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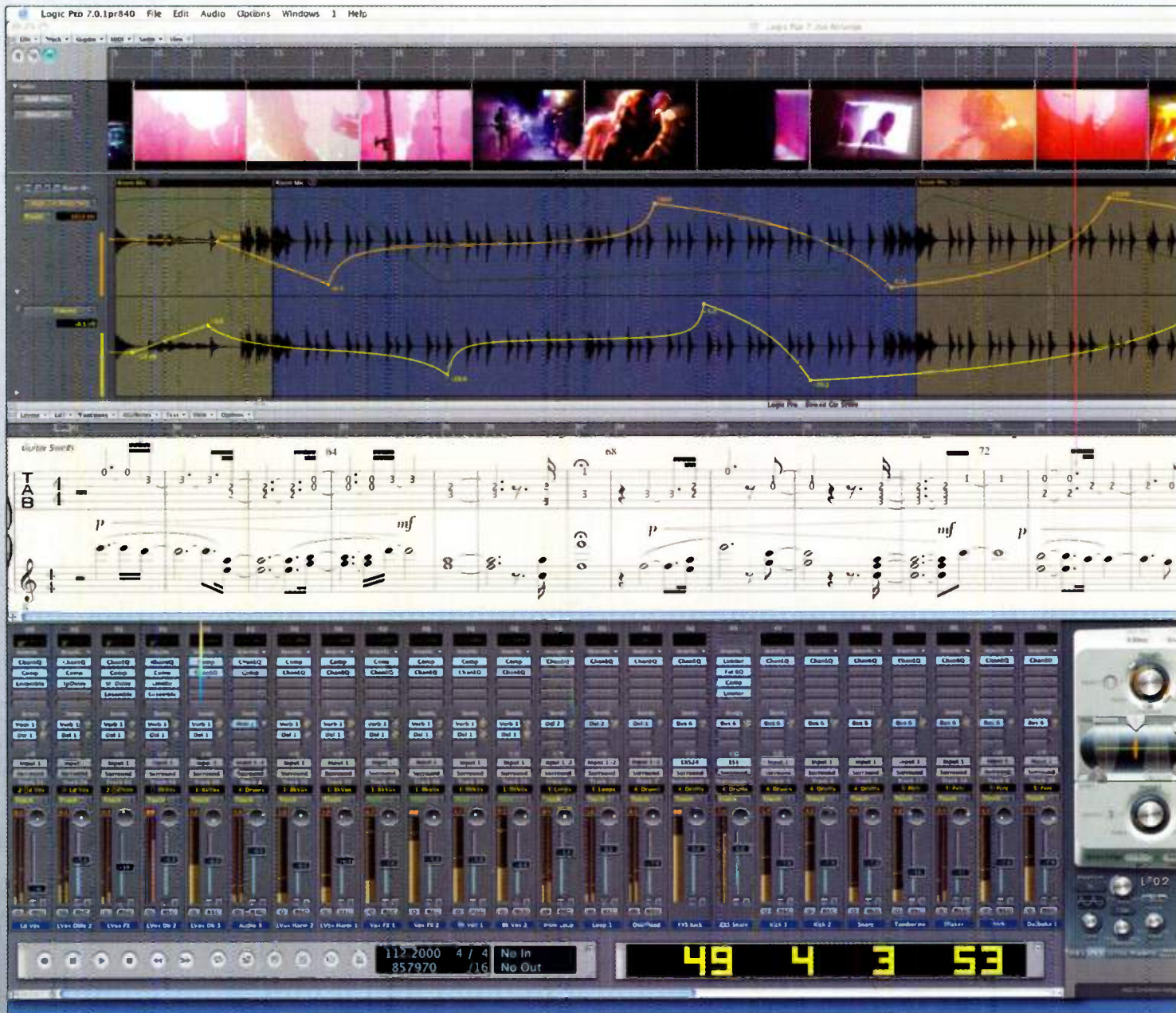
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Pictured: Ian Thornley of the band Thornley

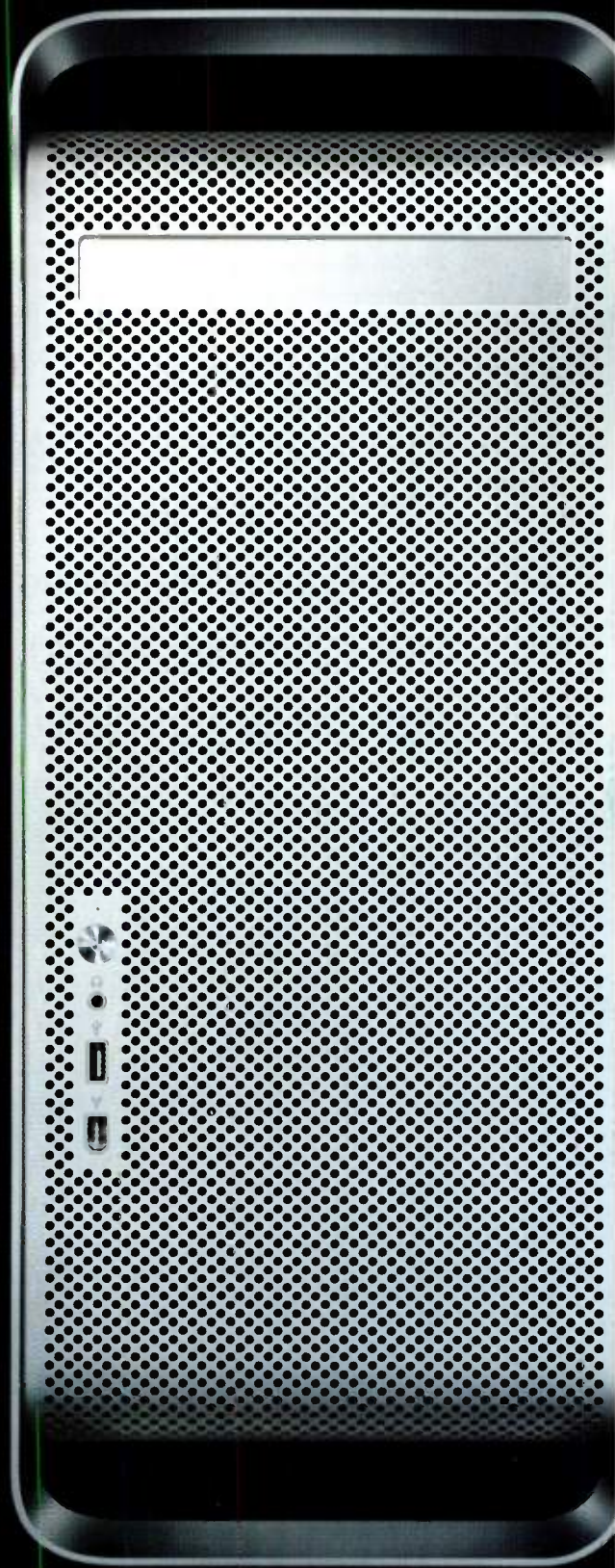


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World Radio History

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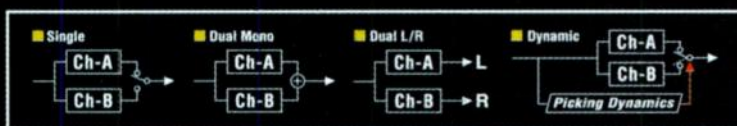


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Producer's Input Required

Dear CM,

I have been a subscriber for a year now and truly enjoy everything about your magazine. I rely on it to give me a vital Canadian perspective of the recording industry. I write to suggest an additional component to the magazine that I believe would be informative, educational, helpful, and entertaining to your readers in general – that being a small section and/or a column regarding a "Producers Note" (you could even title it that). Here is an example, after just reading "Make & Sell Your Own Record" (March/April 2005 issue), note in a small box some key technical information: e.g. so and so used an Fairlight MFX3+ recorder with and vocal mic Neumann U47, API preamp, Mogami cables, or whatever else, and perhaps an explication on how things were used and for what specifically. Just small side notes would be sufficient enough to be enlightening to readers as to just how artists are actualizing their ideas into format.



