out some simple rhythms. Remember some people are just starting out and you want them to be able to perform and feel confident. Try assigning out two or three different rhythms within the circle.

Sculpt Out Various Instruments: for example, cut out the hand drums and have just the shakers and cowbells playing. Also, cut out just the boys and have the girls playing.

Try some of your own ideas. There are many fun exercises to experiment with. The most important thing is to listen and of course have fun. Until next time, happy drumming!

Jeff Salem is a freelance artist who performs drum clinics sponsored by Pearl, Vic Firth, SABIAN and Rhythm Tech. When not touring he maintains a busy teaching schedule. For information visit his Web site at www.salemdrum.com.



by Jeff Salem

where to start?

where to finish?

Where To Start?

As a very young kid, I was fascinated by jazz. Without understanding anything about it, I started to play along with some of the records that I liked to listen to – even though I really had no idea what I was doing. My lack of technical understanding of the basics (such as scalar/harmonic relationships) was a drawback to me – and one that I wouldn't begin to resolve for years to come. But by taking that childish plunge, I began to develop a very strong ear and, more importantly, a very powerful sense of time – which I have never lost and which I think I could only have obtained through that naive but, at the same time, fortuitously beneficial “exercise”.

As I grew older, I did the theoretical-scales-harmony-study-transcribe-analyze-cogitate-take-some-lessons-and-think-things-over until – PRESTO! Years later, guess what my practice sessions now consist of?

Playing along with records!

I have gone right back to where I started. My practice sessions now consist almost exclusively of playing along with records. In any two- to three-hour session, I only do about 10 to 15 minutes of technicals. The rest of the time I spend imitating – and I mean *slavishly* imitating – exactly what I hear my target of the day playing or singing on the CD (be it Miles or Trane or Bird or Aretha or Ray Charles ... or whatever is pertinent to what I am being called upon to do.)

Over the years, I have become fairly precise at “mimicking” even difficult things – though absolute precision is never my ultimate goal. What I really try to do is capture the vibe, the shapes, the nuances, the shadings, the compresses, the swells [Important note ... Listen to Ray Charles!] that *never* emerge on a piece of paper anyway. And I am never discouraged by difficult things such as Trane indulging in sheets of sound. [Important note ... Listen to “Black Pearls” on *Prestige!*] If I have to, I will merely catch fragments – or contours – as best I can – even if I have to let a lot of things go by.

I strongly recommend this approach. However, for this mimicking exercise to work you really have to imitate precisely what you hear – and only what you are *able* to hear. And that means you must

sometimes wait until you are *able* to hear before you start to play. At no time should you permit yourself to effuse with your own “stuff” as it were. Save that for later; i.e., when you are actually in a playing situation and where you may be in a position to exhibit some of the musical things that you will have internalized from this mimicking exercise.

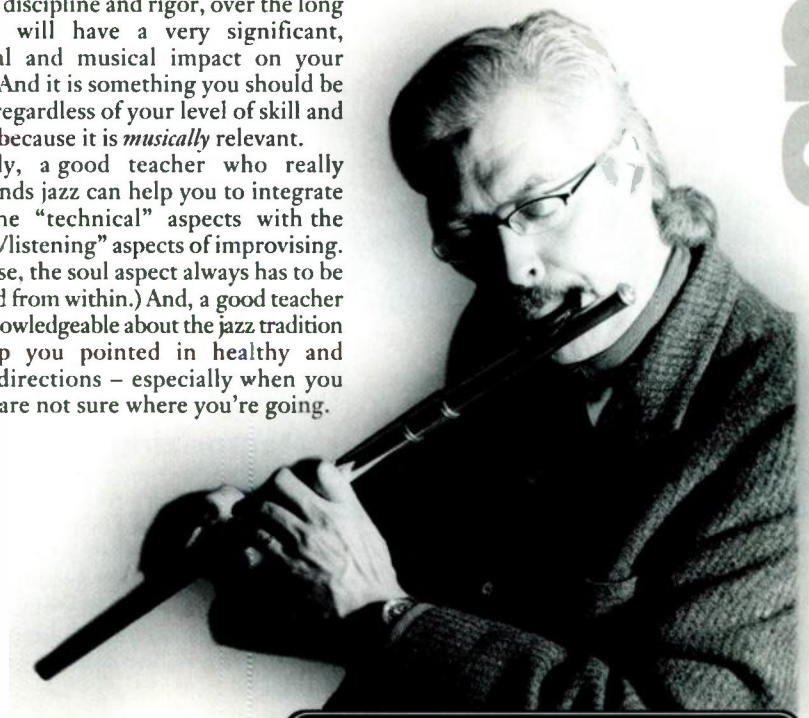
Finally, believe me when I tell you that this mimicking exercise has elements of both fun and realism that simply playing transcriptions – or even playing along with music-minus-one records – completely lacks. Even if the music you are mimicking is not interacting with you, you still have to interact with it! And in any genuinely musical context, that is precisely what is required of *you*, especially as an improviser. Developing that interactive capability will ultimately render you a far more desirable musician – from the standpoint of both the listener – and the band.

Where to Finish?

So do not fail to incorporate into your practice routine some measure of playing along with the records that you really like or that are pertinent to your improvised music situations. I guarantee you, if you do this with discipline and rigor, over the long term, it will have a very significant, beneficial and musical impact on your playing. And it is something you should be doing – regardless of your level of skill and ability – because it is *musically* relevant.

Finally, a good teacher who really understands jazz can help you to integrate all of the “technical” aspects with the “hearing/listening” aspects of improvising. (Of course, the soul aspect always has to be cultivated from within.) And, a good teacher who is knowledgeable about the jazz tradition can keep you pointed in healthy and musical directions – especially when you yourself are not sure where you're going.

Bill is a longstanding and accomplished freelance flute specialist in Toronto. If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact him at billmcb@idirect.com. Also, look for his latest release, Nature Boy, featuring the Mark Eisenman Trio, now available at major retailers and through the distributor, Indie Pool, at indiepool.com or 1-888-88-INDIE.



by Bill McBirnie

Memorizing Tunes

Every successful jazz player knows many tunes. Which tunes should you know? Which should you learn first? How do you learn them?

Get A Notebook

Start a tune list in a notebook. Create two lists: tunes you know, and tunes you want to learn. The first list will help you in jam sessions when it's your turn to call a tune. The second list will remind you of what you should be working on.

Start With Tunes You Recognize

When trying to decide which tunes to learn first, start with tunes that are familiar, tunes that you recognize. It is much easier to memorize a tune that you can hum than one that you've never heard before. Whenever you hear a tune that catches your ear, add it to the list of tunes you'd like to know. Keep your notebook handy.

Don't Get Caught Twice

If you've been at a rehearsal or jam session and a tune is called that you don't know, move it to the top of your priority list. Chances are if it's called once, it will be called again.

Memorize Small Sections

Keep a small stack of tunes on your music stand. Whenever you have a short break in your practice session, glance at the first tune. Memorize a small section of the melody, maybe four bars, then look away and play or sing it. If you get stuck, look at the music again, then look away until you can recall those four bars. Move on to the next section. Continue in this fashion, memorizing four bars at a time.

When you have worked through the tune, put it at the back of the pile. Don't worry that you may not be able to play the tune from beginning to end yet. Each time you work through a tune you will remember larger chunks of it. It is more effective to recall a tune on numerous occasions than to spend hours trying to carve it permanently into your memory.

Memorizing Chords

After you have memorized the melody, it is time to start working on the chord changes. It is harder to memorize chords if you don't yet understand what they sound like, since it is easier to remember a sound than a chord symbol. That's why it is easier to memorize a tune that you recognize. It will help to mentally connect the melody to

the chords. Is a prominent melody note the root, 3rd, or ♭9th of a chord? By associating the melody notes with the chords you can help yourself remember both of them.

As your understanding grows, you will start to recognize common chord progressions, and will not have to think about each individual chord. For instance, you might describe an eight-bar bridge as 'II-V-I in B♭, then II-V-I in A♭'.

Play The Tune

You won't really have a tune memorized until you have played it on several different occasions. Take every opportunity to play a tune you are working on.

Don't Play By Eye

Music is meant to be heard, not seen. The notes or symbols on the page merely represent sounds. As long as you are looking at the music, you will be processing information from your eyes, rather than your ears.

We rely on our eyes to provide us with the most sensory information. Because of this, we are loath to take our eyes off the page. We treat the written music as a crutch. It's like a guy who is still hobbling around six months after a broken leg, afraid to put any weight on it, or somebody who can swim just fine in the shallow end of the pool but is afraid to go in the deep end. Sometimes, you've just got to let go of the hand and take a step.

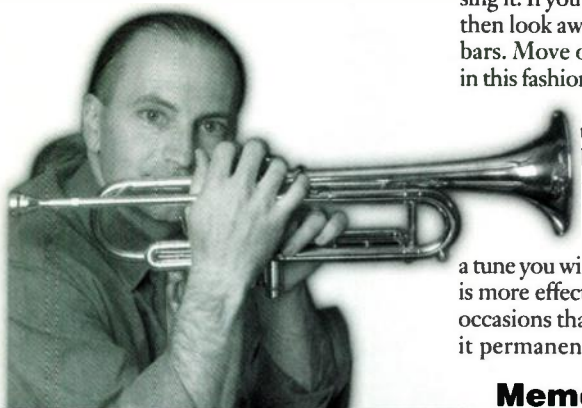
Trust yourself enough to take chances.

Make Musical Mistakes

As a student improviser, you will make mistakes, lots of them. You will make mistakes whether you are looking at the chord changes or not. Here's an important difference: the mistakes you make with your eyes closed will make more musical sense. You might hit a clinker, but you will be quick to move off the note onto one that sounds better. Keep your ears open; sometimes 'mistakes' can lead to unintended brilliance. Of course, never admit the 'unintended' part.

The mistakes you make while looking at the music will not be musical, they will be theoretical. Your brain misinterprets the chord symbol and causes you to play a note that your ear would never tell you to play. Remember: your audience is not reading the part ... they are listening to the music. Try to do the same thing.

When you close your eyes, you open your ears.



by Chase Sanborn

Chase Sanborn is a jazz trumpet player based in Toronto. He is a member of the jazz faculty at U of T and is a Yamaba performing artist/clinician. Jazz Tactics is the third book by Chase Sanborn. A wide range of products and information can be found on his Web site www.chasesanborn.com.

what's "snew", anyway?



digital music

Ah, Yes! The tulips are blooming on the West Coast. I venture outside to rid myself of the vestiges of a studio tan, a gruesome reminder of the mortal trials of our three-week winter. As I mow the lawn, I think about those Canadians I see in the commercials, the ones called hosers, who in an ironic turn now lead the foray of headwear fashion for "artists" like Enrique Iglesias. I think to myself, "Hey ... wearing a toque in the desert makes me think about really cool software and hardware upgrades for my computer!" Then I go indoors and take my Ritalin.

So, let's see what's "snew". The news in computers, especially for musicians, just keeps getting better. It's kind of like my personal dating dictum: "Bigger, faster, cheaper!" So what does a bloke/blokette need to fork-out these days to end up with the modern equivalent of an early '90s mega facility? Shockingly little! (Question for therapist: Is it Freudian to mix personal information containing the words "shockingly little" with software articles?)

Here are some guidelines:

CPUs (they're those little chip things that have something to do with megahertz) in new home computers are actually now beyond the needs of most home recordings. On a recent mix, my now lowly AMD 1800+ was able to run approximately 8 compressors, 6 delays, 2 reverbs, more BBes than anyone should ever need and lots of EQ on a 58-track mix. (Important note to young bands: just because we can play back 58 tracks of audio most definitely does NOT mean that we should!). The hard cost of this much outboard gear is probably around \$30,000; the cost of an 1800 megahertz CPU: \$100! Duuuuude!

Of course, there were bunches of other numbers spewed forth by the spotty-faced young lad at the futuristic electronics retailer, in an attempt to up-sell you to a 5-year warranty. For computer geeks, and you probably don't know who you are, these numbers might be familiar, but what do they mean to us in terms of music?

After the CPU, the next two most important numbers have to do with RAM, (not ovine) and hard drives. RAM now comes with two fancy prefixes: SD and DDR. DDR in a system can process data twice as fast as SD (both are exceedingly fast). More importantly, however, is the amount of RAM in your system. If you are running Windows XP (which I highly recommend for audio ... Bill, please send cheque to address listed at end of article)

your operating system requires approximately 120 megabytes of RAM! After launching the audio software (with a host of plug-ins) and playing the 58-track aural spectacular, while nipping over to a chat-room to exchange illuminating life-philosophies with 'Chloe' from Carrot River, you will likely be using around 260 megabytes of RAM. Do yourself and the chip manufacturers a favour and spring for 512 megabytes.

Cue: Jerry Seinfeld impression ... "Hard drives? What's the deal with hard drives?" Hard drives in new systems are now in the 80 to 120 gigabyte range and spin at a boggling 7200 RPM. When it comes to this mass storage medium, they are so big, fast and cheap that you can afford to go big AND go home. Even though a 120 gig hard drive has more than enough room for all your programs and a couple of albums worth of multitrack audio, I would recommend, like Phil Collins sang, going with "Separate Drives". Groan.

I prefer to go with a smaller "C drive" (the drive that contains all your software) but a big audio drive. It's like one of those pesky high school math problems: Hard Drive "C" leaves Philadelphia bound for Washington at 10 a.m. at a speed of 7200 RPM on the southbound track, while Hard Drive "B" leaves from Buffalo at 11 a.m., but with a different data density but at the same time ... Umm. Clear as mud. You might just have to trust me on this one: The "big" drive will play more tracks more efficiently if it is a separate drive. Greater efficiency is proportionate to higher stability – and that means: "It just works better, eh!" The extra \$200 for a drive that contains audio-only will keep your data more organized and make your computer a happier place for digital audio to live.

Sound cards: Gosh, I could write a magazine on sound cards! Here are some thoughts though: Most motherboards have built-in cards. A lot of these are really QUITE good at playing back audio, especially those with a digital OUT that we can wire directly to our home stereo amplifiers through the digital IN. This makes such units really strong for looping, synthesis and MIDI, but they are still noisy when it comes to recording. Though there are gads of choices out there, I suggest sticking to your budget and examining your needs. If you aren't going to record live-off-the-floor

multitrack performances, a sound card with stereo IN, or a USB sound interface will do the job nicely. Some of the USB interfaces come with surprisingly good microphone preamps which double as instrument inputs. Value for money! Fantastic!

@#%*! I ran out of room. Oh well, be sure to pick up the next *Canadian Musician* where we will talk about the fun stuff...

Yeah sure, there might be some pretty pictures and some band stuff, but the important things will all be right here! Software ... OOOOOIIHHHH!

Attention Bill Gates and AOL: Alec Watson can be contacted at alec@vinsynch.com. Your payment for forwarding all those e-mails is now overdue.



by Alec Watson



the technical elements of vocal style

vocals

In this article I would like to talk about an interesting observation that I have made over my 28 years as a vocal educator; not too many people realize that there are several aspects that have to be addressed with regards to singing in general. First of all, when we talk about singing we are talking about two separate, but very much related elements: physical sound and emotional style. Physical sound is what is achieved by proper utilization of the technical aspects of singing, i.e. breathing (support), structure, placement and projection.

Emotional style is essentially how the singer relates to the song and anticipates and complements the style of music, i.e. rock, alternative, country, R&B, dance etc. A common view is that while the technical aspects of singing can be learned through instruction and repetition, style is only developed naturally over time. There is definitely some truth to this statement; some people just naturally have it within them. As a Vocal Consultant/Producer, I strongly believe in the advantages of instruction in the technical aspects of singing. However, I also believe that it is a mistake to completely separate style from technique and I believe that style CAN BE TAUGHT in the same way that a student can be educated in how to stay in tune, project their voice, etc.

The main technical components of singing are support, structure, placement and projection. Abdominal support is

responsible for the height of the sound. Upper diaphragm support is responsible for the width (body) of the sound. Structure is the structure of the syllables and they are stackable one on top of each other on the central line of the body. Placement is the domain of the four main vocal chambers, which are the same as your sinus cavities. An "aimed" projection is the natural outcome of the previous three.

Once you've achieved mastery of these four components you have achieved technical control of the physical sound. The next step is to dress it up so that it is original, emotional, exciting and affecting. With regards to singing, the physical sound produced must correspond with the style of music and the musical instruments used in its production. Recently, I saw a popular pop singer deliver what was clearly an R&B song with a classical sounding voice. It didn't sound very good because the sound of the voice was so alien to the style of music being played by the band. She actually had a strong sounding voice and, thus, would have received high marks for technical merit if there had been official judges, but also definitely a failing grade for her artistic interpretation. In this instance a *total performance* was not achieved.

The majority of students that come to my school for instruction have a definite idea about the style of singer they want to be, but they don't always know how to achieve it. From the very beginning of instruction, I always teach them the obvious, such as how to stay in key and project their voice, but also work with them on the stylistic elements of the songs they are singing. This is often done by breaking the songs down to individual lines and practicing the ways in which each syllable should be sung depending on the style of music. For example, if you are singing an alternative rock song you should be attempting it in a voice that is a little raspier and somewhat nasal and less smooth sounding and with less or no vibrato. Please note that the rasp should be achieved without straining your vocal chords and is done by correctly coordinating the use of your facial and abdominal muscles. Quite a few of my students sought coaching from me solely because they wanted to achieve this raspy

type of voice without damaging their voice permanently. This is one example of how the artistic style should be based on the foundation of flawless vocal technique.

Some tips on how to approach various other styles of music are as follows:

R & B: sing with a very wide smile. This will open up your resonator (natural amplifier within your facial muscles) and place your syllables as tightly as possible using your cheekbone muscles. This will prevent any vibrato in the voice.

Pop: the pop style is essentially the same as R&B but with a much lighter application. More laid back and in a sort of "boyish" or "girlish" style.

Classical: is definitely a more vertical application – not rounded like in R&B or Pop. The use of proper vibrato is an essential component of this style.

Country: is a mix of classical, pop and R&B. You could often hear a slight crying feel and a minor nasal application. Quite a few country singers use a light, breathy sound, which is also often used in pop singing.

Gospel: uses a classical application, but lately gospel is being associated with the R&B style. I guess it is really a combination of the two.

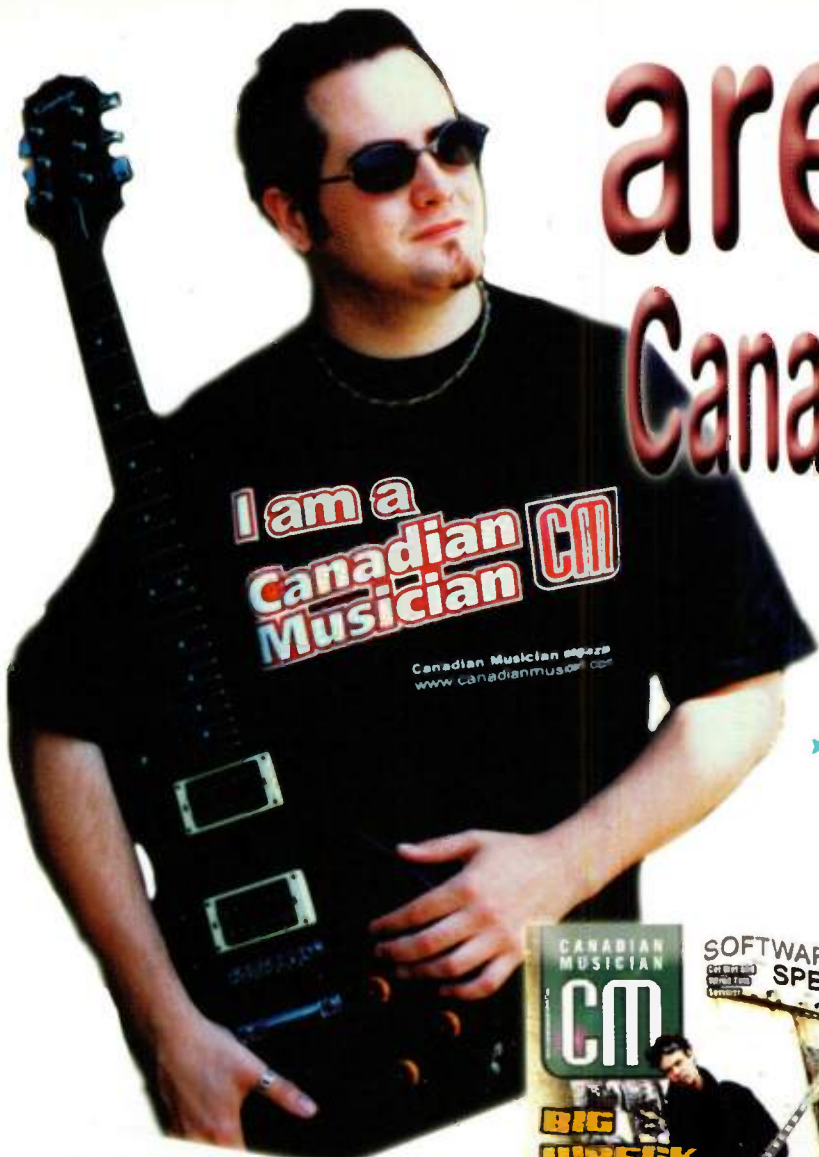
Hard Rock: uses a heavy-duty application of the classical style. Often using lots of vibrato will help to distinguish the singer from the loud guitars and drums and enable him to "cut through".

In all of the above cases, the singer needs to have a strong technical foundation to their singing. Style is achieved by varying and applying the technical elements in different ways. You can find out more about how to become a better and more professional singer, by reading some of the other articles available through my Web site, listed below.