I know these notes may not be applicable to every issue and that CM is not *Mix*, however it would fit in nicely and those who know of these types of technical things stay better informed and those who don't are encouraged and lifted up another level of understanding that they inevitably need to learn by virtue of interest in this field. No one would be talked to over their head only encouraged to learn more about what makes the art of making a recording artist career tick. Thank you for your time.

Kindest regards from,

Paul Thomson,
Windsor, ON

**Ed. Thanks for the suggestion Paul. Could be a good idea ... we'll see. Regarding including technical information, that particular article wasn't designed to go into that much detail. We do – sometimes annually – print feature articles on home recording techniques, which definitely offers the details you're asking for. You may even see one in an issue later this year...*

Weighted Keyboards A Necessity

Dear CM,

I read with great interest the article "Selecting The Right Keyboard", written by Kevin Young, as I too am asked time and time again to recommend a "keyboard". Usually coming from parents who want their child to start piano lessons or from adults with a new interest, my advice remains the same. What I tell folks, and what was missing from Kevin's article, was the importance of a weighted, "full size" keyboard. With the exception of an acoustic "real" piano, the keyboard can quite often be nothing more than plastic keys, undersized, with no apparent "response" from pressure or velocity.

For anyone starting out on keyboards and considering anything other than an acoustic piano, I feel that a full size, weighted keyboard is mandatory. My advice usually steers them away from purchasing a "real" piano (upright etc.) and to consider a used electronic piano, from the makers of Roland or Yamaha that feature a proper keyboard. In my opinion, portable keyboards take up less space, usually accommodate headphones (trust me, this is a good thing!) and are easier to unload if change of mind requires selling the instrument. You are also void of the maintenance required on an acoustic piano. Testament to my advice are the hundreds and hundreds of neglected upright pianos, sitting in homes that folks can't even give away! The skills of playing piano demand dexterity and strength from ones fingers that can only come from a true weighted keyboard.

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No Support For Dual Disc

by Tim Sweeney

While many artists claim they are only artists and want to focus on that aspect of their careers, it is time that you have to focus on the business side of your art and how by doing this, you will generate more income to make your music your full time focus. With this in mind, the first thing you need to learn is what every successful business person already knows, cutting your expenditures may save you some money but it won't make you profitable in the manner you want it to. To be profitable in the way you are envisioning it right now, your business and marketing plans can not solely focus on selling CDs at shows or online. To be profitable in this new era of the music business you must develop new product that is in essence "custom designed" for your audience. To the major labels this means the backing and endorsing of the new Dual Disc format. (CD on one side and DVD on the other). Unfortunately for the major labels, which are imploding at a much faster pace than they thought, this will prove to be another mistake.

This mistake is the same one repeated by thousands of artists every year. The basic problem with the Dual Disc format is the same as having only one CD to sell. Once your audience has bought your one piece of product, what else can you sell them? Nothing! This is why I am not endorsing the Dual Disc format.

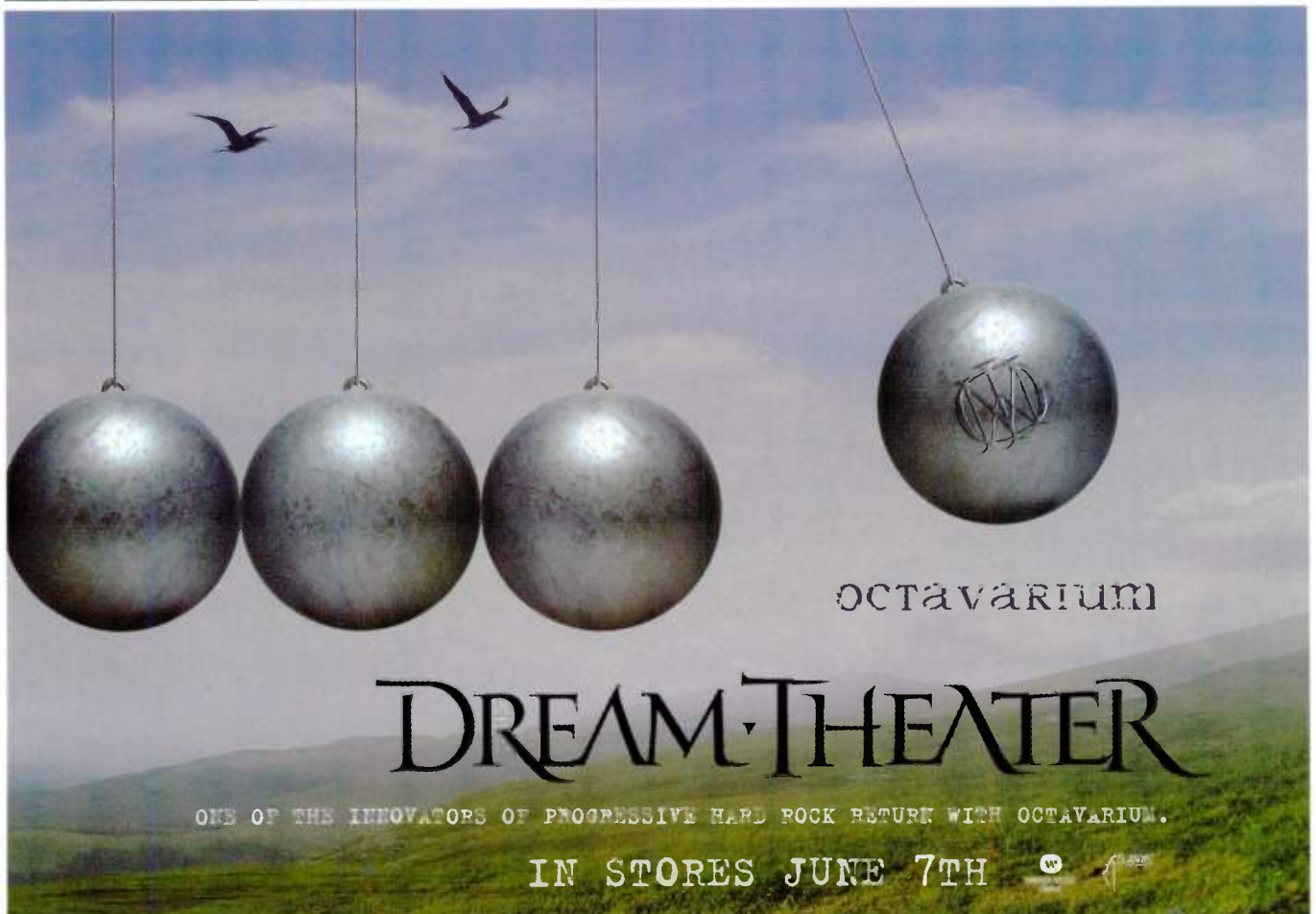
In lieu of jumping into the Dual Disc format that isn't going to sell the existing CDs you have sitting on the floor in your house, you will be developing a new catalog of product that won't cost you thousands of dollars to develop. I am teaching artists how to sell their existing and new live CDs along side the DVDs of their live shows they will be videotaping. In short, the new generation of independent artists will have product that is created on demand that will consist of your studio and live CDs and DVDs of your live shows, tours and even mini-documentaries on yourself and your music.

This new product design will allow you to sell specially designed product to your existing fans that come to shows but more importantly, dramatically increase the product sales to those that are not coming and future fans you haven't even met yet. It will also help you get the attention of booking agents, club bookers, festival directors and talent buyers more effectively than a press kit or an EPK.

While the major labels have started their new quest for bands that can sell 150,000 units of their first label release (while most of their artists can't even sell 10,000 units), most of their artists will fail because of one specific reason. They are so focused on getting radio airplay (which is not generating more CD sales than live shows) that they are not communicating or understanding who their fans are. With that in mind, their careers and their art are lost.

Your first step in creating this new product is to write out everything you know about your current fans. Their age, gender, what they like and don't, etc. Then take your existing art and develop some custom product that you can burn on demand or make in limit quantities.

Tim Sweeney is a musician and writer who can be found online at www.TSAMusic.com.