Diana Yampolsky is a vocal instructor based in Toronto at the Royans School for the Musical Performing Arts, located online at www.vocalscience.com.



by Diana Yampolsky



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hantal Kreviazuk is amazed.

We halt our telephone conversation for a moment so that she can admire the beauty of a hawk that has landed outside her door. She is calling from a California retreat just north of Los Angeles that she describes as "like Tuscany, but five minutes from civilization. It's heaven." She revels in the experience for a while and then turns her attention back to the interview.

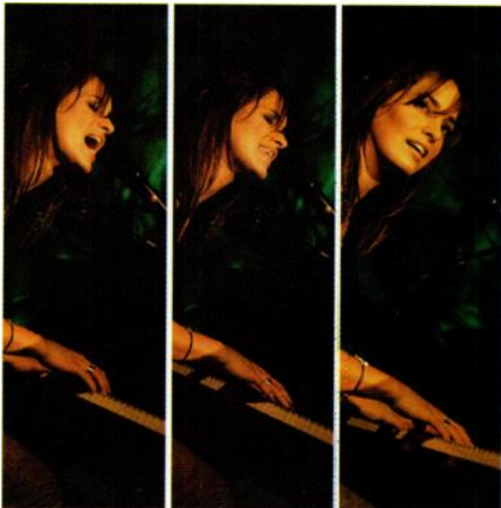
We are talking in December, a few weeks after the release of her third album, *What If It All Means Something*. Wonderfully melodic, soulful and intense, Kreviazuk admits that the album challenges the listener in ways that might be uncomfortable. "I'm trying to put humanness in music, my vulnerability, pain, joy and desire to understand. I'm not trying to provide escapism for anyone. In fact, if you find you might be vulnerable or sad, I wouldn't recommend you put my CD on, because I'm not necessarily going to take you away from that."

Recorded at Avatar Studios in New York City with producer Gregg Wattenberg, *What If It All Means Something* was conceived under a variety of circumstances, with songs written entirely by Kreviazuk, as well as co-writes with husband Raine Maida (singer for Our Lady Peace) and others.

"The song 'Turn The Page' was written entirely by me, despite being credited to Raine and myself in the liner notes," she carefully corrects. "I still remember the night I wrote it. I was with Raine, and when I played it to him, he just looked at me like 'Where did you come from?' He liked it immediately, and it was his passion for the song that made me put it on the album, so in a sense he deserves a bit of the writing credit."

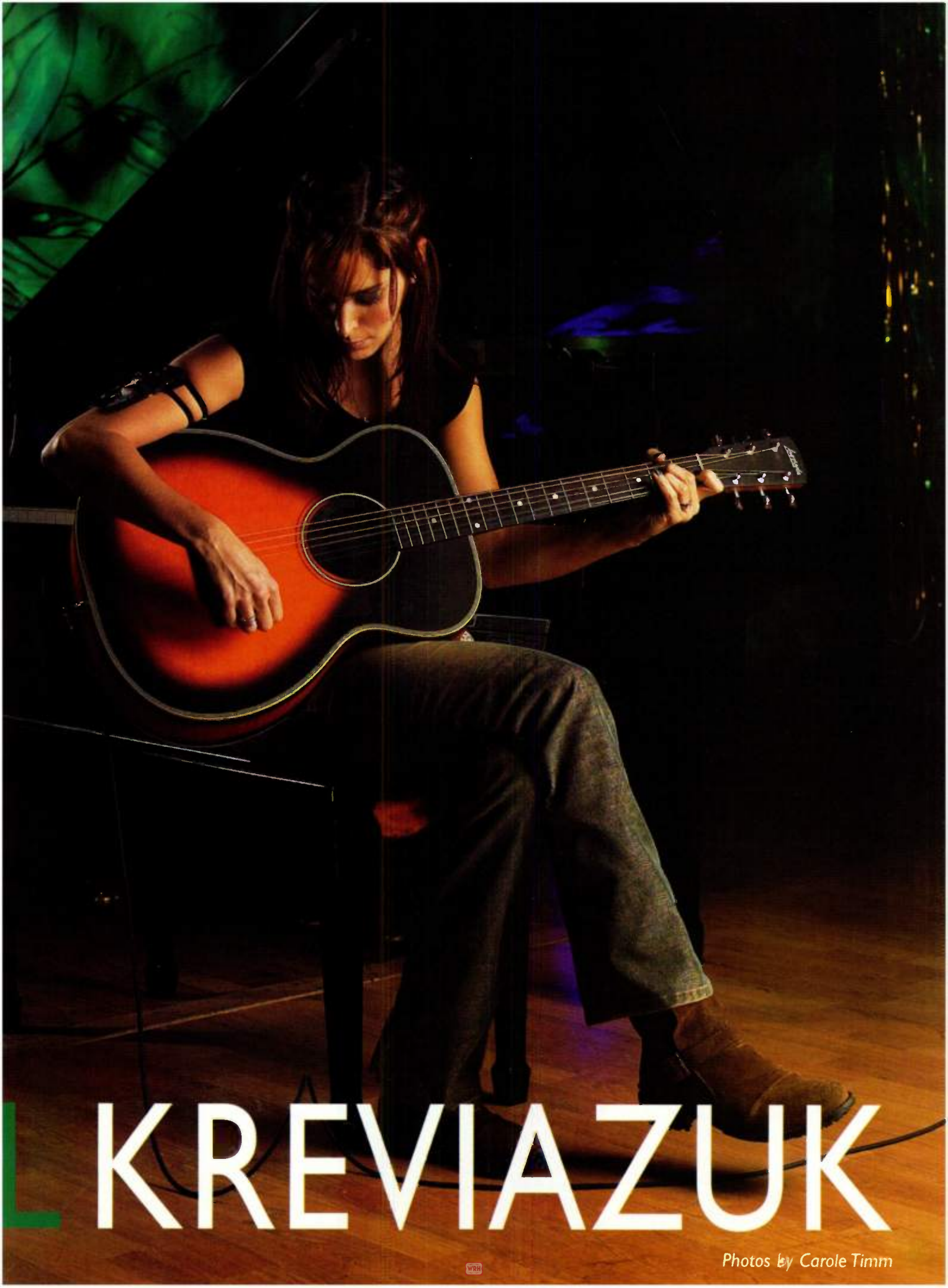
"I wrote it on the grand piano at the Westin Bayshore hotel lobby in Vancouver," she continues. "The Westin lobby is somewhere that I get a lot of work done. It's like a second home to me. I live there a lot when travelling for work and I always host people there when I am in Vancouver. It's heaven for me and I am very happy there. I love the seawall. I'll go out and walk it, have a nice dinner and visit my husband. He was busy mixing at that point, and returned to the hotel early in the morning with the dog. I was going through a bit of a crisis in my personal world at that point, and I wanted to go inside the mind of the person at the centre of the struggle and combine my own state of mind with theirs."

In keeping with her themes of personal exploration and being in the moment, Kreviazuk allows songs to hit her wherever she may be. For earlier songs, this might be riding in a convertible with a friend, or upon returning home, alone and tired after weeks on the road. As often as they come pouring out unbidden, Kreviazuk admits that the hard work is often in the details.



by Rod Christie

CHAN TIA



L KREVI AZUK

Photos by Carole Timm

"On this record, 'Turn The Page' came quickly, but I needed lyrical development toward the end, so I was writing lyrics walking in Central Park the night before I recorded the vocal," she explains. "I wrote 'In This Life' at the studio where Raine and the guys were mixing their last album. I went up to an empty studio on the third floor and sat in the control room with my guitar, and I just wanted to express something that has become a major spiritual and psychological thing for me, the balance of strength and vulnerability, compassion and power. It's something I try to take from my yoga practice and invoke in every aspect of my life."

"I felt the song needed to express the simplicity of my love and my strength and vulnerability within that love, as well as the definitive, unconditional familial love that we have for very few people in our lives. Upon writing it on the guitar, I felt that it was so anthemic that I went over to the piano and worked at making it even more basic, by the John Lennon-style piano riff that came easily after that."

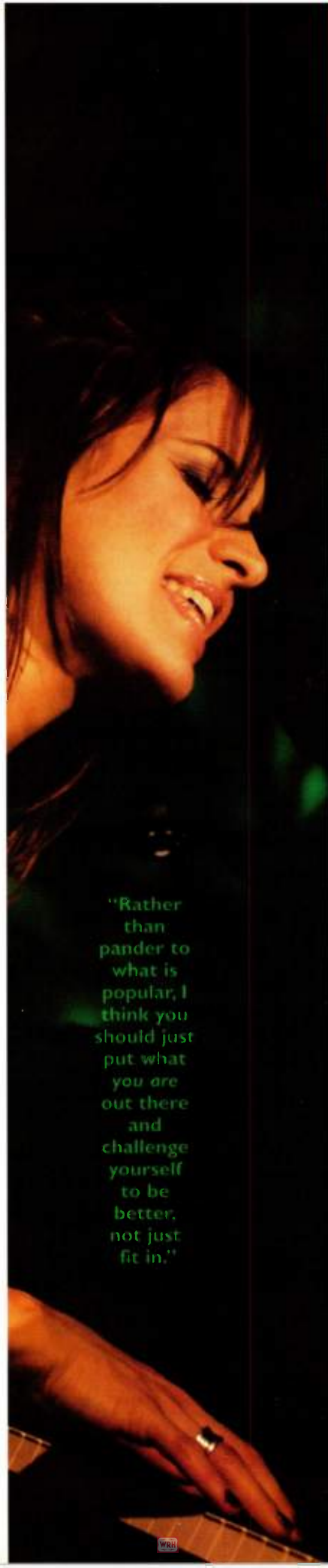
"I really believe in just showing up," she says of the creative muse. "I think we need to give ourselves credit. God made us all different, and there is something that can only come out of each person. I do believe in the channeling aspect of it and being the vessel, but you look at stuff that is just clearly entertainment, and is that God's work? It's your science and environment, your sadness and happiness, so many things. I know that if I go to a piano right now, I will write something. That's just the way I am, but getting me to a piano is a different story altogether."

With so many songs being created, how do the good ideas identify themselves? "It's all about focus and honing in on an idea," she says. "There are many influences that will inhibit or allow that to happen. Did I call my answering machine with the idea, or did I lose interest in it? Do I realize three days later that it's an old Byrds song that I've ripped off? Also, does it inspire me? Does it still hold weight enough for me to write lyrics over it, or did I write about something that I no longer care about?"

"In the recording process, you can track all of your ideas," she continues. "For this one, we tracked 16 songs, and then got into overdubs and the song might not have worked, eliminating itself. Or a song you think might not have worked stepped up and revealed itself. The song 'Weight Of The World' I hated when it was coming out. One day I was doing some extra vocals and there was a line I discovered that just fixed it for me." She punctuates her point by singing the line itself, something she does regularly throughout the conversation.

The editing process is fairly straightforward — songs either work or they don't, and Kreviazuk usually relies on instinct to cull the weaker tunes. "A lot of things come down to taste and I pretty much know when something is not working," she explains. "I also know when to give them a chance, because sometimes they sound awkward, but might work, given time."

A trained pianist, Kreviazuk has turned to her guitar in recent years as a tool for writing. While she admits that she is not a great guitar player, ideas often sound radically different when transferred from piano to guitar. "I wrote quite a bit more on guitar for this record than



"Rather than pander to what is popular, I think you should just put what you are out there and challenge yourself to be better, not just fit in."

on the previous one," she says. "'In This Life', 'Julia' and 'Time' were all written on guitar, not necessarily by my hand, but someone may have come up with a riff, and I took that and ran with it. I find that going to guitar is like getting a totally new inspiration. Sometimes your creative mind gets a bit stale, so it's a good idea to go to something else that gives you a different melodic or bass rhythm."

Pre-production time was spent with producer Wattenberg and collaborator John O'Brien getting comfortable with the songs and each other. Songs are generally complete before pre-production, but as Kreviazuk is constantly composing, new ones are generated. "Pre-pro is when I wrote 'Time' and 'Julia', with Greg and John respectively," she says. "That's the great thing about pre-pro, is that it expands the creative time on the record. We tried out some drum looping, just to get a feel, although I took out a lot of them when the record was done. There was a cool one on 'In This Life' that I took out. I don't want to make 'hip' records because I like the songs to live with people for years. You can use them, weave them in and out, but just use your head and exercise good taste. Rather than pander to what is popular, I think you should just put what you are out there and challenge yourself to be better, not just fit in."

The collaboration between Kreviazuk and Wattenberg came about through her label, and turned out to be a complementary, fruitful working relationship. "We both learned so much through the process," she says. "He was great with detail, and very patient when I presented him with last minute problems, which was great, because it allowed me to sleep at night. [He is] super patient, detail-oriented and very committed."

The intensity of the working relationship between producer and artist created some friction, particularly with someone as driven and focused as Kreviazuk, and both thrived on the challenges. "At the end of the day, I have to remember, who is the artist?" she states. "We were both so committed, and there were such high stakes for both people, but we came out of it as better people. I would love to work with him again."

The choice to record at Avatar Studios was largely a product of working with Wattenberg. "He's kind of the house producer there," says Kreviazuk. "That's where he's been making records lately, and we got a great deal working there. It's a really unpretentious and cool place, a little bit raw, and I love that. It's quirky and funky. I've worked at a few different studios over the years, and some places have superstars walking around, but I don't need my head to be in that kind of place. I don't need to live *People* magazine while I am working."

After three albums, Kreviazuk feels she has refined her studio technique. "I tend to get overwhelmed and depressed when recording, so I'll sleep," she admits. "I'll sit in front of the board and sleep, and I'll wake up when something pisses me off."

It may sound like a detached way to make

a record that bears your name, but in practice, it's a very functional method. "I try to stay out of everybody's way and step up when I need to. There's no shortage of opinion with me, and things need to be how I hear them. I recognize that I am the writer and singer, and I also sleep a lot for my voice, that's my vice for my voice. So I get a lot of rest, go to the gym, walk in Central Park, and show up with enough regimen so that something that is a mistake doesn't go so far that someone wants to kill me when I make them change it."

Because the album was recorded in New York, Kreviazuk had to rely largely on local musicians to record instead of her regular band. "Since I recorded in New York as a compromise with my record company in the States, I had to use New York players," she says. Guitarist Jamie Edwards and the multi-talented John O'Brien are the exceptions, Kreviazuk having collaborated with them before.

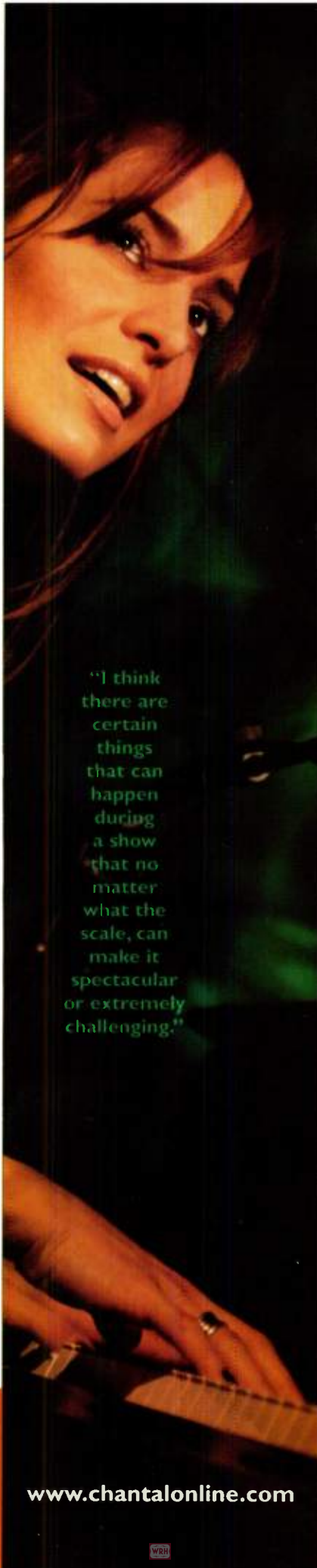
Kreviazuk chose the musicians based largely on recommendations from Wattenberg, paying close attention to each musician's vibe. Sherrod Barnes and Gerry Leonard played guitar, and Kreviazuk raves about the collaboration. "Sherrod is one talented mofo," she says, "and he showed up with a vibe, so it's his vibe that went on the track 'Weight Of The World'. It's the same with Gerry Leonard on 'Morning Light'. His vibe is there, we just let him play through the song five times, then chopped it up, spread out the layers and dropped out parts of it, and it's just his masterpiece. He's an Irish E-bow player, and he's just the best in the world for that type of thing."

Kreviazuk admits that she is a technically limited guitar player, and while she didn't write all of the guitar tracks on the album, getting what she wants from a guitarist is rarely a problem. "On certain tracks, like 'What If It All Means Something', I get a guitar part in my head and then get a genius guitar player who is great technically, then tell them the part and revise it with them until it's right. When I get an idea, I sit there and force it out of them. It's like a torture chamber. The same thing happens with drums, but I get upset when it's just not right and I can't explain what I'm looking for."

Saturday Night Live and studio veteran Shawn Pelton played drums on this album. "Shawn is absolutely the best session player I've ever worked with," she enthuses. "His spiritual presence in the studio is phenomenal. He's generous in spirit, a hard working person, and he steps up to the plate like you would not believe. He's like the total schema of what a session player is, just like Jeff Allen, who played bass. We had a really wonderful collection of people, and it was a stellar vibe."



reviazuk



"I think there are certain things that can happen during a show that no matter what the scale, can make it spectacular or extremely challenging."

Kreviazuk plays Steinway pianos and Larrivée guitars, and raves about both. "I love Steinway pianos, and had a great one brought to me by their New York rep," she says. "It was an amazingly beautiful, 9-foot, stunning piano. On this record it was great. I'm someone who thrives on purity and emotion and rawness and vibe, no matter what aspect of my life. I just like to feel that an instrument isn't too generic. Steinway is amazing that way because they're always different and they're always quality."

"Larrivée has been great to me as well, with their guitars," she continues. "I'm not a guitar connoisseur, but I know when I play my guitar that it's really warm and strong, and it's light and easy for me to play. I feel very unintimidated by my guitar and very moved by its feeling."

Recording and releasing an album means time on the road touring, something that Kreviazuk approaches as naturally as she does the rest of her life. Life on the road is all about trying to stay as healthy and rested as she would at home, which can be tricky. "It's more of a lifestyle thing," she says. "I don't smoke, I do yoga and I breathe a lot."

Playing songs with such a personal and emotional charge every night takes a commitment to the material that can be difficult if she doesn't feel the music. "I write out my set list every night and it always fluctuates, so that way I get some insight into what I am going to play. Fifteen minutes before the show I get into that headspace. I like to sit in front of the mirror and put makeup on, and it sounds crazy, but it distracts me and gets me into the songs. It's my little ritual, and it gets me away from the stress and into a smaller space. I also drink lots of water, maybe a glass of wine or some tea, and just be smart, get lots of sleep."

How does Kreviazuk cope with a tour that can include intimate nightclubs, theatres, arenas and outdoor concerts? "I think that there are certain things that can happen during a show that no matter what the scale, can make it spectacular or extremely challenging," she says. "It's all in the head for me, like a game of tennis. I set challenges for myself that are consistent and try not to look at the venue. I am experienced enough to know that you can't put the onus on the space so much as the small elements that will influence a gig."

"If I'm playing a rock show and I have my band with me, I'll play more upbeat songs," she continues, "or maybe the style of a song will change, or maybe I won't sit at the piano so much. That's what I love about me, I can make it work wherever, whether it's busking or playing with an orchestra."

"I really love this album, and I can't wait to get out on the road," she finishes. Looking into the future, expect to see her on the road across Canada in the spring of 2003, followed by shows overseas and a possible collaboration with husband Raine Maida. Smart, talented and still in awe, Chantal Kreviazuk hangs up the phone and turns back to her ocean view.

CM



Rod Christie is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

www.chantalonline.com

by
Karen
Bliss

Lyrically
insightful
and
sonically
rich,
the buzz
about
Sam
Robert's
music
is coming
straight
off of
the
streets.



am Roberts gives a quick run-through of Vancouver's Mushroom Studios, starting with the TV room, decorated with gold and platinum awards from the likes of Loverboy, Chilliwack and Heart, down a small corridor into the control room, where producer/engineer Brendan McGuire and assistant engineer Scott Ternan are behind the 72-input Neve 8068/8066 console.

He points to a corner in the live room, at the other side of the glass, and mentions something about writing some lyrics there. Turns out to be for "Higher Learning" and "Dead End".

He adds, casually, that the place is possessed.

"There's apparently a haunted cat and a bunch of flashing lights that happen," he elaborates, when asked about the False Creek-area studio owned by Marcy Playground's John Wozniak.

"I freaked myself out so many times by that, especially when I'm in that room alone," he adds, pointing to the live room. "The first couple of days I was so shit scared, I would actually run out

of that room into the hallway..." He adopts a calm, cool and collected voice, pretending he has just bumped into studio staff: "Oh, yeah, um, hey guys, what's going on?"

Roberts's tour of the premises ends in a tiny room, off of the control room, with beige carpet and one grubby brown couch. This is the last day of tracking and there are about 10 tracks to cut on various songs, including parts from his band, which will be in later that afternoon.

Right now, a local horn section has been hired to record parts for three songs. The two that make the album are "Taj Mahal" and a still untitled track.

"This is the most lavish thing that we've done," says Roberts of the three- and five-piece horn sections. "We left it to the last second but we've been planning it the whole time."