Building & Continuing Relationships

As we all know, we have a much easier time building and continuing a relationship with someone when we can meet with them in person. When we can't, staying in touch by phone is the next best thing. But as your mailing list grows to hundreds or thousands of people, meeting with them in person or calling them before your upcoming show isn't possible. However reliable or not* (see below), e-mail becomes one of the only options we have left. With that in mind, here is something to think about.

According to our research, most artists only get 3 per cent of their mailing list to come to their live shows. Why is this?

While schedule, location, day and time play a role, the biggest factor in whether or not your fans come to your next show is the question of why should they. The fact that you have a new CD or you want as many people at your next show as possible is not a great motivation for them or interesting enough. To make your next show announcement more effective focus on the following.

We all receive a lot of e-mail and regular mail. The most effective is the kind that seems to "talk to us." It focuses on something that we are interested in. The same has to be true with your e-mail. For example, what will they learn from you at your next show? Are you going to talk about the topics and ideas in your songs? What kind of experience are they going to have? Are they going to meet new people they can go to future shows with and hang out?

You are the motivating factor why people come to your shows! They want to hang out and talk with you. They want to connect with you.

With that in mind, try this strategy. Plan a pre-show meeting at a restaurant or bar or at the venue itself and invite people to come a couple of hours early to hang out with you! Talk with them about who you are as an artist and what you are doing with your music. Talk about the ideas in your songs. Learn about them and what attracts them to your music. Build a bond with them before the show and you will see two new results. One, they will buy more CDs after your show because they are more connected with you. Two, they will want to bring their friends to future shows since they have this new relationship with you.

When your fan base gets to be more than you can personally interact with, email is one of the only solutions to let people know about your upcoming shows. To get more people to turn off their televisions and leave the house to come see you, you have to give them more of a reason than you are performing. Help them see the value and benefit in coming to your show!

Tim Sweeney is a musician and writer who can be found online at www.TSAMusic.com.

Charity Pays!

Looking for a way to add hundreds of new people to your mailing list in one day? One way is to play charity events. Most charitable events need live entertainment. Offer to play their fundraising or national events for free for their large audience of supporters. This is a great way to meet people and establish a new relationship with them over an issue you are passionate about as well.

The artists I work with get hundreds of new fans on their mailing list and they also sell boxes of their CDs at these events! By offering to sell your CDs at the event and splitting the money with the charity or by having the charity give away your CDs as a premium which they buy from you, you will make a lot more money than if they paid you to play.

Playing at charity events is a great way to show people your musical talent, make new fans and support a good cause. (Plus sell out of the CDs sitting on the floor of your apartment!)

Tim Sweeney is a musician and writer who can be found online at www.TSAMusic.com.



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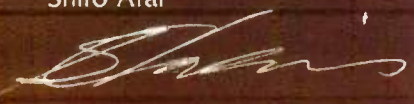
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changes

Fourth Annual National Jazz Awards Coming To Toronto

On Tuesday, June 21, the annual National Jazz Awards will be celebrating both Canadian jazz musicians and its fourth year.

There are 25 different categories of which musicians have been nominated, and fans can vote for their favourites online. Winners will be applauded at Toronto's Phoenix Concert Theatre within the Mardi Gras theme. Participants will feel a mix of being on New Orleans' Bourbon Street and 1800's Paris.

Some of the categories include Jazz Journalist of the Year, Jazz Broadcaster of the Year, Jazz Festival of the Year, Jazz Producer of the Year and International Musician of the Year. There will also be a special Lifetime Achievement Award and tribute to guitarist Dominic Troiano, former member of James Gang and Guess Who. Rik Emmett will accommodate his performance on trumpet, as well as Jeff Healey and others.

Hosting the event will be performers Heather Bambrick and Joe Sealy. Performers are Emilie-Claire Barlow, Coral Egan, David Braid Sextet, Marc Jordan, Jane Bunnett, Swamparella, Fortin and Leveille Donato Nasturica Quartet and P.J. Perry.

A dinner reception will be held at 6 p.m. and the awards show will run from 8 to 11 p.m. Tickets are \$65 for general admission and \$95 for cafe seating and dinner. They are available through Ticketmaster at (416) 870-8000 or online at www.ticketmaster.ca.

For more information, contact the National Jazz Awards (416) 533-4883, www.nationaljazzawards.com.

Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival

The 19th annual TD Canada Trust Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival is scheduled to run from Friday June 24th to Sunday July 3rd, 2005.

With more than 30 venues scheduled to participate throughout downtown Toronto, the festival will showcase both Canadian and International musicians. More than 1,500 musicians are expected to perform, with styles including traditional, fusion, blues, bebop, and much more.

Fans from all around the world are expected to experience the 19th annual festival. Hundred of thousands of fans from around the world are likely to experience performances at the main stage, in concert halls, free indoor and outdoor stages, clubs, hotels, and lounges.

The mainstage will be located at Nathan Philips Square, which is a weather protected 1,000-seat licensed exhibition area. The mainstage will have free performances during the day and ticketed evening events.

Performances from singer, songwriter, and pianist Diana Krall are schedule for The Hummingbird Centre June 27th and 28th, 2005.

In addition to the great sounds of jazz, the festival will also house an arts and crafts exhibitor, which will feature Canadian artists, crafts, designers and holistic practitioners.

Last year's festival featured more than 1,400 musicians at 46 venues throughout Toronto's downtown core. A large majority of the performs were Canadian, 85.9%, with other performers from England, France, Holland, Indonesia, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

Musicians like Oscar Peterson, Oliver Jones, George Benson, Wynton Marsalis, Michel Camilo, John Scofield and many more graced last years stage, showing off the 10-day event's calibre.

For more information, visit www.tojazz.com.



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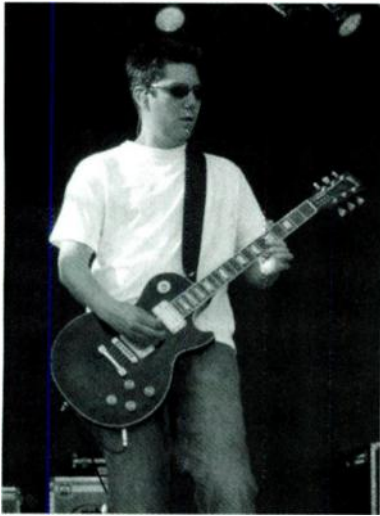
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54-40 Signs With True North Records



Dave Genn - 54-40's new guitarist.

54-40 recently signed with True North Records, Canada's longest running independent music label. The new full-length album *Yes To Everything* is 54-40's 11th full-length studio recording.

Both produced and mixed by Warne Livesey at Bryan Adam's The Warehouse Studio and 54-40's studio The Smilin' Buddha Enjoyment Complex in Vancouver. Warne Livesey is known for his work with artists like The The, Midnight Oil, and Matthew Good.

In addition to the release of their new album, 54-40 announced that guitarist Dave Genn is now officially a permanent member of the group. Phil Comparelli, longtime band-mate and good friend, passed the axe to Dave and gave his blessing.

Dave Genn is best known for his years spent with the Matthew Good Band. From 1995 to 2001 he played guitar, keyboards, and co-wrote many of the Matthew Good Band's hit songs. His resume reads as long as his guitar.

Genn's first Juno award was received for playing/co-writing with punk legend Art Bergmann for *'What Fresh Hell is This?'*. Genn has been playing live shows with 54-40 for two years and played guitar and co-wrote on the new release.

54-40 has penned such international classic as "I Go Blind", "Ocean Pearl" and "Baby Ran." The band is comprised of Neil Osborne, Dave Genn, Matt Johnson, and Brad Merritt.

For more information, visit www.5440.com or www.truenorthrecords.com.

Musician Of The Year Kevin Breit

Recently, the Toronto Musicians' Association presented Kevin Breit, guitarist/songwriter, with the Musician of the Year Award for 2004.

Part of the award reads, "In recognition of outstanding artistic excellence during 2004 and in honour of extraordinary dedication, success on the national and international stage and support for his fellow musicians."

The award recognizes a member of the association each year who has shown significant achievement. In 2004, Breit continually pushed to achieve greater success at both the national and international levels. In addition, he built upon his activities in his group, The Sisters Euclid, his work with international artist Cassandra Wilson, and also his songwriting for other artists, including the celebrated artist Norah Jones.

Breit's discography includes many popular names in the Canadian music scene, including artists like Celine Dion, The Guess Who, Marc Jordan, k.d. lang and many more.

The Toronto Musicians' Association's Musician of the Year Award differs from many other awards because it is not based on public recognition or record sales, but is presented by the members of the Toronto Musicians' Association to one of their colleagues.

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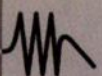
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Humber Songwriting Summer Workshop

Featuring Ed Robertson (Barenaked Ladies), Damhnait Doyle (Shaye), Stan Meissner, Andy Kim and Hayden Neale (Jacksoul), Humber's School of Creative and Performing Arts recently announced The Humber Songwriting Summer Workshop.

The workshop is schedule to run from July 23-29, 2005, and costs \$675 with an additional residency option of \$305.76 for seven nights including breakfast.

The intensive weeklong program is offered through the School of Creative and Performing Arts, Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, in Toronto. It is a learning adventure in songwriting, and is open to all songwriters of any level. From beginners to those with years of experience, there's something for everybody.

Artistic Director of the Humber Songwriting Summer Workshop, Rik Emmett said, "Humber's School of Creative and Performing Arts has a reputation as a place that supports and nourishes the creative spirit. With the songwriting workshop, we reaffirm Humber's leading reputation by providing Canada's established and emerging songwriters with the tools they need to discover their talent and develop their craft."

The workshop features morning, afternoon and evening sessions on various topics including: information on publishing; digital technology and songwriting; applying songwriting skills to soundtrack or scoring work; opportunity to perform at song circles and jam nights; informal trips to some of Toronto's club and a publisher's summit featuring reps from EMI, Sony/BMG, Universal Music, and Peer Music.

There is also an opportunity to win a demo day with Haydain Neale (Jacksoul) at Megawatt Studios.

For more information, contact: (+16) 675-6622 ext.3427, sanja.antic@humber.ca.

Guitar Workshop Plus Provides Lessons

Aspiring musicians of all ages, Guitar Workshop Plus is getting ready for the three upcoming summer sessions held in Oakville and Vancouver.

Each session day will help promote music knowledge in both morning and afternoon classes, late afternoon clinics, ensemble performances and evening concerts. The students will also enjoy the world-class guest artists and will have plenty of opportunities to perform. After spending six days at this session, musicians will have enough ideas and material to last until next year.

The different styles that the students can choose from are rock, blues, jazz, acoustic, classical and an introductory course for beginners. While in class students will practice theory, ear training, rhythm studies and much more. Guitar Workshop Plus also offers comprehensive bass, drums, keyboard and vocal classes.

The hours for the sessions start from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with the nightly concert at 8:30 p.m. The dates start on July 17 to 22, and July 24 to 29, in Oakville's Appleby College and Aug. 15 to 20, in Vancouver's University of British Columbia. For an additional fee, students have the option of staying on campus, a great perk for out-of-towners. Application forms can be downloaded from the site below.

Registration fee is \$35, and tuition for on campus students is \$880 while off campus students pay \$580. Scholarships are available for students to apply. After downloading an application form from the site, the following must be sent in with the form to be considered for evaluation: a full payment or deposit cheque, a letter of intent containing musical interest, musical goals, the reason for applying for the scholarship, a CD or cassette demo with two songs, no longer than 10 minutes, and two letters of reference.

For more information, contact info@guitarworkshopplus.com, or visit www.guitarworkshopplus.com.

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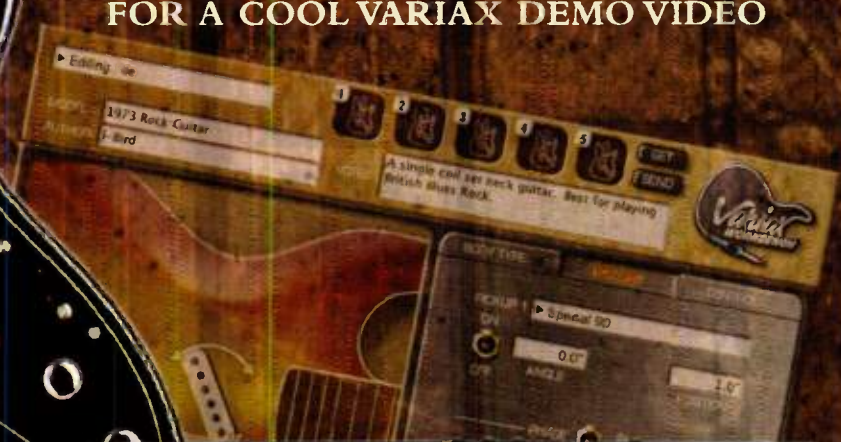
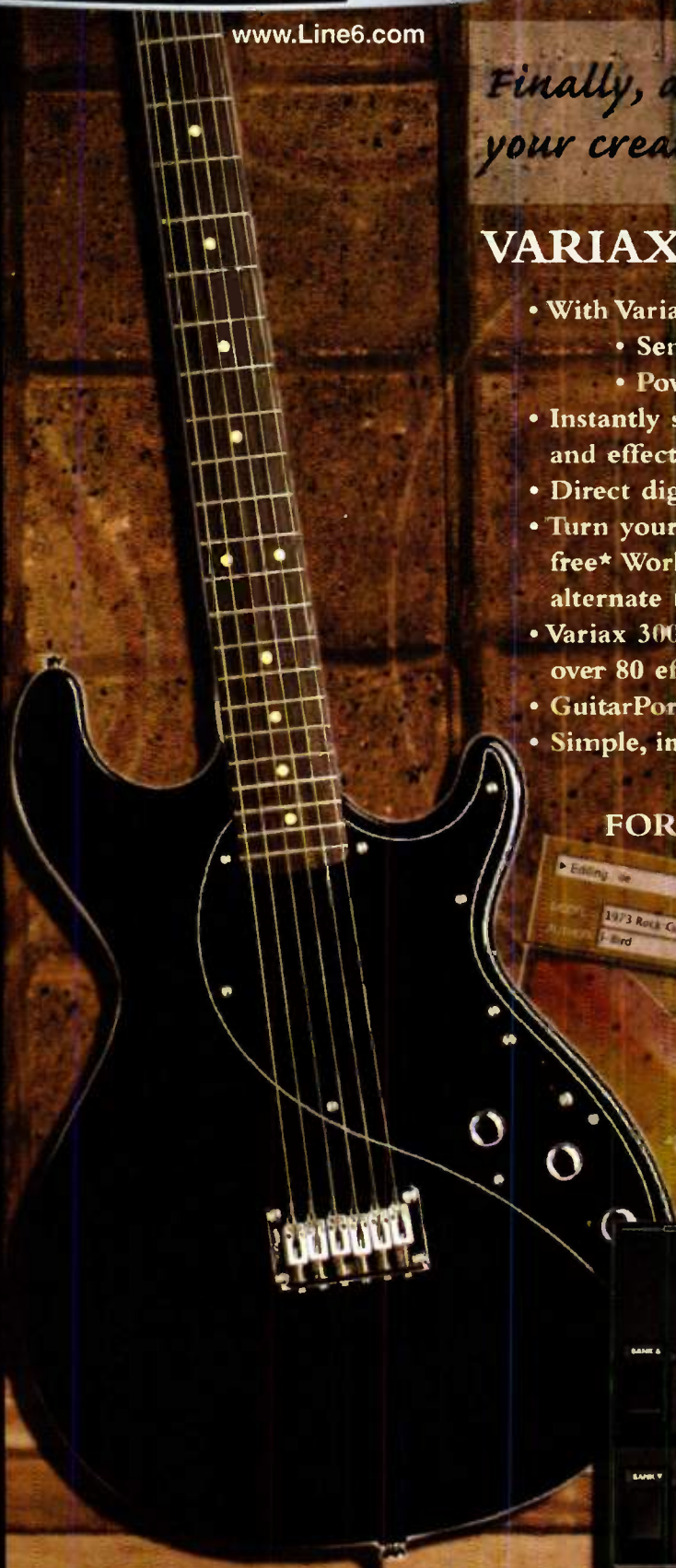
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Orange AD 140 Head and PPC 412c Cabinet

by Mike Turner

Let's get one thing out of the way right now ... this amp looks *really* cool. Orange amps have always had a degree of different to them, from the groovy '60s logo (works great on a T-Shirt!) to the most obvious colour scheme ever, they have always stood a little left of centre from the esthetic of the rest of the guitar amp world.