The song the horn section is tracking at the moment is not new. Roberts, who had one helluva banner year in 2002 when his independently-recorded EP, *The Inhuman Condition*, sold over 30,000 copies, and his band opened for The Tragically Hip nationwide, has performed it many times. It just never had a name.

For a while, it was called "In Every Part Of Me" or the more amusing "Cuddy's Island" because Roberts's live drummer Corey Zadorozny, aka. Cuddy, felt it had an island feel. Later, during the mixing phase, he settled briefly on "White And Black" but then decided against it.

Suddenly, as if Roberts has seen the Mushroom ghost, he darts out of the room. This would happen several times during the interview. He has gone to listen to the horns.

"It's insane how it can really sound like an elephant when you fuck up a trumpet," he comments.

"We have a little bit of a pitchy thing going on," notes McGuire.

"The higher trumpet isn't cutting through," adds Roberts.

"What do you need for a reference pitch?" McGuire asks the players.

"Just the track," they all confirm.

Roberts returns to the little beige room just as quickly as he left.

"I like it in here," he says with a sense of fondness. "You get a view of the live room. I can make sure that Brendan is not misbehaving. Sometimes, I sit in here when he's editing and make sure he's not making a techno record."

It's easy to tell when Roberts is joking. He's either totally serious, usually when talking about the honesty of songwriting or connecting with an audience, or he's making outrageous claims like this album being a multi-national project sung in Portuguese, Iranian "and a few lesser know African dialects as well as from pygmy tribes in the Congo Basin."

In truth, the 28-year-old progeny of a South African couple who emigrated to Montréal before any of their four sons were born, is fluent in English and French, and decent at Spanish and Afrikaans, so who knows what the guy will come up with later in his career?

Live, Roberts, as part of a five-piece band, performs his francophone original "Embrace Moi" that has not been recorded, as well as the bilingual "No Sleep", which is a strong contender for the album.

Besides music, playing hockey and his beloved Montréal Canadiens, his other passion is travelling. Last June, he took off to Morocco for a couple of weeks. He wrote "Hard Road" out of the experience.

For "Taj Mahal", he researched the lyrics because he has yet to go to India.

He will squeeze in a vacation right after the mastering of the album by Bob Ludwig at Gateway Mastering in Portland, Maine, and before his first national headlining tour begins the third week of January. He and his bandmates - Zadorozny, lead guitarist Dave Nugent, bassist James Hall and guitarist/keyboardist Eric Fares - will perform the songs from the forthcoming album, most of which have already been road-tested.

Roberts had 14 songs demoed when he came to Mushroom. The two weeks of pre-production he did with McGuire in Montréal "was sketchy at best," he says. His A&R team, Tom Mackay and Sinji Suzuki from Universal Records in the US and Allan Reid at Universal Music Canada, along with Universal Music Publishing Canada's Linda Bush, are pretty much leaving the pair up to their own devices, only checking in occasionally, with one visit each to Vancouver during the entire recording and mixing of the album.

Roberts and McGuire wanted to leave the material pretty loose to get the most spontaneous and fresh recordings. Of the list of 20-something songs, he recorded 18 at Mushroom, three written and completed in the studio, plus

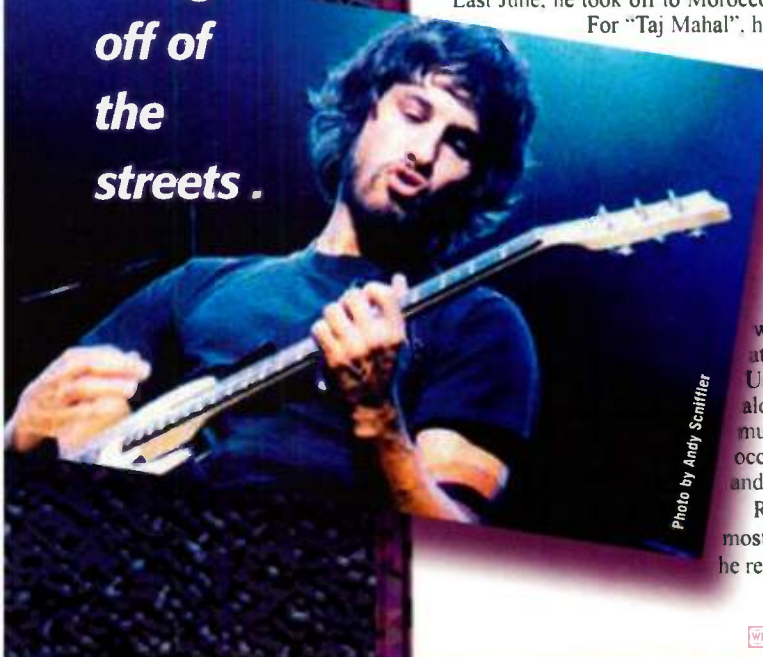
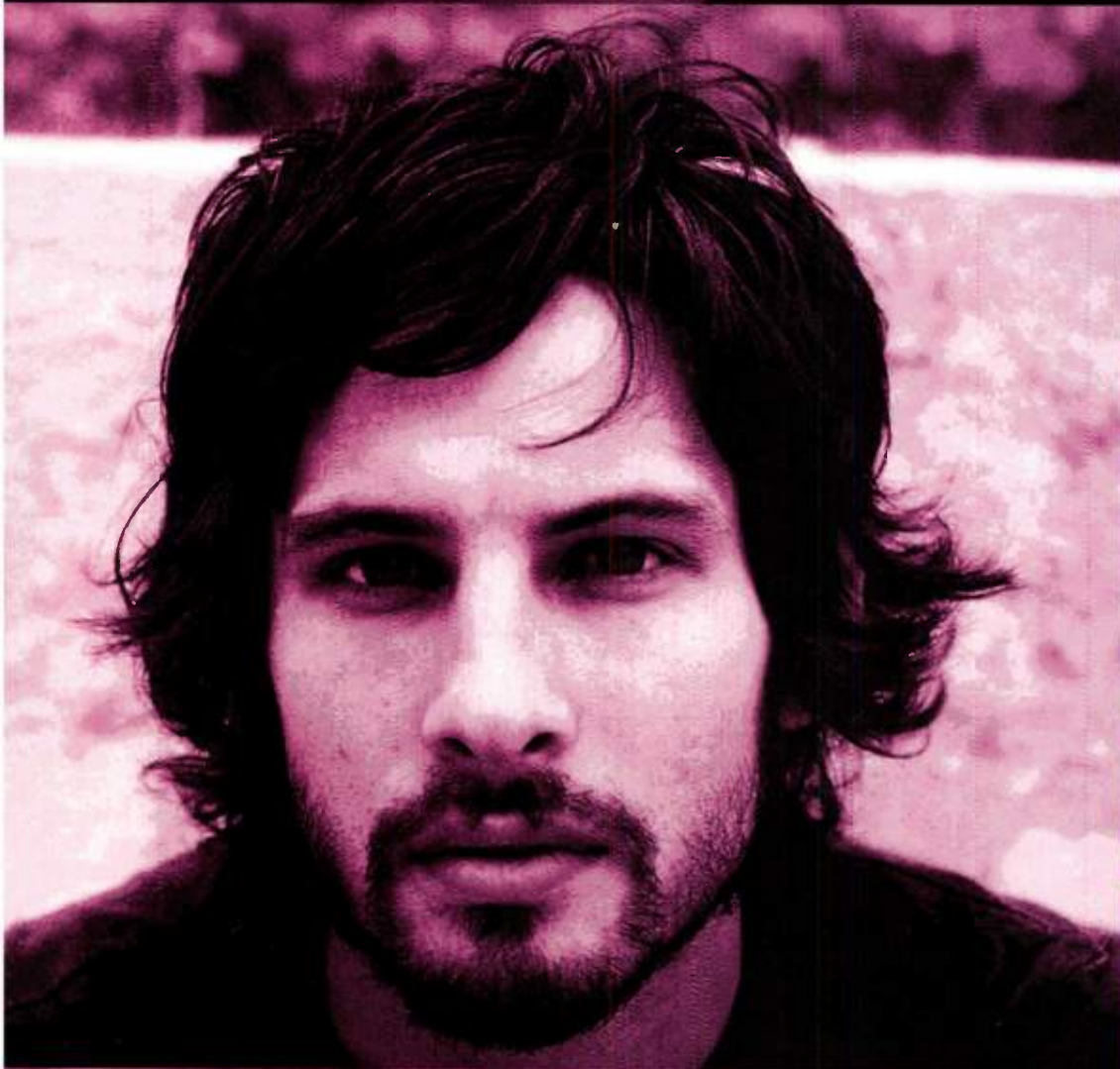


Photo by Andy Sciffiter

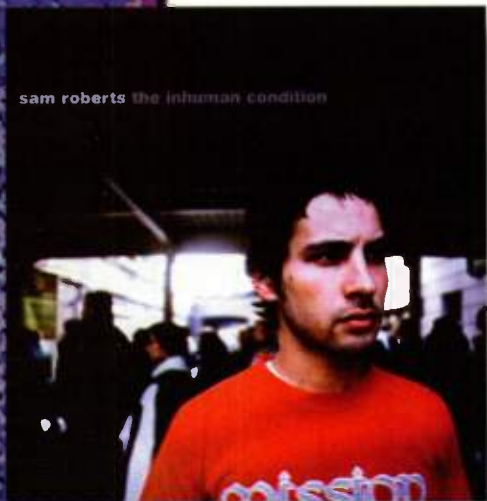


Summer Brobeats

Photo by Mackenzie Strahl



sam roberts the inhuman condition



a cover of Paul Simon's "Late In The Evening" which will be kept in the bank for some future use. The rest, Roberts, the sole songwriter of his namesake band, also arranged all the parts.

"Obviously, there are adjustments made when you get out here and you take the time to re-think what you've done," he says of the demos. "I didn't come out here thinking that anything was set in stone, but I had a pretty good idea of how I wanted it to sound."

His relaxed but focused approach is also reflected in his choice of producer and studio. He selected McGuire, who has worked with Sloan and The Dears, because they not only communicate well musically but spending 16 hours a day together, every day, in one room, for over two months, "it better be somebody that you want to hang out with all the time."

He likes the vibe at Mushroom as well. "You're not afraid to touch anything. I wipe my Chinese food-greasy hands on the wall sometimes when nobody's looking. I'm kidding," he laughs.

"First and foremost, it has a great room, great console, that caters to how I want the record to sound, which is just a good, true rock 'n' roll sound. This place helped me capture that feel and make it not sound like a super glossy Hollywood pseudo rock record."

While in Vancouver, Roberts did make a visit to the super glossy Warehouse Studios, where REM was recording and checked out their set up when they weren't there. "I was blown away by the actual space itself," says Roberts. "And then you walk in and they had like 60 guitars up against the wall. They had one of Kurt Cobain's guitars and I touched that."

Not with greasy Chinese-food greasy hands he assured. "No, no, I touched it reverently, just hoping for some inspiration for our own record."



Roberts was born and raised in Montréal, the eldest of four brothers. At age four, he made a strange request of his parents and received a violin. He proceeded to take lessons into his early twenties. At age 12, his father gave him the classical Spanish guitar he had picked up in Europe. By 17, he was fronting an original band Grover. He enrolled at McGill University, where he majored in English Literature, all the while performing in rock bands.

"There were times back, five, six, seven, eight years ago where I was convinced that my band was going to be the next big thing and it just didn't happen," Roberts remembers.

With his band William, he pressed a three-song single on clear yellow vinyl and titled the 1996 offering *The Piranha* EP. The following year, William morphed into Northstar, which recorded a five-track EP at Concordia University. After graduation, Roberts's friend Dave Spencer, whose University roommate Jordan Zadorozny had been signed to A&M for Blinker The Star, went with him to Los Angeles for five weeks in 1998 to shop the Northstar demo.

Although the excursion would not pan out with a record

deal, Spencer would later become Roberts's manager. In 1999, Roberts self-produced a 12-song demo which he called *Brother Down*. He burned CD-R copies as needed.

In 2001, over the course of three weekends, Zadorozny agreed to produce and engineer six of Roberts' solo at his home studio in Pembroke, ON. The Blinker frontman played drums and percussion on it, while Roberts wrote all the songs and played guitar, bass and keyboards. Nugent and Bodega's Andrew Rodriguez both guest guitar on *Brother Down* as well.

With this EP, *The Inhuman Condition*, with its cow-covered cover, key industry people started taking notice. The first to step up was Linda Bush, creative manager of Universal Music Publishing Canada, who had kept tabs on Roberts since Northstar and caught his solo showcase at Canadian Music Week in March of 2001. The company signed Roberts in January 2002.

After a showcase in Texas at South By Southwest that March, Roberts secured a booking agent, Jack Ross at The Agency Group in Toronto. Bush's boss, creative director Jodie Ferneyhough tipped off Kim Cooke, A&R head at a newly formed label, MapleMusic Recordings, of which Universal Music Canada has a stake, who licensed the EP.

The Inhuman Condition was scheduled for re-release (not without re-mastering the songs and replacing the artwork with a photo of Roberts) in mid-July, but the single would be serviced to radio in May. Universal Music Canada's VP of promotion Paul Jessop insisted the earthy groove "Brother Down" should be the first single and "Eileen" as the second, not the other way around. He was right.

The anthemic track, with its singalong refrain "I think my life is passing me by," struck a chord with listeners and earned a SOCAN No.1 award for the number one played song in Canada on all formats.

"If memory serves right," remembers Cooke, "We shipped it late May and it immediately exploded in Ottawa, Vancouver and Toronto at rock radio, then spread to the rest of the format, then to AC and finally CHR where it did eventually hit top 10. The video hit late June/early July and was embraced across the board with heavy rotation at MuchMusic, MusiquePlus and MuchMoreMusic. It ended up with better than a thousand plays at the various outlets."

When Roberts returned from Morocco, things would never be the same. His years of toiling for rock 'n' roll were about to pay off. The commercial release of *The Inhuman Condition* EP was July 16 and "Brother Down" became the surprise hit of the summer. With that came the announcement that the band had been offered the coveted opening slot on The Tragically Hip's national tour that September through October.

As the threat of a record company bidding war for Roberts loomed, Universal Music Canada president Randy Lennox let his counterparts in the US know about Roberts' chart breakthrough. Universal Records' president Monty Lipman and president of Republic Avery Lipman had already noted the activity and flew Roberts and Spencer to New York for a meeting. They asked Roberts what it would take to sign him and within a week almost every deal point was realized. In August, the contract was finalized and a co-venture was struck with Universal Music Canada to keep it a part of Roberts' growing success story.



Roberts also had someone he wanted to keep part of his success. He decided not to use his regular drummer Corey Zadorozny on the recording. Instead, to honour a pact from years back, he invited his former William/Northstar

SAM ROBERTS

bandmate George Donso, now in The Dears, to track the drums. "It was just for this one time, for my first real album," Roberts explains.

Roberts played all the other instruments, guitar, bass, grand piano, tack piano ("There's thumb tacks on the end of the hammers"), harmonica ("Very badly, but it's fun!") and some violin ("For my old violin teacher Mrs. Sevardjian and for my parents to make them think it wasn't all a waste of time," he chuckles).

Earlier in the recording session, he borrowed or rented various vintage guitars and gear from Not Just Another Music Store, Long & McQuade, Backline, and local musicians Dave Genn and Ryan Dahle, among others.

"There was that kind of stuff that I didn't really anticipate before we got out here," says Roberts. "We used them for the more specialty kind of things and then we ended up going with my old two guitars, the Rickenbacher, and my little brother Mexican-made Telecaster that Eric uses onstage. I found that those two guitars best captured how I like guitars to sound, in our band anyway."

After a month of McGuire and Roberts recording on their own, the band came out just for a week to add additional instrumentation.

"When they first arrived, just to get them acquainted with what we had done, they came straight from the airport here and we literally spent eight hours or so listening to all the tracks that we'd recorded, from start to finish, in depth," recounts Roberts.

"We talked about everything because nobody has better knowledge of the songs than they do because a lot of them they perform and just have a real feel for. I don't think there are any better people to get input on what you've done so far than your own bandmates. And then, they come up with their own creative ideas as to how to change the feel of something or even a specific part." That's when some magic was created on "Rarefied".

"I left this huge instrumental section right in the middle of it completely open because that's where I think the real strength of our band is – we do a lot of jamming," he says excitedly. "In the middle of 'Rarefied', a vocal part came out of it, and the ideas for keys and a piano part on the tack piano, which sounds honky tonk but more metallic. And this part just grew out of the band being there and getting a real feel for where they thought it should go."

Roberts goes quiet but he's not reflecting on the moment. The interview stops. "I definitely have to listen to this for one second. Can you excuse me?" he asks. He joins McGuire again in the control room.

"That staccato in between the two, between the first couple of notes, between the first three notes. " The trumpeter plays three notes – vibrant and welcoming. "That's it."

Roberts resumes interview for the final questions. The final questions? What became of "Brother Down" of course? It turns out, he re-cut three songs from the EP, including that track, "Eileen" and "Where Have All The Good People Gone". Even though there's tons more songs laid down and new ones written and recorded, the US record label intends to release "Brother Down" as the lead-off single.

"'Brother Down' is very true to the original," says Roberts. "I mean, if it ain't broke don't fix it. We did change a couple of things. The nature of that song

hasn't changed at all. And 'Eileen' too. I really like that version on the EP. More than I like the version of any of the other songs. Actually I liked 'Where Have All The Good People Gone' a lot too, but you can't recreate a jam the way that we did that, so we shaped it into something that it calls for live, which is to something that binds the song together."

Not surprisingly, there are high expectations from many in the music industry for Roberts' major label debut. "That's their problem. It's not something I'm going to get my knickers in a twist about," he says, although he seems to do just that.

"That's an unfortunate reality that that's what they would be concerned about. The real people that matter are those who recognize that maybe I've been sitting here for the last couple of months making a pretty decent record. Whether that sells 50,000 copies or a million copies, the fact that there might be 50,000 people out there who would buy one of my records still blows my mind. I'm always going to come out on top no matter what.

"But that doesn't really bother me at all. I don't really think about that. My expectations may be different than other people's [expectations]. I'm not addicted to the amount of notoriety that we've been given in the last few months. I just want to be able to make music for a living and write the kind of songs that I want. I've got a record deal that allows me to do what I want to do the way I want to do it, and that's different than just getting a record deal because what I've wanted to do after all this time is to get to this point, and find myself in control of my own direction, when it comes to making music.

"I've been thinking about this a lot," Roberts continues. "If I were to go back to being 16-years-old, would I be able to navigate that same path to where I am now? I don't think that I would be able to do it. I just have this sneaking suspicion that I would end up somewhere else because I really think that's tough. It feels like such an unlikely thing to have happened to me, in so many ways, and I don't believe it."

As the interview winds down with talk of his goals, studio runner Shawn Penner comes in to tell Roberts he's "needed." It's the first time he's actually been called out. Does the trumpet sound like an elephant again? He returns, laughing.

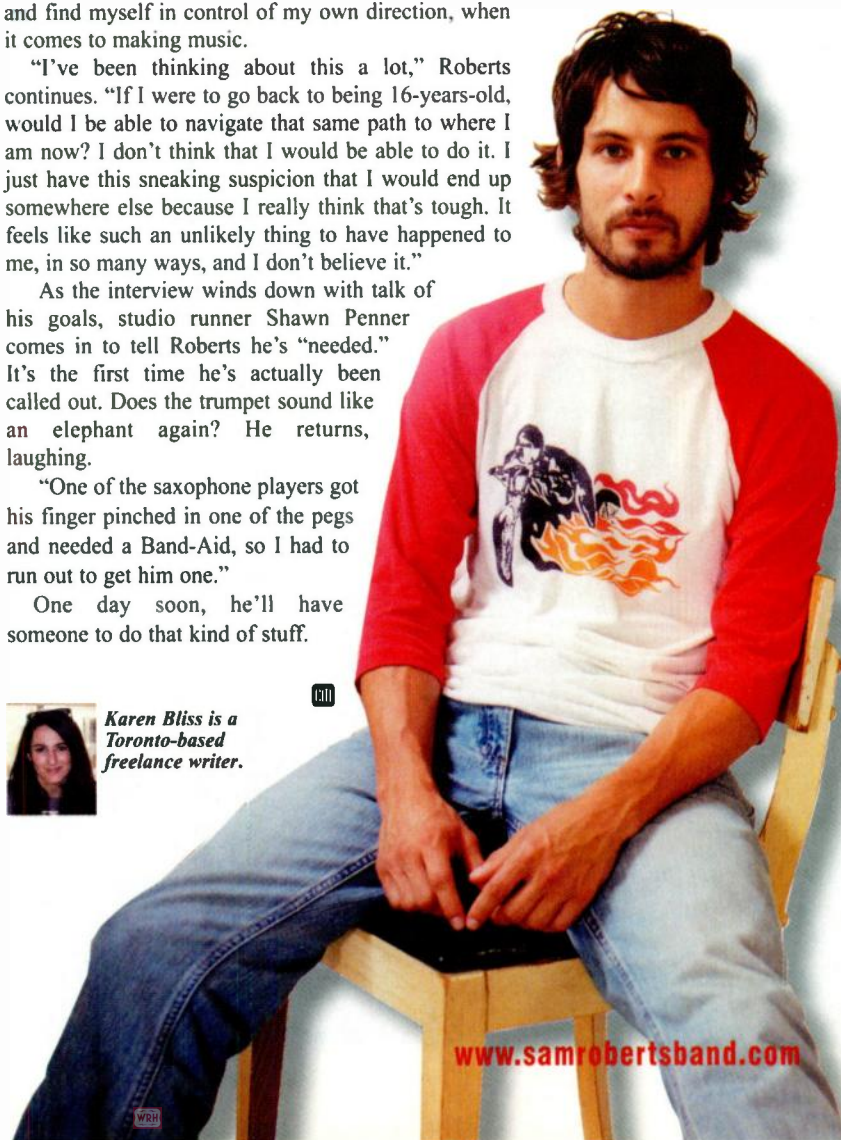
"One of the saxophone players got his finger pinched in one of the pegs and needed a Band-Aid, so I had to run out to get him one."