First let's deal with the head. The AD 140 HTC is a 140-Watt, dual-channel guitar amp. The build quality is really, really good. You won't be finding any plastic components other than the knobs on this amp. The faceplate is steel, the back panel is steel and the head case is heavy plywood wrapped in the signature orange tolex. Inside, wiring is neat and cleanly routed to the PC boards. The transformers (often overlooked even though they're the heart of a great amp) are monsters, big enough to deliver the tone we all associate with good tube gear. All of this adds up to two things, a great quality and really heavy (52 lbs.) head!

The controls are identical on both channels. Bass, middle, treble are all you need for EQ, and gain and volume take care of the preamp (4 12 AX7s) and power amp (4 EL 34s) stages. I have to confess to being a fan of this simple, classic approach, no push-pull knobs, no boost switches, and no EQ shift options, just the basics. My general impression of the amp was that it adhered to the same philosophy shown in its controls, a straightforward classic sounding amp. One characteristic that did stand out was the amount of bottom end the AD 140 puts out; this is one "thumpy" amp. That being said, there's nothing to dislike about a nice, tight, punchy low end!

Channel one is voiced for greater headroom and it delivers admirably on this front. A nice, snappy clean sound is easy to dial in without much fuss. As you bring up the gain into overdrive you get a good amount of crunch while retaining detail. Even wide open (look out, this is a

140-watt amp and it gets pretty damn loud!) channel one doesn't get too saturated but at the extreme it does get a little bit 'loose' in an entirely expectable way. Channel two is voiced for a little more gain and is my fave of the two. A little bit brighter and an earlier

good palette of classic tones to work with.

The cabinet I tested was the PPC412c. Once again the most striking feature is the screaming orange tolex. This combined with the beige basket weave grille make the unmistakable statement that you are a little bit different from the other guys. The PPC412c is loaded with Celestion vintage 30s, (made in the UK, not the "imitation" Chinese vintage '30s Celestion also produces) wired at 16 ohms, has two 1/4" inputs (for daisy chaining a pair to get the full stack) and is rated at a power handling of 240 watts. All of this doesn't come cheap in terms of weight as the cab comes in at a hefty 112 lbs. But then, it's always been true that a good guitar cab is a heavy guitar cab. Having noticed a pronounced low end, I tried a Mesa 4 x 12 with Celestions and quickly confirmed that the extra bottom was coming from the head, not any odd characteristics from the cabinet. I also tried a Peavey 5150 head into the cab and confirmed that it was producing an accurate response. Orange's 4 x 12 is built to stand on its "skids", much like the old Hiwatt cabinets. The theory is that a good connection to the ground/stage aids in definition and bass response. I've noticed this in the past and agree wholeheartedly with them on this front. In the past when a gig was on a tight turnaround I'd leave my cabinets in the wheel trays of their flight cases. This made things quicker for the crew during change over and made everyone else happy. I hated it! Put the cabinets on the floor and you will be happier, I promise!

In closing, the Orange AD 140 HTC is a great sounding, classic rock amp in the best British tradition, but only use all 140 watts at your discretion!

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the amp is \$1,979.95 and for the head, \$3,299.95.

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



breakup mark the sound of this channel. The most obvious layout is channel one for clean/rhythm and channel two for dirty/lead and that works just fine for me! With a couple of nice stomp boxes you've got a

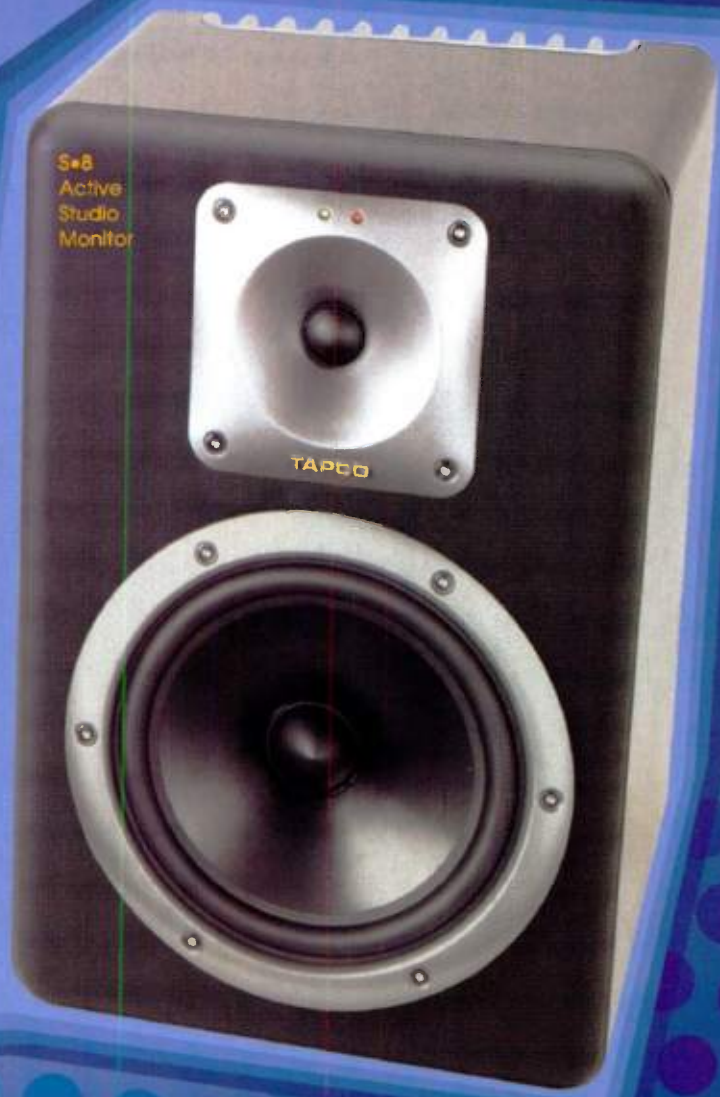
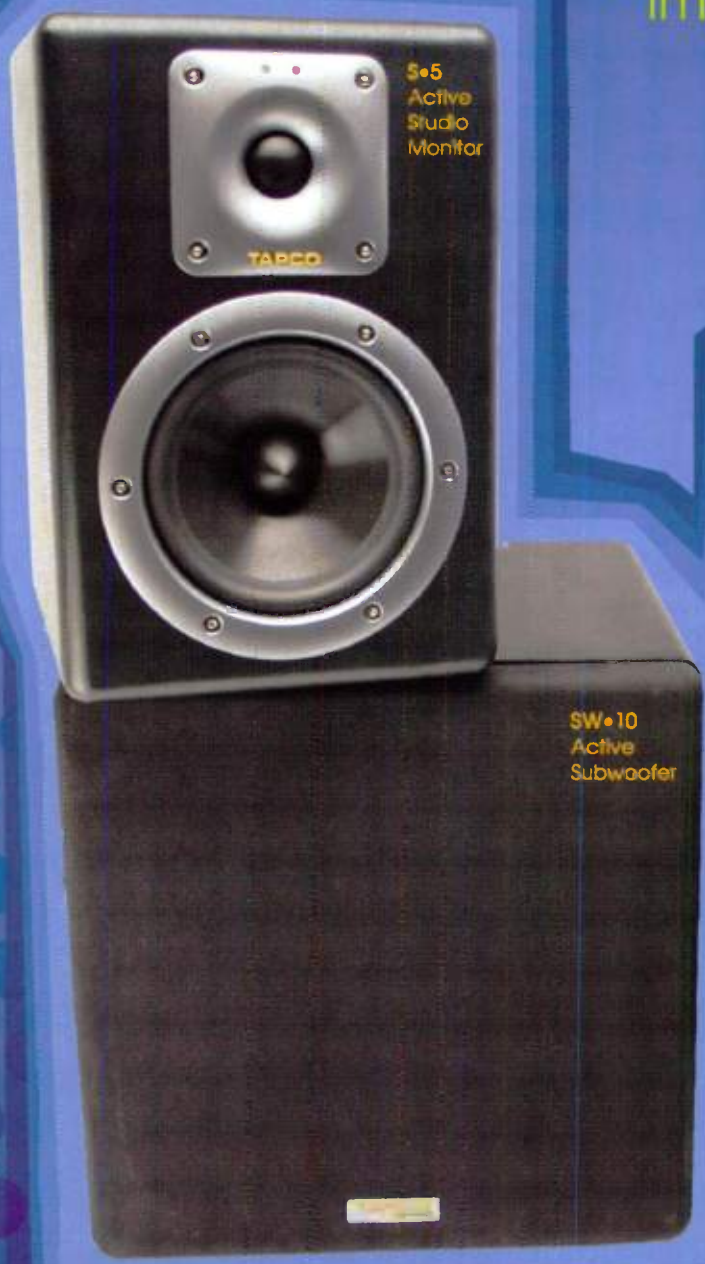
Mike Turner is a Toronto-based guitarist and producer who is co-owner of The Pocket Studios (www.thepocketstudios.com).

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SABIAN Vault Series Crashes and Artisan Rides

by Chris Taylor-Munro

Constantly keeping the creative juices flowing for an art that's been around for centuries may be a challenge, but SABIAN does not rest on its laurels as they have introduced what is certainly going to be a popular collection which they have aptly named "Vault".

Conjuring up images of top-secret cymbal laboratories is what comes to mind when I first caught wind of Vault – and I wasn't far off! SABIAN is venturing into new territory here, but perhaps more importantly, listening and responding to musicians and their cymbal wishes. "Vault" is more of an umbrella that encompasses the drum/percussion community's feedback so it has and will continue to have a variety of cymbal sounds not specific to one genre, but evolve as time and music itself progresses.

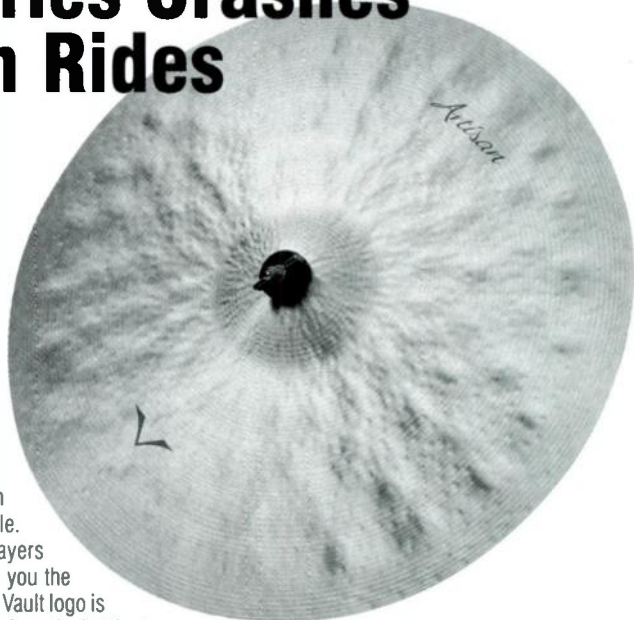


The first Vault cymbals to be introduced are the crashes. By bringing out the sound of the silver (no additional silver is used, all of SABIAN's B20 bronze contains the same amount) in the design process the crashes have a pronounced "tsssss" snake-like tone that is quicker in response to cut through today's modern music, whether it be rock, pop, funk, R&B and even metal. Though the crashes are relatively thin in comparison to "rawk" cymbals they are "extremely robust" to quote SABIAN. The sizes range from 16" through 20", but I wouldn't be surprised if they add more. "Modern" is the best word I can use to describe the tonal qualities of all the sizes. The powerful bell is clean and can get aggressive if needed. It's very focused and does a nice job of cutting through. The narrow pin lathing creates the high glass-like sizzle without the need to whack the cymbal to bring it to life. The decay is in keeping with the response: the cymbal gets out of its own way

which means riding these crashes is effective and the wash is kept under control. When volume is needed it's there in spades, but thankfully pleasant to the ear without harsh overtones as compared to heavier cymbals. To these ears the Vault crashes lie halfway between SABIAN's popular AA line and the softer HH (Hand-Hammered) line, which makes them impressively versatile. Vault crashes will appeal to players looking for one line that can give you the best of both. Appearance-wise the Vault logo is again modern and does not detract from the brilliant finish. SABIAN offers a one-year warranty for further assurance of their crash worthiness.

The second and perhaps most exciting Vault model is the "Artisan" Ride. The search for the perfect ride can be a life long quest for many drummers. Scouring second-hand shops for the vintage Holy Grail of rides will no longer be necessary for many, as these rides are awesome. High-density hammering of the human kind (no machine) shapes the sound and appearance of the 20" and 22" Light and Medium models. Pictures don't do the cymbal justice as the texture especially under stage lights is nothing short of spectacular – almost wave-like.

The Artisan logo is small which is in fitting with the classy (and classic) demeanor of the rides themselves. Characteristically traditional in the sense that they have a dark, gritty tone roaring underneath, (think of Darth Vader breathing) the modern twist is stick definition that never disappears from bell to bow. Splashing and flat stick bashing on the shoulder won't wash out the "click" of your next stroke. The Light ride is darker in tone with a crispier response whereas the Medium's decay is tighter and stick definition is further enhanced. These rides have the right attitude that Jazz drummers will ooze over, but will also be a new experience for those who want to venture into new sonic territory regardless of the musical genre. SABIAN offers both natural and brilliant finishes and as with its HH, HHX lines, a two-year warranty. Each Artisan ride is numbered and comes with a certificate of authenticity. To top off the experience, those fortunate enough to attain one will be given a complimentary bag to protect and coddle these works of art. Don't wait too long if they sound intriguing as the process to create the Artisan



ride is a lengthy labour of love and this model will be offered in limited quantities.

The Vault series thus far has produced two distinct and equally effective voices drummers are sure to embrace. SABIAN continues to explore the realm of cymbal making with input from you the player, which begs the question: what will the Vault reveal in the future?

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the cymbals are \$675 for the 20" Artisan, \$775 for the 22", Vault Crashes are 16" – \$299, 17" – \$329, 18" – \$379, and 20" – \$415.

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

Chris Taylor-Munro is a Toronto-based drummer and freelance writer.

Manufacturer's Comments

Vault is a totally new concept. Unlike a "series", which is defined by specific looks, sounds and prices, Vault is a "collection" that is open to any concepts we consider relevant and valid from the player's perspective. As that suggests, Vault models may consist of various metals, looks, finishes, sounds and prices. There are no limitations other than the sounds have relevance and offer an enhancement of traditional concepts or something innovative and new. The response to the Artisan Ride and the Vault Crash has been phenomenal and new concepts for additional models for this collection are already under consideration.

– Wayne Blanchard, SABIAN Ltd.