One day soon, he'll have someone to do that kind of stuff.



Karen Bliss is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

"I just want to be able to make music for a living and write the kind of songs that I want."



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT A&R



nce upon a time, or maybe twice, there lived a group of musicians who believed themselves ready for world domination of the musical sort. Keenly unaware of their massive egos, they set forth from their dingy rehearsal space ready to connect with destiny. They had walked for quite some time when Frank the guitarist said, "Hey guys, we need a plan. I'm getting hungry and my rent is almost due." They all agreed. But what to do and where to go? "Let's talk to my friend Gwen," said Jimmy the drummer. "She works in a record store. She'll know what to do."

When they arrived at Gwen's record store, they found her staring into a glowing crystal ball. She had a mystical air about her. The guys were very impressed. Gwen told them that, "to achieve world domination of the musical sort, you must first get the attention and commitment of the A&R person at a record company." "But how do we do that?" asked Billy the bassist.

"It's easy," said Gwen, "just write the kind of undeniable hit songs that instantly capture the public's imagination, record a killer demo or indie album, sell a few truckloads of your indie CD, tour like crazy selling out every club that you play, engage a brilliant manager and sit back and wait; the A&R rep will be knocking at your door." "But we don't have time for that, we want to be famous right now," Johnny the singer exclaimed. "Well, why didn't you say so," said Gwen. "In that case, just close your eyes, click your heels together three times and repeat after me, *there's no place like the top-of-the-charts, there's no place like the top-of-the-charts, there's no place...*"

A&R people. Who are they? Where do they come from and what do they really want? To the newly signed recording artist, still aglow from doing the deal, the A&R person is a mythical deity that will scribe their name in stars across the night sky and guide them through a career that transcends space and time. To the unsigned recording

artist who just received his tenth record company rejection form letter (he now has enough to paper one wall of his bedroom) the A&R person is an inconsiderate, pompous schmuck who never returns calls or e-mails and knows nothing about "real" music. But ask an A&R person who they are and they will most likely tell you, they're just normal people who love music and are trying to do a job as best they can.

A&R stands for Artists and Repertoire. Generally speaking, the record company A&R person will find and develop new talent (i.e., recording artists) for their company. They will assess the commercial potential of the recording artist on behalf of their company. They will offer advice and direction to the artist with regard to song selection, record and video production, promotion and touring.

To shed some light on the role of this mysterious gatekeeper, I spoke to Allan Reid, Sr. VP, A&R, Universal Music Canada, and Parkside Mike, Executive VP, A&R, Aquarius Records in Montréal, two of Canada's hardest working A&R reps.

Would you agree that a record company lives and dies by its A&R decisions?

Allan Reid: Well, yes and no. I think the difference in Canada is that the multi-nationals are very much repertoire sources but, even more so, they're marketing and distribution companies for international repertoire. Obviously, artists like Shania Twain, Eminem, U2 and hundreds of others are hugely important to us as far as our business goes, but, I think what really defines a record company is a company that can attract and find talent, develop talent and ultimately break it either on a regional or national level, then hopefully on an international level. It's satisfying to have a multi-platinum Eminem record but it's way more satisfying to have a gold Sarah Harmer record.

Parkside Mike: Completely. The good thing at Aquarius is, I'll spearhead a project but we really do a consensus thing because we're such a small group. Anyone can bring something to the table and we'll go over the pros and cons of each project and then figure out if it's right for Aquarius.

How does a potential new signing find its way into your hands?

AR: There's a lot of different ways. We at Universal do accept unsolicited material, meaning that we'll take any demos that come in off the street. It's a long, laborious process going through the thousands of demos we get. We've got four guys in our department who are filtering material all the time. But more often than not, the artists that end up getting signed come through a contact. Usually they have already done

GET
by Paul Irvine

YOUR

BAND

SIGNED

something themselves in the sense that they have developed their songwriting; they're not in a rush to get to the record company. I find that the really great artists just do what they do and eventually we find out about them. Probably more than anything else we find out through other artists. People who are out touring will say, "Hey, I had this band open up for me in Vancouver. They were great!" I think other artists are one of our best A&R sources. Managers, agents, club promoters, lawyers ... they come from all different areas.

Do you prefer finding the artist as opposed to the artist sending you demos and calling you?

PM: Yes, totally, 100 per cent. Although I'm relatively new to the A&R community, I've never heard of someone just putting an unsolicited demo in the mail and getting signed. I would suggest that if a band wants a record company, if they don't know someone, whether it be a booking agent, a club promoter, a studio manager, if they don't know someone that knows the A&R community, then they're probably not ready yet for a record company. That's a generalization, and there are obviously exceptions to every rule, but most of the people that we work with come from some kind of contact. A&R has contacts everywhere: the publishing world, the studios, law firms, managers, booking agents, or even friends who go to shows and say, "Oh, I saw this great band you've got to check them out." Rather than getting a package, I much prefer getting an e-mail with a link to a Web site with MP3s or streaming and some live footage. You can tell a lot about a band from their Web site. I prefer to communicate via e-mail - it's not as stressful as getting a lot of calls in one day.

The prospective signing is on your radar screen - you like their demo. What's the balance between their ability to cut it on record and their ability to deliver a strong live show - or is it a bit of everything?

AR: I think it's a bit of everything. I know for me personally, I'm a big fan of an artist who can come up and sing their songs. Whether that's acoustic guitar or piano - just sitting there translating their music or if it's a full-blown show. For me and I think for most A&R guys the first thing is the song. It's finding a great song. Then it's the vehicle that delivers that song - the voice. Is it a unique voice? Is there a character to it and is there a character to the music as a whole? And then it starts coming down to charisma and what we call the "it" quality - is that person a star? You know, that's easier said than done. You see that person when

they walk into a room - you can tell they have something.

Given how A&R has over the years moved toward artists that write their own material, is it still a function of your department to source new songs to be recorded by your artists?

AR: Yes, absolutely. I find that the majority of the artists that we work with nowadays prefer to cut their own material and that can be a bad thing as well as a good thing. I think most of us prefer to have artists that can pen their material because it's tough finding great songs. It's very hard to go to a publisher and say, "Hey, we're looking for one of your best hit writers to give us a track," when there's a number of other artists internationally also competing for those kind of songs. So you look to find artists who have a team either with them, within a band; or it's one sole person in the group that can write. But it's definitely important. It's not mandatory, but it certainly helps when you're trying to find material.

PM: Not really with the type of bands that we work with because we're doing mainly rock stuff. We have some joint venture labels that are venturing into different kinds of music. (A&R would be done by the other side of the joint venture.) The bands that I tend to work with, normally they should have great songs to begin with - I see myself more as a facilitator of situations where I get a band and I try and find the right situation for them. Because we're a small company, I tend to product manage my bands afterwards as well. I try to think five steps down the road as opposed to just making a great record. I

try and think of making a great record but then, you know, what are we going to do for a video, who are they going to tour with, what opportunities are coming up over the next year, what bands are on the rise that fit similarly with them and can we make contact with them early to trade off on tour dates.

Parkside, what was your initial A&R involvement with Serial Joe?

PM: Their record was halfway done when I started working on the project. They recorded the first album over March break and I went out to Vancouver with Kim Clarke-Champniss, who was one of their managers, to mix. But, my first real thing was we got them on Edgifest. I went to Toronto where they were rehearsing and I had these visions that Edgifest was going to be a tough crowd for them. So we came up with this plan to try and win over the crowd at Edgifest and at least not get pelted by bottles. I ended up donning a Mexican wrestler's mask for the tour and jumping around on stage to divert the bottles away from the band so they could play. Every show

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"I FIND THAT THE REALLY GREAT ARTISTS JUST DO WHAT THEY DO AND EVENTUALLY WE FIND OUT ABOUT THEM." - ALLAN REID, A&R, UNIVERSAL

I would come out with a video camera and I would egg the crowd on. I have tattoos and I was wearing this muscle-shirt and shorts so I looked like this tough guy and it sort of gave them this air of credibility for that tour. We wound up selling the most records on the tour because our single was peaking at the right time. We had the longest line-ups at the autograph tent and I don't think it was because I was wearing a Mexican wrestler's mask, but at least the guys weren't bloodied from people throwing stuff at them when they went to sign their autographs.

How important is the "team"? If an artist you're considering doesn't have management, a lawyer or an agent, would that dissuade you or lessen your interest in that artist?

AR: It won't dissuade us or lessen our interest, but what we all realize is that before a record comes out, that team is essential. The manager is going to be the most important relationship an artist ever has in their career. That person will touch every aspect of that artist's business relationships and often even personal relationships. They'll be very, very close to the artist – more than anybody else. So that's probably the most important decision an artist could ever make. And equally then come lawyers, record companies, publishers and agents; there's all different people who are going to have different relationships with that artist and before any record comes out and launches into the public. Those relationships should somewhat be formed or at least introduced because (as an artist) you're going to need different members of each one of those teams to help you be successful. The A&R person is only one piece of the puzzle that the artist will need to be successful. You can have a successful career without an agent, without a manager, without a lawyer, or without a record company – it can be done. Ani DiFranco has done very well on her own, but that's the exception to the rule. The more prepared you are as an artist the

better – reading things about the music business and understanding the business is essential to being successful. Be prepared. That way you don't get ripped off or burned along the way.

What is the quality of demos that you receive? Is it high quality or is it a lo-fi home recording or is it all across the board?

AR: With the advent of computers and home recording abilities, demo quality has soared. It really has gotten far, far better. We're basically getting finished masters more often than we are getting demos. It just eliminates some of the guesswork for the A&R guys. What you have to understand as an artist is if you're sending your music in to an A&R person, lawyers, agents, managers, whatever, they've got boxes and boxes of demos and tapes sitting there and if you've got the ability to make a really good sounding demo, when they put that demo on next to the one they just listened to, they'll weigh that decision. It's a hard thing not to; you listen to a singer/songwriter with just an acoustic guitar on a cassette, then you drop on someone's CD that's got full production behind it, the songs will sound better; sonically they'll sound better. The song may not be any better but the sonics are. It just takes a bit more of the guesswork out. As an A&R person you can always imagine things sounding any certain way like "Oh we can do this kind of arrangement or we can bring this producer in."

How do you deal with the "Unreachable, Ivory Tower" stigma attached to A&R reps?

AR: You know, there's a misconception out there, at least I think there is, that A&R people are hard to approach. I don't believe that at all. Maybe it applies in some other companies. I know at Universal, we're normal everyday people who love music and we're very busy because yes, there's a lot of people trying to get to us and we get a lot of packages, but it's as easy as running into us at a club downtown. You know, it's a small business and once you're in the circle of working musicians and working

artists and getting to know who's out there, it's as easy as just asking. Go and hang at the Horseshoe (in Toronto) on Tuesday night and you'll meet all the A&R people – they're all there. The job of an A&R person is to filter through the best of it and get to what they're looking for as quick as they can. They're not there to provide a critique service to artists; they're there to find music for their company.

So unless you see a diamond in the rough, you really can't spend time...

AR: Well it's hard as you get about 2,000 submissions in a year, but the opportunity to sit and give feedback is there, with artists you might want to keep getting material from. But you can't spend an hour on the phone with a lot of artists who put a demo in that you just don't see as right for your company. That's one of the hardest things to explain to an artist when you're passing on their music – it's not to say we're the be-all-end-alls, and if we say your music's not right for us doesn't mean it's not good, it's not that at all. At that point in time it could simply be it's not right for our company. We're heading in this certain direction or we're looking for these kinds of signings; you need more time. There are lots of things that could be causing us to say no. It doesn't mean that the actual quality of the music or the songwriting is bad, but sometimes it is.

Do you only sign music that you personally like or do you remove your personal preferences in sourcing talent for your company?

AR: Absolutely (I only sign music that I like). If you're signing with a record company and the A&R person is signing you because what you do is trendy and doesn't really love it and doesn't have a true vision for it, if there's a bump in the road somewhere along the way in your career, you'll know it, and it'll be hard for you because there won't be that core belief of



"IT'S A LOT MORE EXCITING TO RECORD COMPANY A&R GUYS TO BE SEARCHING MUSIC OUT THAN BEING SENT MUSIC." - PARKSIDE MIKE, A&R, AQUARIUS

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someone going, "I don't care what anyone else says, I love this artist." You need that inside your own record company because when you bring an artist in, the job only begins. You now have to go convince the rest of the company. You have to go make a great record with the artist and then you have to go work it through the marketing and promo departments and publicity and sales departments.

How important is radio in exposing your artists?

AR: Radio is still, I think, by far the most important factor in exposing artists to the mass populace. And it's a great revenue source for the artist in their performance (royalty) income. Having the exposure on radio and having a hit single at radio makes

a huge difference.

PM: If it's a rock or pop band, then yes, obviously radio is important. But, if it's someone like our new signing, Antoine (not from Sky), it's not as important. We just have to figure out how to get it to people and hopefully radio will jump on. Canadian radio is increasingly harder to break an act on – to satisfy Canadian Content, they can play Nickelback and Sum 41 forever and that's all you hear, but there are other artists trying to come up and make some waves at radio as well.

Any suggestions or guidance for the unsigned artist trying to connect with an A&R rep?

PM: Consider playing shows with bands that are well known and established. I have

a lot of friends who work in clubs and I'll usually hear about this band or that band through them. Get into festivals such as North by Northeast or Canadian Music Week.

AR: Take your time, develop your music, take it as far as you possibly can, and if you can develop a live following, and go do that before even approaching a record company. The bands that go out there and create a buzz on their own, we don't wait for their demos to arrive. We'll go looking for them. We'll hear about them. If you're putting 500 people in a club in London, we'll hear about that. It's a lot more exciting to record company A&R guys to be searching music out than being sent music. It's a better position for the band to be in, having someone call and say, "Hey, I'm trying to get a hold of your music," than it is you sending it in and waiting eight months to get a response. Make sure you've got great songs. Not just because your best friend or your parents tell you it's good, but maybe you've already taken it to the local radio station and got it on the air and had it compete directly against all the other great repertoire that's out there.

Do your groundwork, get educated. Understand the business. It's a business. Yes, it's great to go and play music and do your thing, but if you're going to go out and enter the world of record companies and managers and agents and lawyers and promoters – understand the business. You'll be far more successful if you do.

So there you have it. Many thanks to Allan and Parkside for taking the time to speak with me. Given the space limitations of this article, I could only provide you with a fraction of their wisdom and insights. In closing, I offer a word of caution from an ancient prophecy that reads, "He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind." In other words, if you're knocking on A&R's door and the door opens, you'd better be ready! Alternatively, you could wait for A&R to come knocking on your door. And if that doesn't work, just close your eyes, click your heels together three times and repeat after me, *there's no place like the top-of-the-charts, there's no place like the top-of-the-charts, there's no place...*



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So you've got a band, a rehearsal space and a repertoire.

Live Sound Secrets

by Julian Mainprize

Now you want to get the music to the people.

Even if you've already recorded a demo, or an album for that matter, unless you're the gem of a major label's publicity department – or Steely Dan – no one's going to buy your CD until they've heard you play live. With this in mind, it's a good idea to make a good first impression by sounding your best. How do you make sure you sound the best you can? To begin with, being well rehearsed is a pretty good idea, but that is just step one. The moment your band gets on stage and plays through a PA, like it or not, you've placed a large part of your success in the hands of the sound engineer. They can make you, or break you.

One of the best ways a live sound engineer can help you, assuming they are competent, is by knowing the band's sound and repertoire. Think of a sound engineer as an additional band member. Would you feel comfortable hitting the stage with a new drummer who doesn't know any of your band's songs, or even your style? So, if you can, try to find an engineer who will mix on a regular basis for your band. Familiarity is key. If it's not in your budget to bring your own sound guy along in the early stages of your band, you'll have to rely on the house engineer. This is definitely not the end of the world and there are still a lot of things both parties can do in this situation to ensure the best sound



CHIEF

Canadian Musician talked with Front of House engineers Chief (Nickelback), David Norman (Ani DiFranco, The Neville Brothers), Ken Turta (Matthew Good Band, Holly McNarland), Roger Psutka (Chantal Kreviazuk, Remy Shand, Simple Plan, Our Lady Peace) about the various methods that they use to get a band to sound the best they can in a live setting. The fact that these engineers responded very differently to some of these questions is proof that engineering live sound is by no means an exact science. However, each of these engineers has found techniques that have helped them rise to the top of their profession. Their responses should be of interest and helpful to both bands looking to improve their live sound and/or sound engineers trying to help these bands do the same. If you're an engineer, take their responses as advice, not rules. Sound engineering, like music, is an art. Ultimately the key to success is to experiment and listen until you've found what works the best for you.

How can a band prepare to get the best possible sound live?

Chief: It comes down to your source sounds, first and foremost. Without that you can only do so much. You need great guitar tones, properly tuned drums, and good gear. Other than that you need to trust your sound engineer and be willing to work with them and listen to them. If they ask you to turn down on stage there's probably a good reason why. Just be willing to try things and remember they (sound engineer) hear what the audience hears.

David: Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. Record your rehearsals. Before playing your first gig, make sure you have an input list and stage plot to give to the club booker and/or soundman to give them a heads up and to expedite your setup.

Ken: Rehearse a lot, because a tight band instantly sounds good, no matter what. And listen to your soundman or house sound person, because they know how the CD sounds and what you should sound like, and the house person knows how good the room should sound.

Roger: Work on all their sounds before hand. Pay attention to how each individual



DAVID

NORMAN

sound works with the others. Two guitar sounds for example or a key sound with a sample etc. TUNING!

Do musicians have to adapt their playing style in a live setting? How?

Chief: I don't think they really have to adapt their playing style. I think it is more important that the engineer adapt to them. At the end of the day, bands will perform their best when they are most comfortable on stage. So instead of trying to get them to change their style you need to adjust to them and try to work with them, keeping them as comfortable as possible. They have a style and a technique, whether it is good or not isn't for you to decide. You can suggest ideas, but if it works for them, then leave it.

David: A lot of times yes. The guitar player who's used to playing at 100dB in the practice room will HAVE to turn down in a live setting to make the job easier for the soundman and for everyone else on stage to hear themselves play – especially the singer!

Ken: Yes! You have to listen to the PA and the room sound. This is one thing most young bands have a problem with. They get freaked out when they hear their instrument or voice through the PA for the first time. So to answer the question right, I guess it would be not so much the style of playing as changing your style of hearing. Get used to hearing yourself amplified and in different rooms because no two rooms sound a like.

Roger: I'd say for the most part just be more dynamic, perhaps over-accentuating certain parts.

What tips can you give singers in terms of microphone technique in a live setting?

Chief: Every singer is different. The more experienced singers will know when to pull back on a mic and how to control the level of a mic versus the volume of their voice. This is just practice and what you become used to. The only other thing is that many singers like to cup the mic with their hands. This will cause feedback and change the tone of the singer's voice. As a singer you just have to be aware of what you are doing and how you are handling the mic.

David: If possible, get an in-ear set up so you won't have to deal with the previously mentioned scenario with loud guitarists. Also, make sure you have a great monitor system and actually have the band turn down so you won't have to scream to hear yourself. When I was tour managing Roger Daltrey from The Who, he mentioned why he wears in-ears. The reason why is that with Pete Townsend playing so loud and Keith Moon bashing away on the cymbals (and remember those were the days where there really weren't monitor rigs!), that he lost a good bit of his hearing.

Ken: Eat the mic. The more you do this the more you can hear your monitors. This will also give the soundman a great source to work with out front. If your band is loud on stage, this applies even more. "Eat the mic" then you will not have to fire so many monitor guys!

Roger: Mic technique, mic technique, mic technique!

Is there any gear (mics, in-ears, outboard gear) that a small live band can invest in to help them sound better on stage?

Chief: This is a tough one. There isn't one specific piece of gear that can make a band instantly sound better. Again, the most important things are your source sounds. Spend the money on your instruments first. Good gear will result in good sounds. Mics, in-ears, and outboard gear will only go so far in helping out the sound. These will enhance the sounds, but again your source sounds have to be good. Once you have good source sounds you can build from there. The right mics are important, but



ROGER

PSUTKA



KEN

TURTA

again if you have a mediocre PA, the mics will only help so much. Outboard gear just becomes a lot of what a sound engineer personally likes.

David: A small in-car rig for the singer, a feedback exterminator to ring out monitors and the FOH mix. Plexiglass around the drumkit to lower the stage volume is always a good one.

Ken: Yes! There is a tonne of things out there, but also being a tour manager, it comes down to dollars and cents. So for a young band just starting out (no record deal) take your own vocal mics if you can; this will help with vocal consistency. If you have a bit of tour support look into renting your own mics for drums, guitars and vocals; it will help with overall consistent sound. And because most bass players need to hear 40 freakin' hertz on stage, a good compressor will help smooth that over. And if there is definitely money put aside for production get in-ears as soon as possible as this will help in so many ways. You will be able to tour longer because the singer isn't straining to hear him/herself every night. Also, your stage sound stays very consistent.

Roger: I would say a vocalist's personal in-car system and microphones would be a great place to start AFTER individual gear (a great guitar, drum kit, amplifier, stomp boxes, etc.).