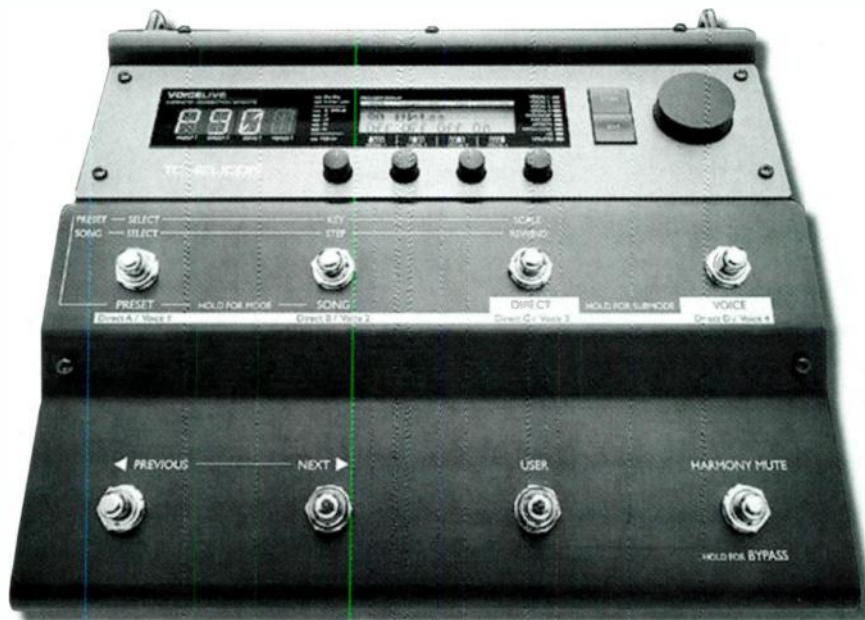
TC-Helicon VoiceLive

by Jeff Pearce

In 2003, TC-Helicon released the VoiceWorks, a rack-mounted studio unit dedicated to vocals. Now, they have released the VoiceLive vocal processor, which puts the same processing power and TC algorithms into a floor unit. The idea is that singers can now take all the fancy vocal processing that goes in their recordings out on the stage. Good idea? Bad idea? Whatever you make of it, TC-Helicon has done it, and done it well. Think of it as a multi-effects pedal for singers, a heavy-duty, eight-button stomp box containing 3-band EQ, compression, pitch correction, lead voice thickening, tap tempo delay, reverb, and most intriguingly, four-part harmony.

The construction and design of the VoiceLive is the first thing to impress. Although the unit is lighter than it appears, it is solidly constructed and looks ready to get bashed around a bit. The bottom is anti-skid rubber matting on a steel plate, while the rest of the chassis is double aluminum construction. The main data wheel, and the four smaller level/edit knobs are slightly recessed, so they're out of the way of the main stomping area. The footswitches are what is called "smooth travel" which means they don't click when you step on them. The back panel of the unit has two metal handles, useful both for picking up the unit, and for protecting the cables and jacks at the back. The VoiceLive has four display areas. The first is a big LED for quickly viewing the most important performance info, like preset numbers and modes. Then there is a simple input meter, mixed with an input and output clip and MIDI in indicators. Next to this is a smaller LCD for more detailed information and editing. Finally, there are simple LEDs that indicate which effects are enabled on the selected preset. Although these four displays take up very little space, they show an incredible amount of information at a single glance.

The VoiceLive has an impressive array of input and output options. The main mic input can be XLR-leading to a built-in preamp or 1/4" TRS line level. There is also second 1/4" TRS input jack for running a line level signal from guitars or keyboards into the VoiceLive. There are also SPDIF digital inputs and outputs, MIDI in, out, and thru and an input for an optional expression pedal. Finally there is an XLR mic pass thru output, which will passively route the mic input through to an outboard mixer. This will allow a sound engineer to balance the levels of effected and non-effected vocals in the house. The back of the unit also features a -20dB mic pad and an optical analog limiter and a switch to turn on 48 V phantom power. The unit can function as a 3-channel mixer, with lead vocal, instrument, effects and output all having independent controls with the four level/edit knobs.



So, what does it do? First, VoiceLive can spruce up a lead vocal track. It can enhance the lead vocal with EQ, pitch correction, voice thickening or doubling, compression, delay and reverb. It can make it sound like you are singing through a telephone, or it can make you sound like a robot. It can then add up to four harmony vocal tracks, through TC-Helicon's patented Hybridshift technology. The harmonies can be turned on or off, held over the lead vocal, humanized and randomized and quantized, used with vibrato and gender switched and effected in many other ways. The choice of harmonies is either done live using MIDI input or automatically. Preset mode (also called performance mode) allows the singer to scroll through presets, which are basically multi-effects settings. The harmonies used while in this mode can be determined by inputting the song key using the footswitches, or with a MIDI keyboard. This means that in a looser, jam-type setting the singer can modify the patches during the performance without having to pick up the box and scroll through edit windows. Song mode (or advanced performance mode) is more useful when the performance will be following a set. Each specific song, or song section can be modified in advance so during the performance the singer simply has to keep advancing through the song sections. Each song section is built out of presets, which can include changes to the harmony intervals, key changes, effects changes or changes to just about any other parameter in the VoiceLive. Pretty much any element of any preset is

editable. The VoiceLive can also be configured as a collection of stomp boxes, where each button, or a connected expression pedal, can be assigned to turn on effects or harmonies or any other parameter. TC-Helicon has managed to make this unit able to do whatever a performer envisions it doing.

As for how it actually sounds, it needs to be heard to be believed. The reverb, delay, EQ and pitch correction are all pretty much as good as you would expect from a consumer level multi-effects unit. But the harmony voices are quite remarkable. Although somewhat synth like, especially when high in the mix, they do a pretty good job of emulating what really fantastic background singers, with somewhat robotic voices, would sound like. It doesn't completely sound like four singers singing in perfect, or imperfect, harmony, but it is a remarkable simulation.

The VoiceLive is a remarkable performance tool. And a dedicated performer, who takes time to become familiar with the VoiceLive's many parameters, will learn to work with, and around, the few limitations it has.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the VoiceLive is \$995 US.

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

Jeff Pearce is a musician and producer best known for his work with Rye, Moist and David Usber.



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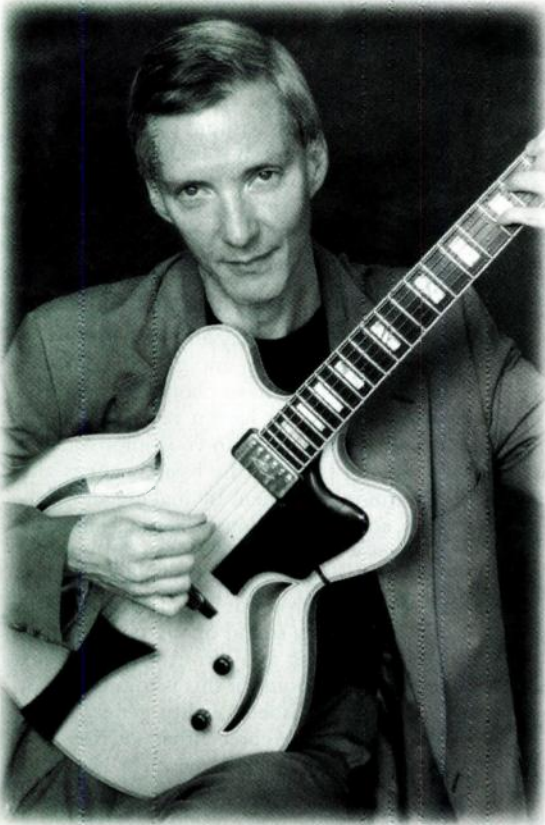
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Some Thoughts About Recording And The Studio

by John Stowell



elements: be well prepared, so that the melodies and forms of the tunes to be played are well internalized. Try to be relaxed, and as spontaneous as possible; keep some of the same joy in the music making that happens on a gig. I never do more than three consecutive takes of a tune.

I'll come back to a piece if I'm not satisfied, but I start copying myself if I'm doing four or five versions of the same piece. After you've recorded and listened initially, let a month go by and hear the music again with a fresh perspective. Small mistakes will seem less important if the overall feel is good.

My most recent recording *Resonance*, (Origin Records, www.originarts.com), didn't start out as a recording; consequently I didn't have the usual problems and pressures that normally accompany the process. Luthier Mike Doolin (www.doolinguitars.com) has

become a good friend, and I've happily played one of his nylon string acoustic-electric guitars for five years. Mike is always building; when he'd finish a new instrument, he'd call, and I'd go to his house and record a tune with his newest creation. The idea started as a way to include a recorded piece as a gift to the customer buying the instrument in question, but as we kept adding tunes, the process became a way to archive Mike's instruments for future clients. When we had enough material for a CD, I realized that I liked my performances enough to put

them out. My friend John Bishop at Origin Records agreed.