Would you recommend that a small band with regular gigs invest in their own PA system? Why?

Chief: I would recommend this only for a band that is performing a lot and making money to pay for it. They could also use this PA to set up for rehearsals thus getting the full use out of the PA. The advantage of this is that you will get a level of consistency that will keep the band happy. Also, if you end up playing places that don't have an in-house PA you can rent your PA to them and actually make money from it.

David: Yes and no. For rehearsals: yes. To travel with: no. Many of the venues that a small band will play will already have an in-house rig. This will also eliminate travelling with a large trailer for the PA and many times, your rehearsal PA couldn't cover the size of some of the rooms your act will be playing.

Ken: No! The reason why I say this is because 99 per cent of clubs have PA systems, and the promoter is in charge of this. Also, the money could go to things like recording a demo!

Roger: This is a tough one. I would say it is a good idea for a small trio or acoustic artist to invest in a system, up to a certain size venue of course. This assures the artist's quality production. But as I mentioned, this is only practical to a certain size venue. For

most bands I would say it is impractical: transport, storage, maintenance.

How important is it for a FOH mixer to be familiar with the band's repertoire?

Chief: I think this is very important. There are many different ways you can make a band sound by the way you mix. You can make a band sound heavier, or lighter. It is important to know what direction the band wants to go in and how they want to be portrayed to the audience.

David: Extremely. If that engineer can also assist in the demo recordings of the band he'll have a leg up on compression, gating, delays and reverbs for the live setting as well. A great FOH engineer can definitely make or break a band in many instances.

Ken: Well, if you're a house tech, as long as you know gain structure you're laughing, but in a touring situation I think you should know the music and all the cues. The band is only as good as the weakest link. You don't want to be that link!

Roger: I think it is quite important but it also depends on how adaptable the sound person is to various types of performance. Some engineers are great for certain genres of music and possibly not another.

How important is it for a FOH mixer to be familiar with specific makes and models of the FOH gear being used?

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Chief: Again this is very important. The more familiar you are with makes and models, the quicker and easier it is to get the sounds that you want. Also, many pieces of gear have their own tricks and shortcuts that you can use. This is all helpful in knowing your gear. Plus, when a piece of gear goes down, sometimes there's a very simple solution to get the gear to reset itself.

David: That's a tough one, but I would definitely say a serious FOH engineer will always try to mix on every console out there and learn about compression and gating. Those are the main tools for a FOH engineer.

Ken: I think this is important. If being a soundman is what you want to do for a living then research is very important! Don't let this statement freak you out. There is no way you are going to know all the gear being used all the time. Sometimes you won't, and it's better to ask a stupid question ("How the hell does this work?") at the beginning than look stupid three quarters of the way through the set.

Roger: Well, unless you have the luxury of always getting the gear you want, bribe the production manager. I have been thrown into some funky situations and had all those years of club gigs pay off.

How important is it for musicians to be familiar with the basics of live sound reinforcement and signal flow?

Chief: For a number of musicians, it is important to understand how their gear works and how signal flow works. I think that any opportunity you have to learn and understand more about your craft is never a bad thing. However, that is why musicians have techs. Sometimes they don't have enough time and sometimes they just don't want to be bothered with the technical side of things. However it does make it easier for a FOH mixer to communicate with a musician that can relate when there are problems with the sound due to signal flow, etc.

David: Not a whole lot, but it definitely helps! I think a musician already has his hands full with his/her own instrument and playing as a group.

Ken: Being familiar with the basics of live sound is a good thing. Knowing what certain components are, like PA boxes, soundboards, snakes etc., is great! But if you understand signal flow 75 per cent of all your problems are gone. If you don't understand signal flow get this book: *Sound Reinforcement Handbook*. It's written by the people at Yamaha and is a great book to have on the road with you!

Roger: I would say that this is very important! In smaller venues, say on a club tour, it helps you to identify problems within the system if it doesn't sound right. I also think it's important to understand the basics when you are able to choose production for a larger tour or venue. By no means am I a very technical guy, but I'm glad I learned the stuff I do know.

In a low-budget club situation, what are some 'must have' pieces of FOH gear you request?

Chief: You need gates and compressors. These will be your best friends in dealing with a low budget club situation. They will help you control the environment the best that you can. Also, a graphic EQ for the Front of House PA is a must. You have to be able to tune the PA properly first. You would be surprised at the number of small clubs out there that do not have an EQ.

David: I believe a really good engineer can do his job with anything, but I must request really good compressors, gates, a good delay and a nice reverb unit.

Ken: For me there are two pieces of gear I need: a quad noise

gate for drums, just to get rid of the little over rings because I hate gaff tape on drums; and a quad compressor for vocals and whatever else is out of place.

Roger: I almost always tour with my own selection of microphones! After that I use a couple of quality compressors and multi-effects units (not of the guitar processor type) and always a good 31-band EQ.

How important is mic selection in terms of over all sound?

Chief: When you have good source sounds and a good PA, having great mics can make the world of difference. Just like being in the studio, every mic has its own unique sound. You need to find the best mic that sounds the best for whatever it is that you are miking. This comes down to just trying different mics and seeing what you like best. There are a lot of mics that have become industry standards over the years. Some mics just sound good all of the time and are reliable. But if you are not happy with how your sound is through the PA, the right mic can definitely help. Just remember that the most expensive mic is not always the best one.

David: Not a whole lot, but it definitely doesn't hurt. A good vocal mic is essential for a good overall group sound.

Ken: Very important! This is the device that is between the source and you. It's like that tire commercial, "What would let your family ride on?" Well, your mic selection is like the tires on your car, they will determine how easily you can drive down the road!

Roger: For me, this is the most important element. Even if I'm on a fly-in gig I at least try to take vocal mics and my favourite Sennheiser 602 kick drum mic.

What are some miking techniques you like to use on various instruments?

Chief: I really just try to get as much separation as possible when miking. Sometimes you have to compromise and use an overhead mic to pick up all the cymbals plus the hi-hats, for this you just have to find the sweet spot that sounds best. Use your ears and listen to what you are miking. Chances are, where you think it sounds best is where you should be putting the mic. I don't do anything crazy or unusual to mic, I just find that sweet spot by listening.

David: For drums, I like to have my overheads low to really pick up the cymbals and to eliminate the wash from guitar amps and monitors. I also like to have Plexiglas around the drumkit to isolate and fatten the drum mix. For guitar amps, I always like to mic them in stereo. For the bass rig, a mic and direct box to fatten the sound and to have a choice (also, if one channel goes out, you have a backup).

Ken: Well, for drums I guess a basic technique that I stick to would be keeping the mic close to the drum skin and fairly flat. Kick drums are a bit different, they require a bit of attention until you find that sweet spot! Bass guitars I approach like a PA, I take a direct line – this is only a sub line – then I run a mic on the cabinet to get that rich top end. Guitars are usually miked half on the cone and half on the paper, you can get a great pant leg moving low end with chunky top. With all this said, I still have to find the sweet spot with every new instrument that I mic.

Roger: It's all voodoo! Ha ha! When it comes to drums, talk to Greg Keplinger!! He taught me so much.

What are some of the compression and gating techniques you like to use on individual instruments or sub-groups?

Chief: Gating techniques I use for the drums are pretty basic. I generally gate all the drums and try to have no bleedover when possible. As for compression, that is something that I am always playing with and experimenting with. Compression can

drastically change your sound. I really like to compress snare drums a lot to get the ring out of them. I also like to compress the kick drum to make it really tight and punchy. I generally won't compress the guitars, but sometimes that depends on the player. For clean guitar sounds, I usually will put some on as well as for acoustics. I'm always compressing the vocals. For the vocals, I found that you just have to try different ones. Every compressor has its own sound – some work better for loud singers while some work better on quieter singers. It takes a lot of experimenting, and the amount of compression all depends on the singer.

David: I'm not a big fan of compression on subgroups, but prefer to use it on designated channels. Channels I always compress are for kick drum, snare, bass, assorted guitar channels, and all vocals. For gating, it's always kick drum, toms and snare.

Ken: When it comes to compression, I usually compress bass guitars a little differently. I like to use heavy compression on the sub line and not so heavy on the mic line. I try everything in my power to never compress drums – I only gate. But there are those very limp-wristed drummers who require a bit of help staying in mix. As for vocals, I compress at the last stage, being the sub-group. You will get the most headroom there, and let's face it, if we can't

hear the singer why the hell are we there! As for keyboards, I always have a compressor inserted on new or unfamiliar keyboards – this could be the end of the show if one of these puppies gets away on you. Plus you never know when the band will change a sample on you, and you get a 20 Hz to 20 kHz burst of signal – safety first now! With noise gates, the only thing I will use them for is on drums or if I'm doing a corporate show where I want to get rid of unwanted background noises.

Roger: Well, I'm not big on gating at all (see Greg Keplinger!). I only use them if the tech or drummer can't get the drum to do what it needs to. I don't like to use them in any other capacity live. Compression is cool to give you a warmer or fatter sound for bass, but for the most part, I like to keep the signal path as clean as possible. Compression can be a quick fix for bad mic technique or an over-the-top player. I'm gonna hear about this one!

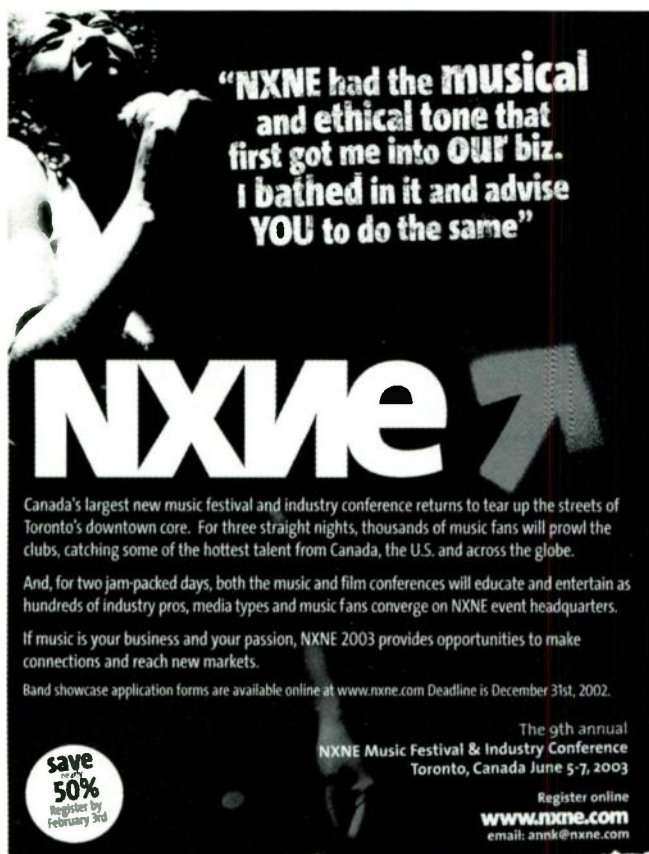
What are some general EQ techniques you use on individual instruments to help the overall sound?

Chief: Again, this depends on each individual sound. In general you tend to add low end to the kick drum and take out some low mids. On overheads, I tend to roll off a lot of bottom end. After that it's really all

about using your ears, there are no rules written in stone. Just make sure the PA is EQed properly. With a proper PA and good gear you can get away with doing very little EQing.

David: It all starts with the crossover while EQing the room. I set the house EQ flat and use the crossover to get the room as flat as possible. I'll then use the house EQ to rid myself of any extra offending frequencies the crossover couldn't get rid of for me. I hate 250 Hz and 400 Hz and will usually work around these frequencies quite a bit. Another thing to do is to EQ your reverb and delays. A lot of times, offending frequencies (and feedback) come from these units not being EQed also.

Ken: I try to do a lot of source work first. What I mean by this is going to rehearsals and trying to get the sources (drums, guitars, bass, etc.) sounding the best they can. Sometimes it's a hard thing to do. If a musician has been listening to one sound in the rehearsal room, then you come in and tell this person that they have to change their sound it can be like trying to teach an old dog a new trick. What I am trying to accomplish by augmenting the source is a flatter sound in general, then when I'm out at FOH, I can adjust the sound anyway I need to. Keep in mind that as a FOH person it is easier to have to add top or bottom than



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it is to get rid of it!

Roger: Start with the instrument itself! I try to EQ very little out front.

What are some effects you like to use on vocals or other instruments?

Chief: I love the TC 2290 for delay on vocals. I love the sound of it and it is extremely user-friendly. The SPX-900s and 1000s are also great tools for overall reverbs and vocal effects. Eventide's Harmonizer is my favourite effect to use for chorusing on the vocals. Also, I have started experimenting with some guitar effects pedals on vocals with the Line 6 gear as well. I will also put a very short delay on the guitars to thicken them.

David: A great tube compressor, a rich reverb and a delay are my favorite tools. Having a great vocalist who doesn't have to scream over the band and who also has great mic technique makes my life a lot easier as well.

Ken: On vocals I try to keep things wet. I try to achieve this by using a "big room" setting with very little verb. This way it won't muck up what the singer is saying but you still get a wet vocal. On drums it's pretty much the same theory, except I punch a lot more low-end out right in the actual unit. And for instruments like guitars or stringed instruments, I try to keep things as dry as possible, just for clarity.

Roger: This really depends on the type of music and or performance. I always use stock effects that I've grown to love over the years with a few of my own tweaks. It's all voodoo!

Do you have a preference to mixing bands in mono or stereo?

Chief: Stereo does have its advantages. It gives you more options when you want to pan things such as guitars and overheads. Mono can sound great, but I do prefer stereo just because of the options.

David: Definitely stereo. God made us with two ears to hear stereo!

Ken: Most definitely in stereo! Mono can be fun in a small club or something of that nature, but stereo gives you another dimension to work with; bigger fatter tone can be achieved.

Roger: Well, unless the venue is terrible, stereo.

When mixing in stereo, what instruments or effects do you like to pan in the stereo field and where?

Chief: I like to pan the overheads, and I pan the toms, but not very much. I love panning guitars in stereo. Other than that everything else is pretty straightforward. Panning effects in stereo also sounds great.

David: Toms (hard left, centre, hard right), bass guitar mic slightly left and bass DI slightly right, keyboards hard left and hard right. Percussion always varies.

Ken: Most effects are panned hard left to hard right, but with guitars let's say I like to put a cabinet a side panned at 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock. The only thing that you have to be careful about is phasing but that's a whole new can of worms. As for vocals, I always run these centred, it helps keep the vocals on top. Cymbals are another thing that I like to run in stereo – same theory as the guitars, 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock.

Roger: It's all voodoo! Again depending on the group and or venue I just try to make it sound big.

How do you adapt the same band's sound to different venues and PA systems?

Chief: You just have to go in and evaluate the PA and the room. EQ everything properly and just go for it. The most

Mixing Digital: Is This The Future Of Live Sound?

Digital audio is nothing new, in the recording studio that is. For more than a decade, studios of all sizes and budgets have been updating from analog to digital. Despite the continued debate over the sound quality of digital recordings, the advantages of digital technology are indisputable. Non-linear editing, full automation of all parameters, full storage and recall of all parameters, cheaper media formats, and waveform editing down to the individual sample are available to even those on a shoestring budget. While the new technology continues to proliferate in studios, in live sound reinforcement, digital audio has taken a lot longer to be accepted.

The advantages of the digital technology offered on live consoles by companies like Yamaha, InnovaSON and DiGiCo are a sound engineer's dream. One advantage digital live consoles offer over their analog counterparts is memory storage of most, if not all console parameters, which can drastically shorten daily setup time on tour and makes running multiple bands off the same console that much simpler. Another advantage is space. Most digital consoles have all effects (delay, reverb etc.), dynamics (compression, limiters and gates) and EQ functions on board! This renders the need for racks and racks of this type of gear at the Front of House mixing position obsolete. Engineers, techs and roadies can all appreciate this. Yet another great advantage of digital live console technology lies in the simplicity of cable runs. Most digital live consoles have a couple of large racks, located just off-stage, which contain the mainframe computer, analog and digital inputs and outputs, and analog-to-digital and digital-to-analog converters. This is where all the audio processing and patching takes place, the console itself is merely a control surface. This means that there is no longer any need to run all audio from the stage to the console and then back to the amplifiers via thick and cumbersome cable snakes. The only thing that runs between stage boxes and a digital console are two thin optical or coaxial cables (one is redundant just in case the first gets crushed or cut mid-show) to link the console and mainframe computer, and an AC power run.

So why are analog consoles still being used much more than digital ones in live sound reinforcement? It's definitely not the same reason as the initial resistance to digital technology in recording studios. Live, the quality of analog-to-digital conversion and vice versa is less of an issue as the subtleties of conversion are less noticeable. Instead, the problem lies at the heart of the technology itself: computers. If a computer goes down in a studio setting, everyone goes on lunch until the problem is fixed; in a live setting, you risk a riot. So the key in digital live console is stability, the engineers and musicians have to be confident that the programming code is stable – very stable. What's more, one has to consider that computers are very fragile by nature. In a studio they sit in a climate-controlled environment and remain immobile; on tour, they are in a different city every night and travel many kilometres in between. Manufacturers have focused on these issues, whether it be writing code for their own operating systems, or ensuring that the audio keeps flowing even if the computer goes down. The fact that we are starting to see more and more digital consoles being used on major tours is proof that engineers are beginning to feel more secure with the stability of the technology – they have always been impressed with its potential.



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important thing is you have to go in knowing that every room and every PA is going to sound a little different. Get the best that you can out of it, but realize that there is only so much you can do with a room and a PA. Saying that, always challenge yourself and never settle for just good enough.

David: EQ baby!

Ken: Sometimes I adapt with the greatest of ease, and then sometimes with blood, sweat and tears. If you are carrying your own production and only have to deal with different venue sounds then this isn't usually that much of a problem, because you know everything works. It's when you are using everything the club provides,

that's when we earn our money! I find myself going into these rooms two hours early just to make sure the PA has all its components working right, or to find out some local punk band was in the night before and there a four mics down and two monitors missing. But anyway, it's good to get in early, play a few CDs and put your voice through the PA and hear what it will do! The band's sound is the band's sound, that's why we did all that work in the rehearsal hall right?

Roger: Stage volume! Enough said.

When EQing the PA, what gets preference, gain before feedback or sound quality?

Chief: I think both, you want the best quality

of sound that you can get, but you also want a good gain structure as well. Go for sound quality first and then go for gain. Feedback is never a good thing.

David: It's a tricky balance, but if you're really good – and sometimes lucky – you can achieve both.

Ken: If memory serves me right, one of the first things I was taught is that headroom is the key to a great night of mixing! So I guess what I am saying is that gain before feedback is the way I approach sound quality!

Roger: Sound quality – I'd say make it sound flat. The other seems to take care of itself then.

Everyone always talks about musicians protecting their ears from exposure to high sound pressure levels. As a FOH mixer, do you ever worry about this? If so, what kind of precautions do you take?

Chief: It is something that I do worry about. You want to protect your hearing, but you can't mix with earplugs. What I do is wear earplugs before and after a show. It tends to give my ears a break and I don't get the ringing in them after a show. Especially in clubs, most hearing damage takes place from people yelling in your ears all night, so be sure to wear plugs when you can.

David: Immediately after sound check, I wear ear plugs right up to show time and will usually try to take a nap in my bunk to get away from everyone to rest myself as well as my ears. I also tend not to mix that loudly as a result.

Ken: This is always on my mind! I don't wear earplugs when I mix, so I try to keep my mixes as clean as possible and watch the dB levels! But let's say I'm out to see a band, I have to confess that I always wear earplugs!

Roger: Now, I rarely watch a band or attend a rehearsal without my hearing protection. I have been fortunate to mix at comfortable levels over the years. I would not expose anyone to sound pressure levels that I couldn't take without protection. I have my hearing checked every two years or so now. What's that ringing? Do you hear it?

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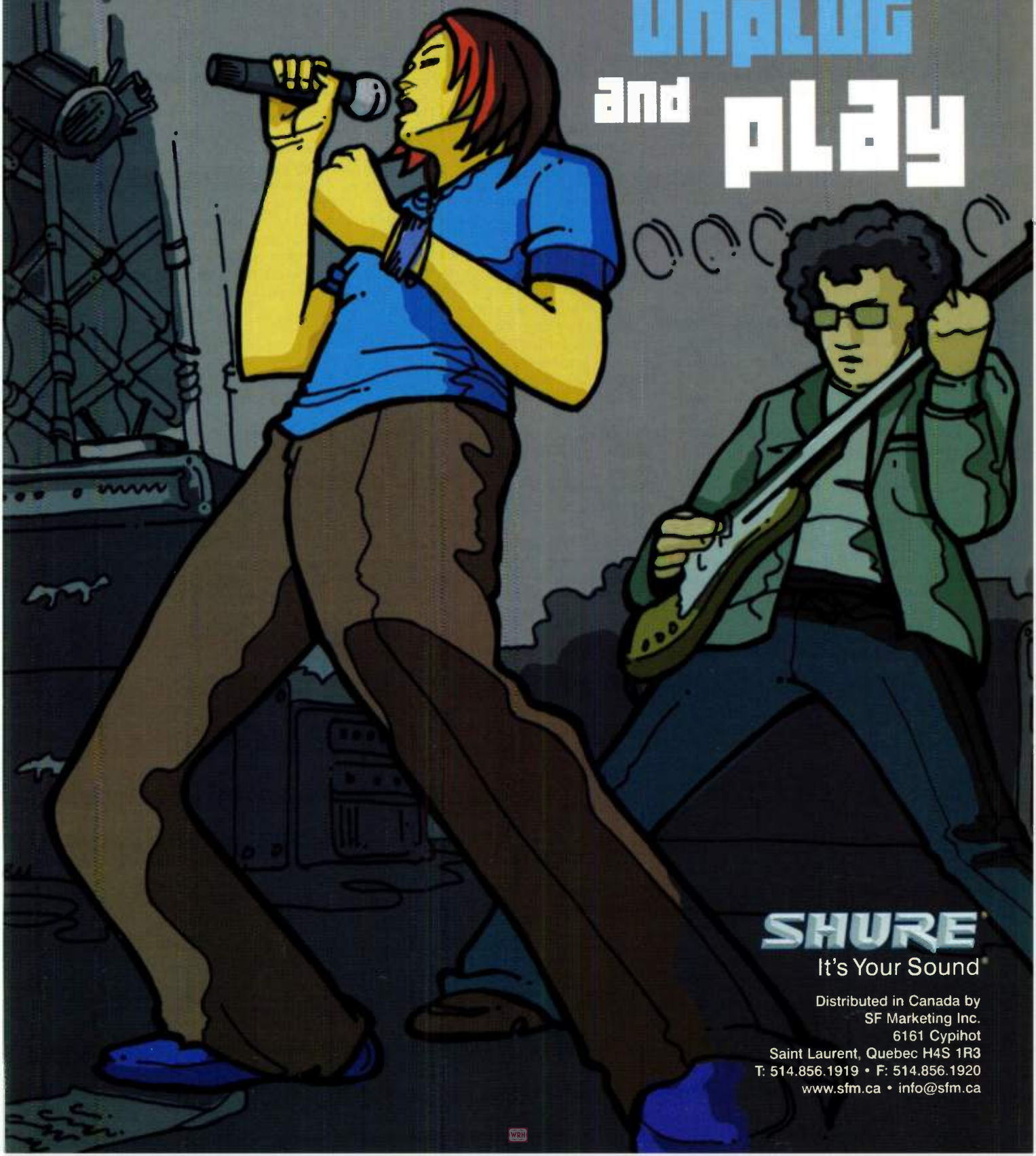
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never stop writing Part II

writing

Do you have any warm-ups or any kind of rituals that you do before you sit down to write?

No, well I drink coffee. I try to write regularly, so it's not such a scary thing. Sometimes there can be a lot of pressure to try to be inspired on the spot, but if you write regularly you are inspired at moments that you wouldn't expect, and then you can use those moments later whether you have them on a cassette tape or written down somewhere.

How was working with Dweezil Zappa, being that you are involved with him romantically? Was it hard to get used to having to deal with the business side of it and the romance side of it?

It was something I tried not to do, because I thought it was a bad idea to work with your boyfriend, but it was something we couldn't help but do, we just like writing together. It was a fun thing for us to do. I especially like his music writing and his approach to music - he's always just trying to make something that sounds really cool, he doesn't really care if it's going to be successful or not, so it just makes it more fun to write. With certain writers they've been hired as hit song writers, so you have an actual limit that's placed on the song, where as with us, he's always interested in making sure we have some cool musical element, which I've always loved. I've always loved, when I'm writing, to have some musical element that is just as important as a lyrical element. And because his heart is in the right place, he wants to make sure the song comes out cool, it's fun to work with him. I also think he's less critical than I am, he'll be more open to things than I normally am, which is good for me because I open my mind a bit more and not hold myself back.

Do you tend to go back and do a lot of rewrites on your songs?

No. I write and rewrite while I'm writing. Once I'm done, I'm done.

How do you know when you're done?

I don't know. Sometimes I just know, sometimes I don't know. I've worked on songs for years and finally played them for a friend and I'm like, 'Well it's not quite done yet, but I'll play it for you' and I play it and they're like, 'It's done.' I think that's the problem a lot of us have is we get sort of anal

about things, and think that they're not done when they are.

Do you have any formal writing education and do you use that in your song writing?

I've studied a lot of literature growing up in school and in college. Spanish literature, English literature, a little French literature and I had a little bit of fiction writing here and there in college. The writing teacher that I've been most excited about, and that I actually did a workshop with here, is a woman named Natalie Goldberg. She writes fiction, but she also writes a lot of books about writing. She gives a lot of great exercises for getting out of your head. She has some great books like, *Writing Down The Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* and *Wild Mind: Living The Writer's Life*. A lot of songwriters I know have her books and get inspired by her writing exercises. They teach you to write whenever you can and you get out of your mind and you end up finding things that you didn't even know were there. Some of them are fictional, some of them are true, and some are just interesting metaphors and pictures you paint with words. On one hand it takes the importance out of writing, which is good because it gets you less critical, you're just writing. Then when you go back and look at your writings, you've actually ended up with some cool things because there wasn't pressure on the writing, it was just coming out of some place weird in your mind.

Do you try to incorporate universal themes into your songs?

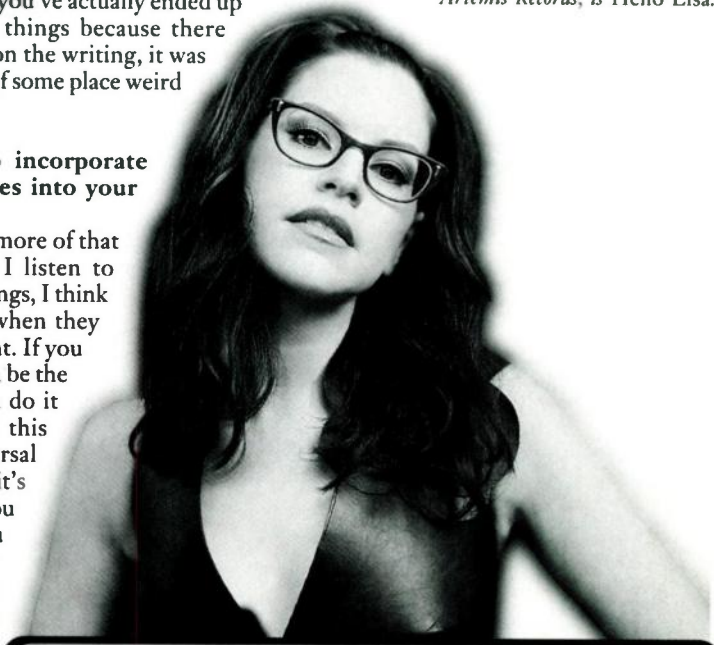
I'd like to do more of that actually. When I listen to other people's songs, I think it is really cool when they are able to do that. If you do it wrong it can be the worst, but if you do it right it can be this really cool universal song, so I think it's just something you need to practice a lot. I have so many other hobbies and things that I do, I need to spend more time writing. I'm

do a lot of hobbies, talk on the phone, go hang out with friends and just do other stuff other than putting myself in a cave and writing all the time.

Do you have any advice you could pass on to songwriters looking for inspiration?

Songwriting is such a weird thing. It's not really formulaic. I think the main thing is that it's like working out, just 10 minutes of exercise is more important than waiting for the perfect opportunity. You have to capture you're inspiration when you have it because you never know when you'll have it again.

Lisa Loeb has become one of the most recognizable faces in female folk-pop since she burst onto the scene in the middle '90s with her song "Stay (I Missed You)" which earned her the title of being the first and only unsigned artist to have a No. 1 single. On top of making appearances in many TV shows and starring in House on Haunted Hill, she is also currently working on voicing the character of MJ in the new Spider-man animated series. Her latest album, on Artemis Records, is Hello Lisa.



with Lisa Loeb

recording the singer songwriter



Recording

In our field it is not uncommon for a solo performer or writer without a band to come in and ask to do an album or demo that features an ensemble approach.

The ideal scenario for this sort of undertaking of course is to have the resources and personnel base to be able to assemble a select group of appropriate instrumentalists and vocalists from a coterie of seasoned studio professionals, have strong, proven charts and go "in" and have everything go to tape or disk in a smooth and tight fashion, all at once. This requires that the budget be able to afford the pre-production time and services of the arranger and the studio and session fees of the players, and if they are vocalists, to be on their game and get their job done straightaway as well. With the above in place, this is a fairly sure way to accomplish a tight, good sounding recording, with the special kind of synchronicity that only happens when players are playing together in the same moment, at a reasonable cost. It can also railroad the recording to an undesired end, though, just due to sheer momentum. Adequate forethought is vital.

More often though, the budget for this kind of undertaking is not in place, or the artist wishes to record in a non-studio setting. Or the desired players do not live in the same region but have access to a common MDM format or compatible IID system. Or that the artist wishes to experiment to find a sound or direction, which fits what they imagine but do not know at the outset what it is or how to achieve it. Or maybe the song is intended to be a remix style dance piece; all the above tend to indicate or require a piecemeal approach, not all tracks going down at once, but in succession, as they can be done.

Whether MDM, MIDI, HD, or that special treat — large format analog, sitting down at the mixing desk with a proliferation of tracks and takes and myriad arrangement possibilities can put the producer and engineer into quite state of selection anxiety, not to mention the mix time over the top. So as the possibilities and track choices grow, so must the strategy become more definite. Discussion time and listening time between artist, producer and engineer is a vital part of this efficiency.

All in all, the main challenge of the not-all-players-at-once approach is ensuring that the process and the technology remain transparent to the artist's work. In the case of the singer/songwriter, that their song comes through the vast possibility machine intact, and rings through loud and clear, with all parts, effects, and techniques serving

that central thread of creative impetus that the artist started off with, cohesively and powerfully whole. The principles discussed here are equally applicable to the demo project and the 'album' project, which the primary differences between these being in arrangement detail and post-production effort.

The toughest hurdle comes early on, and that is making the decision to use a click track, or not. It is often difficult to convince an artist that it is a musical tool, yet without it, you can be stuck with subtle tempo variations that nobody else — even the artist — can match during overdubs later on. As with any recording, ensuring the artist and their material is ready for recording includes determining the best tempo(s) for the music and keys for the singer. The artist may already have this all figured out, but be sure that it is all to the best, because once the recording has begun...

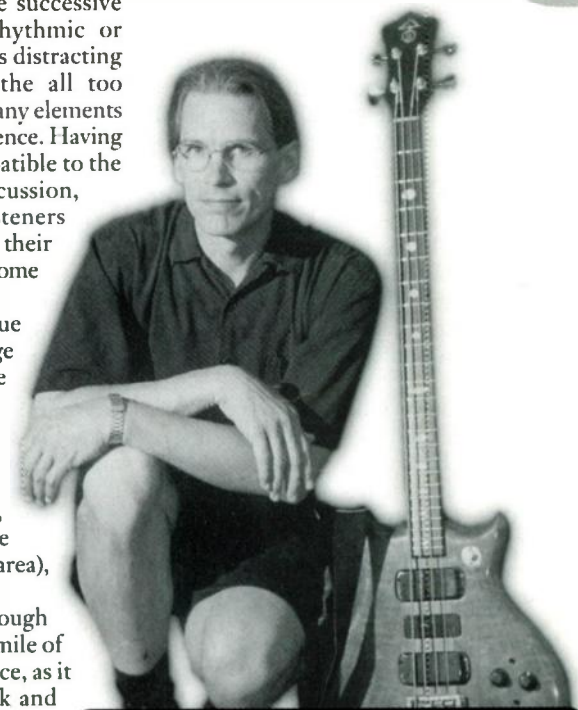
A great pre-production tool is MIDI tracking, since all aspects of the music are easily alterable. Most MIDI recorders have provision for a tempo map to be constructed, which comes in handy when the song has tempo variations, or when synching MIDI recording to a free-time audio basic track.

Fleshing out the tracks with the desired or selected instruments is a delicate process. Keep the melody and basic structure intact by making sure they are always being supported or enhanced by the successive layers of sound. Avoiding rhythmic or harmonic clashes, sub-melodies distracting from the main melody, or the all too tempting allure of having too many elements requires rapt attention and diligence. Having players on board who are compatible to the music is a definite asset. Discussion, listening, having objective listeners who know the artist well to lend their observational wisdom are all welcome additions.

Come mix time, with due diligence preceding, the challenge will be concentrated in taking the appropriate stylistic approach, rather than 'weeding' through a plethora of contradictory musical information; choosing the correct effects, imaging, dynamic range (assuming you've allowed for some choice in that area), and final timbres.

The greatest reward at this tough time is to see the unconscious smile of honest joy suffuse the artist's face, as it all comes together. Good luck and happy tracking!

Hugh McMillan is best known for his work as multi-instrumentalist for Spirit of the West and Oscar Lopez. He can be reached online at hugh@sorw.ca.



by Hugh McMillan



Does Your Live Sound Engineer Measure Up?

live sound

Musicians spend considerable time working to develop their talent and playing style in an effort to create a sound that is distinctive. Inevitably they will form a band with other players and vocalists that have similar tastes and capabilities in order to showcase their respective talents. The weeks or months spent rehearsing to get their chops down and to create a stage sound that breathes life into their performance may all be for nothing if the sound from the PA does not reveal what the band has worked so hard to achieve.

We have all gone to see a band in a venue where the sound was horrific. When the sound is unintelligible, the bass is heavy, ear piercing or wrought with feedback, hum or buzzes – your sound engineer is ultimately to blame. Before all you sound guys start on the “Dear Ted, Bite Me!” e-mails, let me explain this statement as there are some exceptions. Most touring acts bring the same monitor and Front of House engineers with them to every show so that there is consistency in their sound both on stage and out front.

These people sometimes spend a couple of weeks with the band in pre-production to get to know the needs of the band members and to work on the actual gear that will be out on the tour. Technical riders are advanced by the tour manager to the venue management detailing the power requirements for sound, lighting and video as well as rigging and staging specifications for the production. If the band is not carrying production these riders may also include complete details of acceptable equipment for the PA system, monitor rig and backline gear. By advancing the show properly the engineers are not faced with any surprises and can set about their usual routine to make the show go off smoothly. When someone drops the ball advancing the show you cannot blame the sound engineers for bad sound although the best ones will make lemonade out of lemons and the show will go on.

When sound is unintelligible you either cannot understand the words being sung or you cannot look at an instrument being played on stage and discern its sound from the other instruments. In large venues intelligibility problems can be a result of a PA that is insufficient for the size of the venue as the sound from the PA can be severely attenuated by the time it makes it to the back of the room. Frequently club intelligibility issues are related to the Front of House mix position being too close to the stage and as a result the engineer thinks he

has a good mix but if you walk farther from the stage some instruments seemingly just disappear. This is especially noticeable with electric guitar amps that are facing the audience. If you stand close to the mix position you are hearing a huge amount of guitar off the stage and all too often the natural response is to not put much guitar into the mix thereby depriving the majority of the audience of that guitarist’s performance. If your engineer put on a set of headphones with good isolation characteristics he or she would have heard that your guitar was not up in the mix and could have corrected the problem.

Option two would require that your engineer get off their duff and walk the room but who does that anymore? The most common cause of intelligibility problems is engineers that do not understand how or when to use a graphic equalizer. These are the guys that cannot get a good kick drum sound on the console so they grab the main EQ to create the ultimate kick sound while sacrificing every other instrument and vocal on the stage. But there are even worse offenders. The happy face smile EQ setup is something you have probably done to a 5-band EQ on a car stereo or on a ghetto blaster, but that’s not what should ever be done to a PA system with 27 or more bands of usable EQ. The happy face EQ curve will give you bass heavy sound because it is cutting the crucial intelligibility range between 1 kHz and 6 kHz. If you look at the main EQ on a well calibrated PA with a quality engineer at work, you might see a mild boost at 40 Hz, some cutting through the mid bass region and a few more cuts up to about 6 kHz to get rid of ear piercing rings or frequencies that are on the threshold of feedback and mild boosting above 10 kHz with everything else relatively flat. The less you boost or cut on a graphic EQ the fewer phase shifts you create and the better your overall sound will be. The job of a main graphic equalizer at Front of House is to match the PA to the acoustics of the room. It is for this reason that you cannot keep the same EQ settings from venue to venue as no two rooms are the same acoustically. If a PA is tested for hum and buzzes at each stage of its assembly, trouble-shooting becomes a simple task for system technicians that thoroughly understand AC power and other potential noise problems. If after a four-hour setup and sound check the PA is still humming or buzzing without the cause being identified and hopefully rectified then heads should roll.

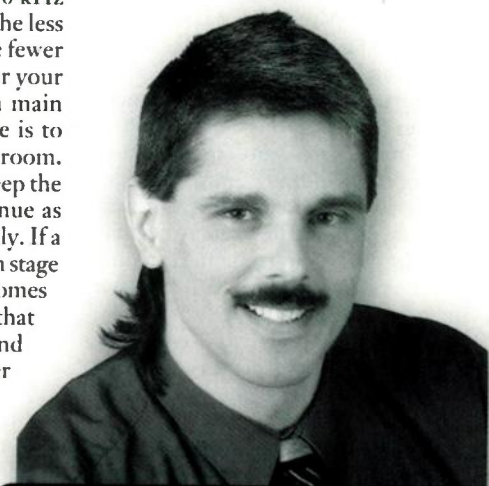
The recipe to make a great live sound engineer:

- 1 part electrical engineer
- 1 part acoustical engineer
- 1 part recording engineer
- 1 ton of experience
- Then mix thoroughly!

You probably have a good live sound engineer if:

- He actually listened to your CD.
 - You consistently have people telling you “It was the best show they have seen”.
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 - The board mix is taped at each show and it sounds quite similar to the recording.
 - He has always solved “the problem” before you took the stage.
 - He kept you from getting shocked, electrocuted or crushed.
 - When everyone else is in a panic – he stays cool.
 - He uses reference headphones to check the mix and solo channels.
- He has tools and can fix anything including a tour bus.
- He has a cable tester, tone generator, phase checker, multi-meter and a real-time analyzer and does not like to share his toys with others.
 - He hears everything.
 - He is sought after by other acts and has a solid reputation in the biz.

Ted Barker is an independent audio engineer and sound contractor based in Toronto.



by Ted Barker

The Winners' Choice

“ I listened to every mixing console you can think of. Why the Venice? It's an easy answer. It sounds like a Midas. That's the answer. ”

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Robbie McGrath, FOH Engineer, Rolling Stones LICKS World Tour 2002 - 2003

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“Frankly, there is nothing that compares to the Venice in sound quality and size! And believe me, I've tried everything...”

Marvin Sutton, FOH engineer, Morgan Sound

Faith Hill/Tim McGraw

“I can honestly say that this is the sweetest sounding board I have tested.”

Jamie Rio, Technical Reviewer, Gig Magazine

Blue Barrel Jazz and Blues Festival

“I love this thing! You just turn the EQ and know it's a Midas!”

Jack Alexander, Education Editor, Live Sound Magazine

“I've dreamed of something like this, and now Midas has come through with its Venice series.”

Etienne Lemery, Technical Reviewer, SONO Mag World Edition

“This is an outstanding console! We've had it jammed to the max and it performs wonderfully! Truly a MIDAS!”

Jack Haffamier, Manager, Nelson Sound

Pasadena Pops/Wayne Newton/Jay Leno at Bally's Events Center

“This is the money! I had every single hole at the back of the Venice 320 filled with all the toys like Summits, Focusrite® and Drawmers®. I was running three sends back to stage for monitors, two for effects and the last for subs. DI outs to Pro Tools®. I was maxxed out, and it seemed to like it. I did too!”

Cristiano Avigni, FOH Engineer

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B

Publishing Agreements – Part II

Business

The views and opinions expressed in this article are not meant to substitute for legal advice which should be sought in each particular instance.

Introduction

In the last issue of *Canadian Musician* we briefly reviewed the four main sources of publishing income: 1) Mechanical Royalties; 2) Performance Royalties; 3) Synchronisation Licenses; and, 4) Print and Other Income. In this article we will examine how this income is split up amongst songwriters and publishers under a typical music publishing agreement with a major Canadian music publisher (i.e. Universal, EMI, Warner/Chappell, Sony/ATV, BMG, herein referred to as “CMP’s”).

Term/Scope

A songwriter may sign with a CMP for a single song, a period of time, for a whole catalogue of songs; or, an agreement could be coterminous with the term of a recording contract (where the songwriter is also a recording artist).

When a songwriter/recording artist signs with a CMP their agreement may be coterminous with a recording agreement which means the publishing agreement piggy-backs the recording agreement; however, a recording agreement may be for six to eight albums and standard publishing agreement will only be for two to four albums. Your agreement should clarify if *all*

songs written during this period come under the publishing agreement or if *only* those songs which make it onto your albums should be included.

A songwriter/*non*-recording artist may enter into a publishing agreement for a period of time; for example: three periods of two years each (six years total). During this period the writer will be required to deliver a certain number of songs per year (i.e. 8-12) and normally a certain number of these songs must be included on “Major Record Company” recordings (i.e. 2-4 per year).

Advances

Songwriters are normally paid some form of advance against future songwriting royalties when they enter into a publishing agreement with a CMP. These advances can range dramatically depending on the bargaining power of the parties.

Publishers may enter into development agreements where the songwriter/artist is paid a minimal advance upfront (i.e. \$15,000); along with a development fund to produce demos, buy a van or produce an EPK (i.e. \$20,000); and, finally if the artist secures a major recording contract they may be advanced further amounts when their album is released in Canada (i.e. \$20,000) and the US (i.e. \$75,000).

Straight songwriter agreements may pay songwriters an upfront advance (i.e. \$25,000-\$75,000) along with further advances when the songwriter meets performance targets.

Royalties

Royalties for income streams discussed in Part I of this article under a co-publishing agreement are typically divided 75/25 with the writer retaining a 75% share of the songwriting income for mechanical and performance royalty income. Synchronisation income is typically divided more favourably for the publisher on a 65/35 or 60/40 basis due to the argument that publishers exert more effort towards securing these opportunities.

Foreign income is typically divided differently than domestic income. Most CMP’s reduce the amount of income you receive from the UK for example by applying a foreign administration fee “off the top” of money earned in the UK; thereby reducing the amount of money that ends up in the songwriter’s pocket. You and your advisors must be very focused on the provisions that reduce your income in the manner and reduce the negative impact as much as possible.

Clearly, as a songwriter, you want to structure the royalty percentages as much as possible in your favour. The numbers alluded to above are not set in stone. You would be amazed where they can get to if you (or your legal counsel) push.

Reversion – Performance Obligations

Most CMP’s will attempt to own the rights to your songs delivered during the term of the agreement for “the life of copyright” which is the life of the author plus 50 years. Many times they are successful in retaining the copyright for this length of time; other times songwriters can negotiate a reversion (or return) of the songs they have delivered after a period of time after the termination of the agreement (i.e. 7-15 years).

Some publishing agreements will clearly stipulate that such a reversion will only occur when the songwriter is in a recouped position under their agreement.

You should also focus on songs which are delivered during the term of the agreement but which are *never* exploited by the publisher. For example, if you have delivered a handful of songs which have never earned you any income during your publishing agreement you may be able to negotiate an early reversion of those particular songs.

Rights to Alter Songs

What happens when another artist wants to record a version of your song but wants to alter the lyrics slightly? What about when Burger King wants to put your song in a commercial? What about a foreign artist who wants to re-record your entire song in Japanese?

Your right to restrict the publisher from authorising any of the uses described above will be determined by your bargaining power and your absolute desire to control this aspect of your songs. Songwriters vary on their needs in this regard.

Conclusion

In the past two issues of *Canadian Musician* we have walked through some of the “ins and outs” of music publishing agreements. I hope this review has been provided a starting point for any reader curious about this topic. For a more detailed review I highly recommend Paul Sanderson’s, “*Musicians and the Law in Canada*” (3rd Ed.) which is an excellent overview of this complex topic.

Chris Taylor is a lawyer with the law firm of Sanderson Taylor where he represents Nelly Furtado, Sum 41 and David Usher amongst others. Find him on the Web at www.sandersontaylor.com.



by Chris Taylor, B.A., LL.B.

The Very Best Of



1979

- March/April - Burton Cummings, Murray McLauchlan, Shopping for a Synthesizer, Recording Studio Design, Notables' Stereo
- September/October - Domenic Troiano, Prism, Iish Rovers, Moe Kottman, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Keyboard Combinations

1980

- January/February - Trooper, Sogers, Ronnie Prophet, Andrew Davis, Managers, Vintage Organs
- March/April - Triumph, Jerry Doucette, Ginette Reno, Tom Mawhinny, Show Playing for Guitar - Part I, Record Piracy
- July/August - Dan Hill, FM, Henry Cuesta, Powder Blues, Radio Airplay, Show Playing for Guitar - Part II
- September/October - David Clayton-Thomas, Downchild Blues Band, Nash the Slash, Hearing Loss, Canadian Recording Studio Guide, Jazz Clubs
- November/December - April Wine, Dianne Heatherine, Bully Sainte-Marie, Bobby Edwards, Troubleshooting Your Gear Part I, Bass Players' Choice

1982

- May/June - Chilliwack, Shan Ulrich, Daniel Lavoie, Performing Rights - Part I, Songwriters' Market Guide
- September/October - Diane Tell, Doug Bennett, David Wilcox, Linda Menzer, Anvil
- November/December - Loverboy, Andrew Hermant, Wayne Rostad, VE J.J., Canadian Recording Studio Guide

1983

- March/April - Rough Trade, Rolo McConnell and the Boss Brass, Dick Diamond, Terry Crawford, Sami Moon, Do It Yourself Percussion - Part I
- May/June - Lions Boyd, The Spoons, Raffi, Do It Yourself Percussion - Part II
- September/October - Bruce Cockburn, Ian Thomas, Lydia Taylor, Image - Part I
- November/December - Oscar Peterson, The Lincolns, Wildroot Orchestra, Jarvis Benoit Quartet, Image - Part II

1984

- July/August - Triumph, Aldo Nova, Uzeb, Chilliwack, Grokking Electronics
- ## 1985
- May/June - Corey Hart, Murray McLauchlan, L'Etranger, The Electronic Drum Jungle, The Canadian Musician Lighting Guide Part I
 - September/October - M + M, CM Lighting Guide Part II, Electronic Percussion Accessories, Spotlight on Vancouver, Vancouver from the Air, Bruce Allen, Ido Eyes, Nitwerk Records, Headons, DDA

1986

- January/February - Joni Mitchell, Loverboy, Creating That Buzz, The New Music, Focus on Pro Keyboards
- July/August - Luba, 54-40, Musicians' Money, Cover Bands, Computer Music Revolution

1987

- July/August - Bryan Adams, Gowen, How to work Overseas Markets, Focus on Recording

1988

- September/October - Red Rider, Art Bergman, Jeff Healey, The State of the Guitar
- November/December - Disaster Proofing your Band Part I, On the Road, Anne Murray, k.d. lang, Live Sound

1989

- March/April - 10th Anniversary Edition, The Artists, The Business, Selected Artist Index, The Equipment
- November/December - David Wilcox, 54(40), Kevin MacMichael, How to avoid gating ripped off, Putting a sound system together

1990

- January/February - Jane Sibery, Daniel Lanois, The Scramblers, A&R Directors, What are they looking for?, Life after Music Education
- March/April - Rush, George Fox, Oliver Jones, Booking Agents: What makes them tick?, Keyboards in the Nineties
- September/October - The Jeff Healey Band, The Northern Pikes, Celine Dion, Learning from Lawyers Part I, From Demo to Master

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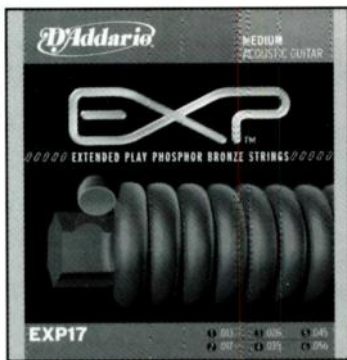
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D'Addario EXP Acoustic Strings

D'Addario has recently announced that the company has extended its line of EXP Extended Play coated strings, largely in response to musicians' requests for additional sets.

Since the EXP10, EXP11 and EXP12 sets were introduced last year, many users have contacted the company to ask for additional 80/20 sets, in particular custom light and 12-string sets, a request the company was more than happy to comply with. Now available are EXP13 (custom light), EXP14 (bluegrass: light top, heavy bottom) and EXP36 (12-string light).

All D'Addario EXP coated strings are built to last three to four times longer than uncoated sets, due to an exclusive, ultra-fine, corrosion-resistant coating. The coating is applied to the wrap wire before the strings are wound, to allow the strings to look, feel and sound like a standard set of strings, but with the added benefit of extended life.

For more information, contact: D'Addario Canada, 50 W. Wilmot St., #13, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1M5 (800) 268-6855, FAX (905) 889-8998, caddariocan@globalserve.net, www.daddariocanada.com.

Zoom 'Fire' Modelling Combo Amps

Zoom recently introduced two new guitar amplifier combos – the Fire-15 and the Fire-30. Both amps feature Zoom amp modelling and multi-effects built-in to compact cabinets with solid power. Some of the sounds the amps model include vintage stack, modern high gain, vintage tube, acoustic and solid state thrash metal. A clean amp setting is also provided for use with outboard effects and pedals. Fire-15 has 11 amp models, while the Fire-30 has 22 amp models. Fire combos include a full complement of Zoom guitar effects including chorus, flanger, phase, delay, reverb, ring modulator and slow attack. Both combos offer 18 adjustable effect types.

Built-in memory allows the user to save up to 10 custom effect combinations or patches. A patch combines effects and modelling selections. Preset patches are also built-in that simulate classic amplifier tones. With the optional FS-01 footswitch the user can switch between two effects patches. The Fire-15 has 10 user/10 preset patches while the Fire-30 offers 10 user/20 preset patches. The Fire-30 also features an independent control section for delay and reverb effects, a type/time control to alter the type and duration of the effect and a modulation control that allows the user to control the intensity of modulation effects with the turn of a dial.

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

Gibson SmartWood Les Paul Studio



Gibson USA has created a new, full-size Les Paul Studio model in Muir wood as part of its ongoing Les Paul Exotics guitar series. The new guitar reaffirms Gibson's commitment to producing quality instruments that utilize only Forest Stewardship Council and SmartWood Certified Woods. Gibson partnered with the Rainforest Alliance six years ago when it introduced the world's first line of eco-friendly SmartWood guitars.

The SmartWood Studio guitar has a Muiracatiara, or Muir, top and a Mahogany back. Muir grows extensively in Brazil, but ranges from southern Mexico through Central America to the Amazon Basin. The beautiful grain varies from shades of brown to red with irregular stripes that range from dark brown in the heartwood to greyish white in the sapwood. The fingerboard is made of the species Preciosa (Prec) and is inlaid with pearloid dots.

Gibson will produce as many Muir guitars as the company's supply of certified wood will allow. After that, the model will continue with a different exotic wood, and a production will again be limited by the supply of wood.

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



Audio-Technica 5000 and 4000 Wireless Systems

Audio-Technica recently introduced their new 5000 and 4000 Series of wireless microphones, which builds on their line of Artists Elite wired microphones.

The new 5000 and 4000 wireless systems feature true-diversity, frequency-agile operation and are offered in multiple configurations including handheld and UniPak transmitters to suit a variety of applications. Multiple receivers of both series can be linked, and both systems feature IntelliScan frequency selection and dual compansion. In addition, the 5000 Series includes PC- and Mac-compatible control software.

The heart of the 5000 Series is the AEW-R5200 true diversity frequency-agile dual receiver, which comprises two independent receivers in a single full-rack housing. It features 200 selectable UHF channels, which are offered in the range of 655.500 to 680.375 MHz (TV channels 44-49), with an operational range in excess of 300 feet. Receivers may be linked to form a complete system in which the built-in IntelliScan capability can automatically determine and set the best available frequencies on all linked receivers, minimizing interference and intermodulation. An AC pass-through system allows multiple receivers to be powered using only one outlet. Receivers also include Ethernet ports, enabling monitoring of system parameters via the included Mac or PC software. Dual-band compander circuitry compresses and expands low- and high-frequency audio signals separately, minimizing artifacts such as pumping and breathing and maximizing audio quality. The digital ToneLock squelch system ignores RF that does not carry the wanted signal's unique signature. A digital ID signal carried by the frequency-modulated audio conveys transmitter information back to the receiver. An external mute switch jack provides the capability to mute the system quickly and easily.

The 4000 Series feature a half-rack receiver, the AEW-R4100, with frequency-agile operation over the same channels as the AEW-R5200. It also includes two independent RF sections for true diversity operation. The AEW-R4100 has the same IntelliScan capability for optimum frequency selection on all linked receivers. Dual compander circuitry is included, along with the digital ToneLock squelch system for rejection of unwanted RF. The 4000 Series receivers may be linked with one or several 4000 or 5000 Series receivers and may be monitored by the 5000 Series system software.

For more information, contact: Audio-Technica US Inc., 1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH 44224 (330) 686-2600, FAX (330) 686-0719, www.audio-technica.com.



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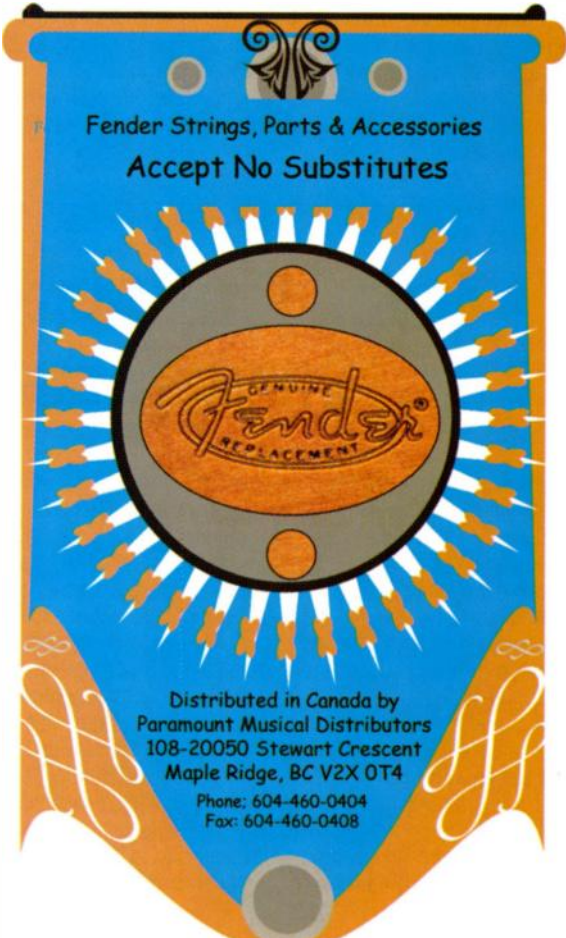
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Yamaha Silent 'Steel' Guitar



Yamaha recently introduced the latest addition to their "silent" family of instruments – the SLG100S Silent Guitar. This is the first time Yamaha has offered a steel-string guitar in its "silent" series.

Like its nylon-stringed counterpart, the SLG100S allows musicians to practice and perform in privacy using headphones and is an ideal choice for students in dorms, apartment and condo dwellers, travelling musicians staying in hotels or even casual hobbyists. Additionally, performing and recording guitar players will find the SLG100S to be a unique tool due in part to its appearance – and the self-contained design that completely eliminates on-stage feedback. The SLG100S features a streamlined appearance, lightweight composite body, Mahogany neck and Rosewood fingerboard plus a pickguard and adjustable rod in the neck.

The SLG100S breaks down quickly for ease of transportation. Electronics include a Piezo in-bridge L.R. Baggs pickup system, and an internal DSP that reproduces the natural-sound reverb of user-selected acoustic spaces. An auxiliary mini-stereo input on the body of the instrument can easily connect to an external CD player or tape machine for practicing or playing along with pre-recorded material. The SLG100S can be plugged into an amplifier or PA system for live performances. Accessories include a gig bag, AC adapter and headphones.

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.

Tascam CD-GT1



Tascam recently introduced their CD-GT1 Portable CD Guitar Trainer. The CD-GT1 is a CD player with a built-in guitar and vocal effects and is a tool for beginning guitarists, vocalists or other musicians looking to improve their performance capabilities. Offering the ability to play along with any standard audio CD, the CD-GT1's 'Slow Speed Audition' function slows down the playback speed (tempo) of the disc by up to 50 per cent without affecting the pitch. Similar to the old technique of manually spinning an LP record to learn licks, this feature is invaluable for beginning guitarist to quickly learn the chops of their favourite performers.

The unit's onboard pitch control makes it easy for musicians to adapt the playback content to their own style. It also includes a footswitch input that can be used to start and stop CDs as well as switch effects, a line input to use its effects to jam along with other audio sources such as cassette decks and a chromatic tuner. With its built-in modelling effects for guitar and vocals, CD-GT1 users can also emulate the tone and feel of the recording they are "jamming" with or learning.

For more information, contact: TEAC Canada Ltd., Tascam, 5935 Wallace St., Mississauga, ON L4Z 1Z8 (905) 890-8008, FAX (905) 890-9888, hbennie@teac-ca.com, www.tascam.com.

Peavey XXX Amp Series



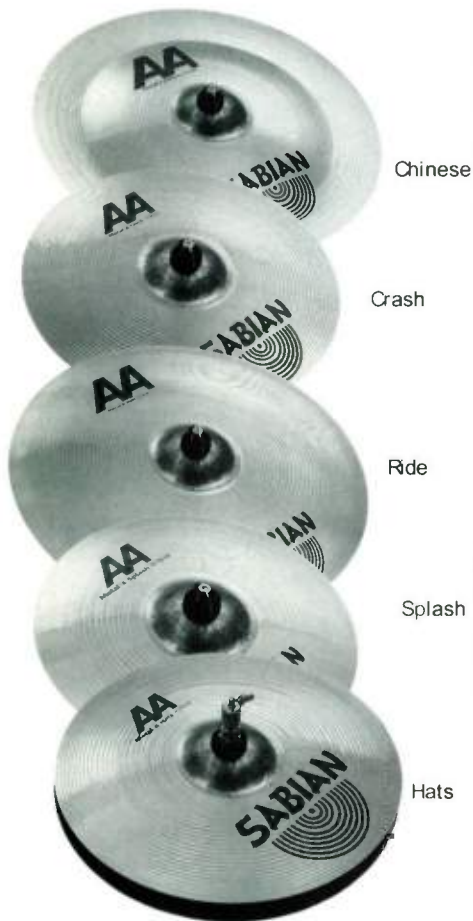
Peavey Electronics Corporation recently introduced three new amplifiers to the Triple XXX Series – the Triple XXX 112, the Triple XXX 40 and the Triple XXX Super 40 EFX.

The new Triple XXX combos are all-tube, high gain amplifiers. Underneath the striking cosmetics are tones such as 'Crunch', 'Ultra' and 'Clean', plus active EQ on the some of the channels. Every Triple XXX comes with long-lasting chrome-plated 12" Triple XXX 30 speakers and an all-tube power amp for that genuine 'push back' tube feel. The series also features the three-setting damping switch, which alters speaker resonance to create tight, medium and loose tones. The amps can also operate using either 6L6GC or EL 35 power amp tubes.

Each of the Triple XXX 112's channels has its own independent 3-band EQ for bottom, body and hair (low, mid, hi) on both the 'Crunch' and 'Ultra' channels. On the Triple XXX Super 40 and Super 40 EFX, the 'Ultra' channel includes bottom, body and edge EQ, while the rhythm/crunch channel includes bass, mid and treble EQ. Both have independent gain and volume controls.

For more information, contact: Peavey Electronics Corporation, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301 (601) 483-5365, FAX (601) 486-1278, info@peavey.com, www.peavey.com.

SABIAN AA Metal-X Cymbals



Cymbal-maker SABIAN has recently unveiled their latest range of cymbals specifically designed for the hardest-hitting, loudest and heaviest of drummers. The AA Metal-X are handcrafted from SABIAN's secret-process B20 bronze, and deliver power through a unique design that focuses on cymbal performance efficiency, as opposed to weight, to create the powerful sound required to cut through loud audio levels.

The new cymbals feature a power-active design for a faster opening, louder and further projection, and extended sustain. As well, the AA Metal-X contain a solid, raw, unlathed bell that increases both volume and explosiveness, yet is pitch compatible with the rest of the cymbal for increased response brightness and tonal consistency.

Polished to a Brilliant Finish, the cymbals are available in 10" and 12" splashes; 14" and 15" hats; 16-20" crashes; 18" and 20" Chinese and 20", 21", 22" and 24" rides. A 'Sonically Matched' Performance Set (14" hats, 16" crash and 20" ride) is also available. All the cymbals are quality-protected by SABIAN's One-Year Warranty Program.

For more information, contact: SABIAN Ltd., 219 Main St., Meductic, NB E6H 2L5 (506) 272-2019, FAX (506) 272-1265, sabian@sabian.com, www.sabian.com.

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hot gear

Ludwig Accent Combo Outfit



Ludwig Drums has recently released the new Accent Combo Outfit, LLR1125RC, for beginner drummers. The entry-level outfit is offered in three wrapped finishes of black, blue and wine. Double brace stands offer durability, while Philippine Mahogany/Juniper shells give the drums a resonant sound quality.

The outfit includes a 16 x 22" bass drum with spurs, a 16 x 16" floor tom with legs, a 6.5 x 14" matching wood snare drum and 12 x 13" and 10 x 12" toms with post style double tom holders. The LR1125RC also includes a set-up video, drumsticks and a drum throne.

For more information, contact: Ludwig Drums, PO Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515 (574) 522-1675, FAX (574) 295-5404, custserv@ludwig-drums.com, www.ludwig-drums.com.

Vestax Solid-State MP3 Player/Controller



Vestax has recently released the DSS-X1 solid-state MP3/AAC player to the DJ market, utilizing compact, affordable SmartMedia memory cards.

The DSS-X1 is a rugged, reliable and versatile DJ-sized (or full-sized) digital playback system able to replay digital audio files recorded in either MP3 or high-quality AAC compression algorithms. Fine pitch control (+/- 10%) is provided, as well as comprehensive play, pause, search and scan functions. Loop sampling is made simple with tap start, exit and end buttons. The unit weighs only 11 lbs. and measures 18.98" (W) x 5.31" (H) x 8.66" (D).

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

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B-52 Pro-Audio and Stealth Series guitar amplifiers are now available in Canada through Intellimix. B-52 offers more than 100 innovative active and passive speaker systems. Active systems feature B-52's revolutionary 1200-watt digital amplifiers that only weigh 6 lbs.

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M-Audio OmniStudio USB

M-Audio recently released its OmniStudio USB – a complete USB audio/MIDI studio interface featuring more connectivity, flexibility and functionality than many other USB audio products.

OmniStudio combines two of M-Audio's previous products, the Quattro USB and the Omni Studio. The 4 x 4 architecture is software configurable for 4 x 4 operation at 16 bits, or 2 x 4 or 4 x 2 operation at 24 bits, thereby getting the most out of the bandwidth available via the USB specification. The unit sports an on-board mixer along with numerous connections for auxiliary I/O, effects sends/returns, monitoring and more. It's designed for both mobile and desktop operation and includes detachable rackmount ears.

The first two inputs of OmniStudio USB feature Neutrik connectors to accept both XLR and balanced 1/4" TRS microphone and instrument inputs, each complete with M-Audio's preamp technology, switchable phantom power, gain control knob (up to 66dB), 20dB pad switch, 1/4" inserts and signal present/clip LED. Two additional balanced 1/4" TRS line inputs with selectable +4dBu/-10dBV operation levels also route to the A/D converter.

Zero-latency direct monitoring of all four inputs is available, complete with individual mix level controls that are independent of record levels. Switches control direct monitoring and mono/stereo mode for each stereo pair. Four stereo aux inputs on pairs of 1/4" TRS jacks provide direct zero-latency monitoring of the connected signals to the output bus or can be routed to the A/D converters for recording outboard sound modules and other line-level signals.

For more information, contact: M-Audio Canada, 1400 St. Jean Baptiste Ave., #150, Québec City, PQ G2E 5B7 (418) 872-0444, FAX (418) 872-0034, info@m-audio.ca, www.m-audio.ca.



Mark Tremonti Power Wah



Morley has recently unleashed its Mark Tremonti Power Wah, which they created in conjunction with the guitarist to make the "perfect blend of modern and classic wah tones."

This power Wah lets you dial in a full 20dB of Wah boost that puts you centre stage during your performance. The Wah pitch, sweep and "Q" are set to Mark's specifications. It features switchless design – simply step on it to engage the Wah, and step off to go to bypass.

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

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hot gear

Shure PSM 200 Personal Monitor Systems



Shure Incorporated has recently released the Affordable PSM 200 Personal Monitor Systems, an inexpensive in-ear monitor system that offers both Shure's quality as well as a number of innovative new features for musicians who need to keep a close eye on their bottom lines.

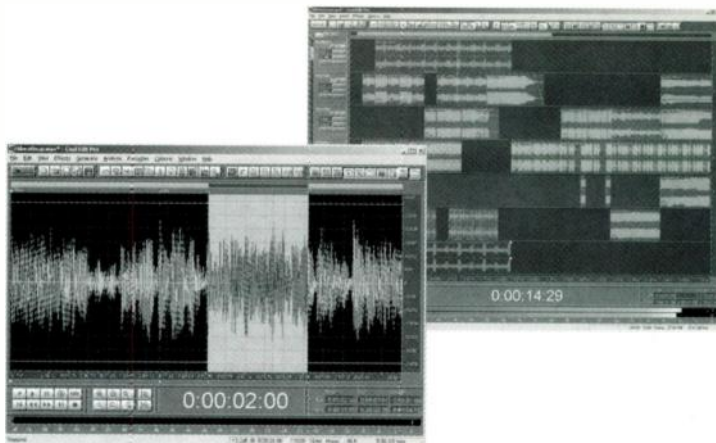
The P2R Hybrid Receiver is perfect for users that can't initially afford wireless, but may wish to upgrade in the future. The P2R Hybrid Receiver is a dual-function receiver that operates as a wired and wireless bodypack and features a built-in limiter to aid in hearing protection; LED indicators for power, radio frequency signal strength, frequency, limiter and battery level; volume control; an integrated cable management system; and a ¼" line input jack for connecting monitor mixes, click tracks or effects. The receiver will operate for up to six hours, volume dependant, on a standard 9 V battery.

The P2T TransMixer combines frequency-agile wireless transmitter functionality and a 2-channel mixer to offer the user complete control of the in-ear mix right on the stage. Features include eight channels per system, up to four simultaneous compatible systems, a range of 100 m (300 ft.) under optimal conditions, LED indicators for input level and frequency, volume controls for mic/line inputs, integrated mix control with two mic/line XL-¼" combo input channels for personal control and XLR split outputs that connect signals to a mixing console over other device without affecting original signals.

The E2 Earphone offers in-ear, high fidelity sound; isolation to help keep what is heard on-stage under control and interchangeable flex and foam sleeves to give you the perfect fit. The PSM 200 is available as a complete system or as individual components, making it easy to design a system custom fitted for specific needs.

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

Cool Edit Pro 2.0



Syntrillium Software has announced the release of Cool Edit Pro 2.0. The updated software offers a host of new features, including real-time effects and track EQ, Disk-At-Once (DAO) CD burning and MIDI and video support.

The software's new real-time effects and EQ features allows users to add any of the more than 40 supplied DSP or any third-party DirectX effects as well as EQ on the fly, as opposed to applying the settings once the recording process is complete.

Cool Edit Pro's new DAO CD burning capabilities allow all the tracks for a disk to be written at one time rather than individually, eliminating the requirement for silent gaps between tracks. The new version has also included limited MIDI and video support, MTC "master" generation and loop-based music composition, and a compressed loop file format, offering a wide-range of features and functionality at a low price point.

For more information, contact: Thinkware Canada Inc., 109 Woodbine Downs Blvd., #12, Etobicoke, ON M9W 6Y1 (416) 798-4293, FAX (416) 798-1755, ddriscoll@thinkware.com, www.thinkware.com.

Hohner XB-40 Harmonica



Not since the introduction of the chromatic harmonica in the 1920s has there been such a innovative development in harmonica design as Hohner's new XB-40. Created by Hohner's Rick Epping, the XB-40 allows the player complete bending freedom with 10 holes and 40 reeds, permitting a level of expression and note bending capability never before possible on any harmonica.

The XB-40 overcomes traditional note-bending limitations by incorporating an additional set of reeds, tuned so that all 20 of the harmonica's notes can be bent using the standard blues harp bending technique. Using a system of patented valve chambers, the auxiliary reeds only come into play during note bending. This design allows the player to achieve a complete chromatic scale, and offers multiple ways to play most notes.

For more information, contact: Hohner, Inc./HSS, 1000 Technology Park Dr., Glen Allen, VA 23059 (804) 515-1900, FAX (804) 515-0347, jcossaboon@hohnerusa.com, www.hohnerusa.com.

Roland V-Synth



Roland recently announced the release of its next-generation synthesizer, the V-Synth.

This 61-note instrument uses multiple oscillator technologies powered by VariPhrase technology – including user sampling – to create new sounds with independent control over a waveform's pitch, time and formant. Flexible COSM filtering, an advanced arpeggiator and a host of real-time controllers give musicians unlimited control over their sounds.

The V-Synth is based on two variable oscillators that use three sound generation techniques. The PCM oscillator uses Roland's VariPhrase technology for independently manipulating the pitch, time and formant of the over 300 preset or user-sampled waveforms. A new 'Time Trip' function gives users the freedom to experiment with a waveform's time aspect – speeding a waveform up, slowing it down or freezing it at any point.

Analog modelling is the second oscillator type, which

provides nine traditional waveforms, strengthened with Roland's latest modelling technology to sound even more fat and warm than ever. The third oscillator type is 'External Audio Processing', which allows any external sound to be used as a synth waveform. All oscillator types can be mixed and layered in several ways, or modulated using FM, ring mod and hard sync to create sound never heard before.

The V-Synth's sound engine can be configured in several different ways by choosing from preset structure types – just like a semi-modular synth. Front panel structure buttons make for easy use while a host of knobs, sliders and buttons offer direct access to vital sound parameters. More detailed parameters can be edited quickly using the large touchscreen, which also responds to dragging motions.

V-Synth also features twin 'D Beams' that make it easy to modify a range of controllers using

infrared light beams. An arpeggiator creates instant phrases and motifs and can be used to modulate sound parameters.

Analog and digital I/O is offered, and allows users to exchange .wav/aiff files via the built-in USB port, which also works for MIDI. All preset patches are fully re-writable and sounds can also be saved via USB to a computer or to an optional PC card. V-Synth also features Roland's V-LINK technology through which users can trigger and manipulate video clips using the unit's keyboard, bender and Time Trip Pad when used in conjunction with Edirol's DV-7PR. Other connections include a stereo mic/line input, stereo main and direct outputs, coaxial and optical digital I/O, a stereo headphone jack, two control pedal jacks, MIDI in/out/thru, and a USB port.

For more information, contact: Roland Canada Music Ltd., 5480 Parkwood Way, Richmond, BC V6V 2M4 (604) 270-6626, FAX (604) 270-6552, info@roland.ca, www.roland.ca.



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background picture: Paul-Jon Bakker (Kane)

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Multitone combo

Multitone Top + TS212R1

Multitone Top + TS412BL

Powerzone Top + TS412BL-SL on TS412BL-S7



Marshall Mode Four Amp

Marshall Amplification has recently announced the release of the Mode Four family of products, consisting of the MF350 Head (350 W) and four 4 x 12" speaker cabinets. Drawing on over 40 years of experience in amplifier design, as well as the latest innovations in valve, solid-state and digital technologies, Marshall's R&D engineers have created the hybrid MF350 head featuring high gain, expanded headroom and a low-end response capable of accommodating popular dropped tuning styles.

The Mode Four features a "two amplifiers in one" design – AMP 1 and AMP 2 – which both offer two footswitchable modes that provide the player a total of four options. AMP 1 is the classic amp, providing Clean and Crunch modes, while AMP 2 is a high-gain modern amp with OD1 and OD2 modes.

A fan-cooled power amp section in the Mode Four recreates the warm, musical feel of an all-valve power amp in either configuration, delivering 350 W into 8 ohms. The amp's user-friendly Master Section is located directly in the middle of the amplifier to separate AMP 1 and AMP 2 controls

and eliminate any possible confusion between each amp's controls. The MF350's two channels feature independent Scoops buttons and controls for Volume, Gain, Bass, Middle and Treble. AMP 2 also features a three-way Tone Matrix control that reconfigures the mids.

The family's four specially-designed 4 x 12" cabinets (two angled, two straight), each of which are over 3" taller than Marshall's traditional 4 x 12" cabinets, a feature which helps to enhance and compliment the aggressive bottom-end capabilities of the MF350 head. Both the MF280A (angled) and MF280B (straight) cabinets are designed to be used in a full-stack configuration and are loaded with four custom-voiced, 16 ohm, 70-watt 12" Celestion/Marshall "Vintage 30MF" speakers. The MF400A and MF400B cabinets are designed for half-stack operation and come loaded with four custom-voiced, 8 ohm, 100-watt 12" Celestion Marshall speakers.

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.



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*Chris Thorsteinson
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MSS3CP-BLK

EV N/D367a & N/D967 Reissued

Electro-Voice has recently reintroduced two of their vocal microphones, the N/D367a Vocal mic and the N/D967 Dynamic Supercardioid Concert Vocal mic, due to continued interest and demand from customers for these models.

The N/D367a is best known for its ability to hand female vocals. A tight cardioid pick-up pattern, specially tailored frequency response and low handling noise allow the nuances of any voice to get to the front of the mix. The unit offers a sensitivity in the 1-2 kHz region, with a smooth, controlled response above 2 kHz. The N/D367s features an on/off switch, durable construction and a multi-stage shockmount.

The N/D967 is specifically designed for applications where vocal power and clarity are essential, and features an exclusive, low-profile grille that puts the performer's voice as close as possible to the microphone element – causing the mic to pick up more of the singer's voice and less of everything else. This allows the mic to boast a remarkable gain-before-feedback as well as superb performance in high SPL environments.

For more information, contact: Telex Communications, Inc., 12000 Portland Ave. S., Burnsville, MN 55337 (952) 736-3901, FAX (952) 736-4582, franck.fabry@telex.com, www.electrovoice.com



N/D367a

N/D967

American Woman Overdrive Pedal



Tech 21 has recently given musicians the ability to easily recreate the tone of one of the most recognized guitar solos in the history of rock – the American Woman Overdrive Pedal. Developed at the suggestion of Randy Bachman after he purchased Tech 21's SansAmp PSA-1 preamp/direct recording processor, which includes a preset named in honour of the famed song by The Guess Who.

To design the pedal, Tech 21 worked with Bachman to capture his entire chain: '59 Les Paul going through amps, mikes, compressors and tape compression. The "overdrive" pedal is an interesting compliment to Bachman who originally coined the term "overdrive" when naming his band Bachman Turner Overdrive.

The American Woman pedal includes Drive, Gate, Tone and Level controls. Using just the right balance of odd and even harmonics, the unit recreates the cascading effect of two different amplifiers, including preamp and power amp stages. Additionally, the pedal can be cleaned up for semi-dirty and warm blues sounds. Other features include a 1 mega-ohm high impedance ¼" output and a smooth, silent-switching custom actuator.

For more information, contact: MOL Marketing Solutions, 1425 Benvenuto Ave., Brentwood Bay, BC V8M 1J5 (800) 992-7845, FAX (800) 992-0015, info@molmarketing.net, www.molmarketing.net.



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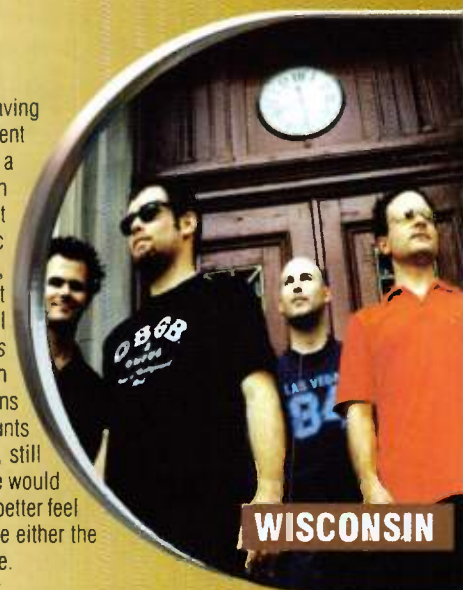
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Wisconsin

Who: Wisconsin
Where: Brantford, ON
What: Melodic Alternative Rock
Contact: Hype Music, (905) 275-9613, GR8PR@aol.com

Wisconsin is the cream of the crop of the Brantford, ON music scene. Despite having known one another since their high school days, it took close to a decade for the current five-man formation to solidify. Their first full-length release *Rhymes Without Reason* is a self-funded, independent release being distributed by Universal Music. Wisconsin won the distribution contract when they were named the 'Best Unsigned Band in Canada' at NXNE 2001. Their guitar-driven rock has won Wisconsin several other independent music competitions over the last few years. Wisconsin members, Paul Harris (vocals/guitar), Ernie Meggison (guitar/vocals), Chris Amey (bass), Jeff Melick (guitar/vocals) and Robert Chowhan (drums), list The Doughboys and Foo Fighters as a couple of their musical influences. It's not difficult to hear these influences in many of the songs on *Rhymes Without Reason*, but Wisconsin still has its own personality. If anything, their approach is a bit more on the melodic side. No wonder the band has been so successful in competitions and their CD is proof that these guys can play. *Rhymes Without Reason* is on all accounts an excellent recording, but the musicians, who are obviously their own worst critics, still admit to wanting to be even more prepared next time. As bassist Chris Amey put it, "We would spend more time on pre-production, so fewer things are figured out on the fly. You get a better feel and performances if things have been worked out well in advance." It's hard to imagine either the feel or performances on *Rhymes Without Reason* being any better than they already are.



Ritual

Who: Ritual
Where: Cornwall, ON
What: Alternative/Metal
Contact: Ritual, www.RitualNet.com

The release of their self-titled CD last June was an epiphany of sorts for Cornwall, Ontario's Ritual. The recording marked the band's bold return from a three-year hiatus. Since then, Ritual has already seen a couple of songs off the new CD rise to the top of polls on well-known indie music Internet sites. The band has also had one song from the CD used in the American television series *Witch Blade* and another in a radio commercial for Pontiac. There is no doubt that metal is what lies at the core of Ritual's music. The songs off the new CD feature well-pounded drums, unison of thumping bass and overdriven guitar, and vocals screamed to the point of natural distortion. It's not difficult to believe that Helmet, Queens of the Stone Age and Black Sabbath share a dominant place on Ritual's CD rack. Ritual's self-titled CD was tracked using Steinberg's Nuendo software at Distortion Studios in Ottawa, mixed at the Park Studios in Los Angeles and Mastered at Metalworks Studio in Toronto. The recording was essentially self-produced by the band members, with some help from their soundman and friends. One thing the band is considering doing differently next time around is to save some money by tracking songs themselves. The members of Ritual, Sean Harley, Jason Collis, Joel Labrosse and Daryl Kiviaho, handle all promotion and publicity for the band themselves. The success they have had in selling their music in innovative ways has proved the effectiveness of their methods.



Chris Colepaugh and the Cosmic Crew

Who: Chris Colepaugh and the Cosmic Crew
Where: Moncton, NB
What: Blues Jam Fusion
Contact: Monarch Music, (506) 863-3980, www.colepaugh.com

Since the release of their latest recording *Trip*, things have been going extremely well for Chris Colepaugh and the Cosmic Crew. They were recently featured and nominated for 'Rock Artist of the Year' at last year's East Coast Music Awards. The band was also a finalist in the CBC's Great Canadian Music Dream. They also had a song selected to be a part of the Great Canadian Talent Search compilation CD through a contest run by *Canadian Musician*. Singer/guitarist Chris Colepaugh and bassist/singer Lynn Daigle have been with the band since its inception in 1996. Since that time the band has seen more drummers come through its ranks than Spinal Tap. Colepaugh, originally a drummer, decided to solve this problem on *Trip* by playing the drum parts himself — he clearly hasn't lost his touch. As talented a multi-instrumentalist as Colepaugh may be, he's no acrobat. The band uses drummer Remi Borque for live performances.

Chris Colepaugh and the Cosmic Crew definitely hail from a purer era of rock. Their funky blues style is not a far throw from better-known jam bands like Phish, Blues Traveller and the Grateful Dead. As they have yet to receive the right offer, Chris Colepaugh and the Cosmic Crew are happy to keep full independent control of their creative future. But as bassist Lynn Daigle put it, "As soon as a label offers us a good deal and a solid team to work with, then we would definitely consider relinquishing some of our control." One thing the band has learned over the years is how to actively promote itself. As Lynn Daigle put it, "Time runs out very quickly with a new release on the independent level. Funding dries up and the industry gets hooked on the next new thing. Get it out, get it heard and get it going!"

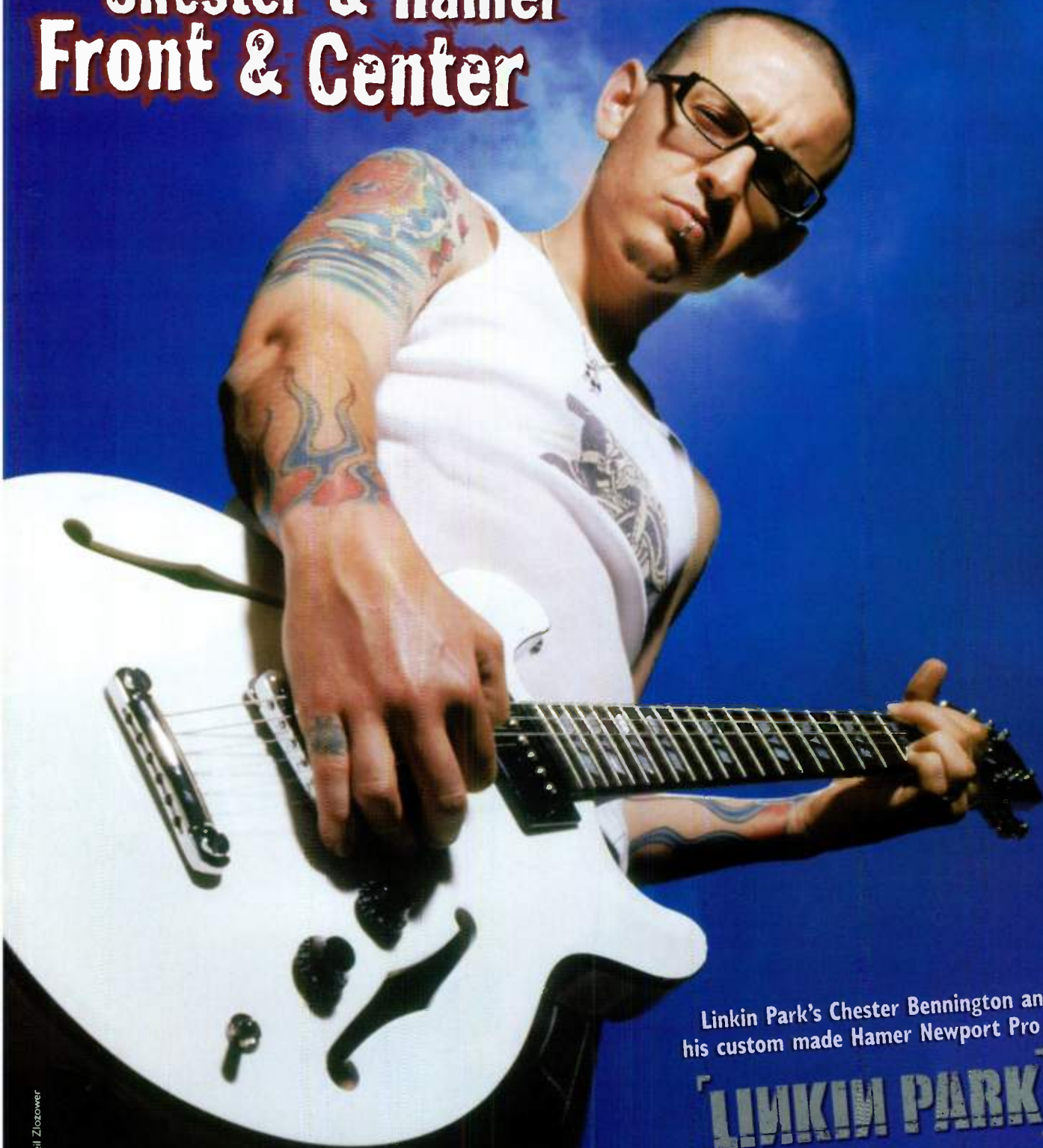


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