A few words about the recording: I'm playing a total of eight Doolin guitars, all in solo performances. My own instrument is used several times. In addition, I'm playing a twelve string, four OM size, two jumbo and one classical. Using all the different instruments was an interesting experience; my mindset and technique changed in small undefinable ways, depending on the size of the body, steel vs nylon string, etc. I would suggest that all guitarists own and play two or three instruments to experience the subtle broadening of your technique that will occur as you develop your skills on multiple axes. The recording Mike and I made was done with an older Fostex UF08 and two Audio-Technica Pro 37R mikes. The microphones were placed at the twelfth fret, and to the right of the bridge. All of the tunes were done in one take.

With a couple of good mikes and a digital workstation, we can make a good sounding recording in the living room (and a lot of us are doing just that). Good luck with your own recording experiences.

In this article, I'd like to discuss a new solo CD that I made recently, touching on the recording process and some general observations about the studio.

The recording studio is not the ideal environment for an improvising musician. Our best performances involve a spontaneous act of creativity, reacting to the audience's energy and response. The studio setting usually doesn't have an audience, and as our own harshest critics, we tend to pick apart our performances, especially on recordings. My approach to the studio involves several

straight up 8th note driven chord changes.

*American guitarist John Stowell is based in the Pacific Northwest, and has 25 years of International playing and teaching experience. He plays Signature Model guitars made by Mike Doolin (acoustic) and Hofner (Varythin JS, electric). His new Mel Bay book/DVD, *Jazz Guitar Mastery*, will be published soon. Comments and questions are welcome (www.johnstowell.com).*



The Art and Philosophy of Speed and How To Apply It To Drumming

percussion

Every drummer, be it a beginning drum student through to professional status has at one time or another wanted to acquire the ability to be able to play and/or solo on the drum set at an extremely fast rate because in a general sense people equate speed with great ability and of course girls will go after the fast drummer as opposed to slow drummers and all the secondary categories of musicians such as bass players, lead guitarists, zither players etc. This is a well known fact to most of us drummers. The sheer sting of truth!

This article will focus on the philosophy, methodology and techniques required to obtain greater speed on the drums with both hands and feet.

First, and I hope obviously one understands that speed is only one small aspect of drumming and must be balanced with a good sense of timing, rhythm, independence, groove, good attitude and of course above all else, taste. There is an appropriate time to employ speed with one's chops and non-appropriate times and I think we have all been there. At least I know I have. Give a guy a set of drums in his late teens or twenties and it seems that speed becomes the personal gauge of his playing ability.

Speed, the study and acquisition of it, has been and still is a lifelong and continuing passion of mine. The speed of human movement to me is simply fascinating and pushing the limits of human potential is an exciting part of my life. I have always been an extremist and combine my studies of speed for drumming into the other passion in my life, martial arts. Specifically Jeet Kune Do.

Many significant attributes of accumulating and employing speed that can be effectively used in drumming are found in the notes and books by many current martial artists as well as the information left behind by the legendary martial artist Bruce Lee. Bruce delved into speed in all of its different facets such as:

1. Perceptual Speed
2. Mental Speed
3. Initiation Speed
4. Performance Speed ... muscle control speed
5. Alteration Speed ... control of balance and inertia

Desirable characteristics to promote speed acquisition:

1. Mobility
2. Spring ... resilience/elasticity
3. Resistance to fatigue ... stamina and physical fitness
4. Physical and mental alertness
5. Imagination and anticipation

Economy of form and relaxing the muscles add to speed. Overall tension and unnecessary muscular contractions act as brakes, reducing speed and dissipating energy.

I have purposely left out some information on Bruce's definitions because they distinctly pertain to fighting but as you can see there is much that can be learned by the reading, studying and application of these principles to drumming.

I have many drummer role models as I am sure you do too. Virgil Donati, Carmine Appice, Buddy Rich, Zoro, Mike Mangini and Funky John Blackwell have all contributed to my development over the years. These guys are amazing and I hope one day

I hope to be able to attain the same level of proficiency that they have. They have my greatest respect and there is always information that can be gleaned by watching these drummers. I have and continue to study speed acquisition by grounding myself with a thorough foundation in physiology, kinesiology, bio-mechanics and martial arts applications, as well as articles and university studies on the refinement of the neurological system with regards to improving pathway synergy/alignment and the improvement of neurological synaptic firing rates.

Aside from all of the previously mentioned scientific studies for the rest of you extremists speed acquisition primarily and simply involves proper and natural limb positioning in a very relaxed and loose manner according to the length and genetic design of your body. I'll tell you right up front that without relaxation you will never acquire any speed or dexterity of any useful type, period. True limb-hand, wrist, forearm, leg, ankle, feet relaxation sound simple but in my years of teaching, I have come to the conclusion that it does not fall into the common sense area at all. Students agree and state that they understand totally that they need to relax and can do it, but very rarely do they employ true relaxation.

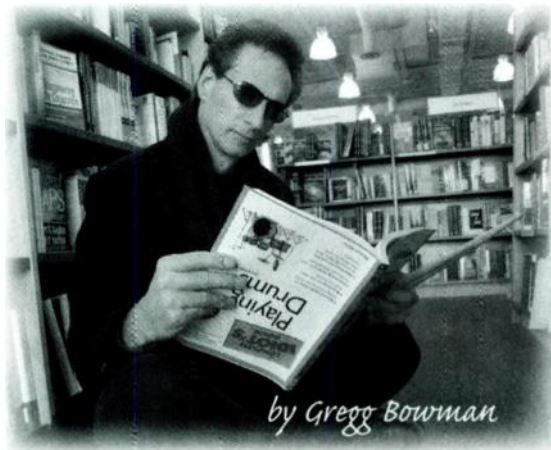
Speed increases for either hands or feet require:

1. Proper bio-mechanical alignment of the limbs (natural relaxed positioning)
2. Proper technique of propulsion and utilization or rebound
3. Natural angle and positioning of equipment in reference to your body size and limb length
4. All equipment ... drums, cymbals, pedals are to be situated close enough to you that you can hit and attack all you need to without being hemmed in as well as positioned so that you are able to strike without over or under reaching. The angle of every drum and cymbal's playing surfaces should coincide with the natural angle of any given limb in all relevant playing positions.

Simply put, all of your equipment comes to you, you do not go to it, unless for a specific effect. You should be able to sit naturally in a comfortable, relaxed, supported position and play and strike all the drums and cymbals with your eyes closed without even thinking.

Being able to develop incredible speed is complicated yet when explained properly can be understood and natural in its practice and application. My intention is to do my best to explain both while demystifying all the nonsense and hype out there regarding speed development.

Gregg Bowman is a freelance artist who has studied with Carmine Appice and Funky John Blackwell, and has performed on various projects for Aboriginal Arts at the Banff Centre in Alberta as well as guest faculty at the centre working with Aboriginal youth. Gregg is currently doing session work in Vancouver, teaching privately on Vancouver Island and in the middle of writing two drumming method books. He plays Pearl Masters Custom Drums exclusively, as well as SABIAN cymbals and Vater sticks. He can be reached by e-mail at greggbowman@hotmail.com



by Gregg Bowman

A Jazzer At The Symphony



Back in November, 2004, I had the opportunity to perform the "Saxophone Concerto" by Alexander Glazounov, a piece that I have been practicing on and off for almost five years, with the Guelph Symphony Orchestra. This was a significant event for me for a number of reasons: it was the first time that I had ever performed as a soloist with a professional orchestra (and it was a treat to perform with such a fine one), and it was exciting to finally perform the Glazounov in public after working on it for so long. It also felt like an affirmation of sorts, in that it was my first public per-

formance playing classical music. Certainly, I've been playing it for a pretty long time – I did the Royal Conservatory of Music's Grade 9 exam in 1998, and I completed the ARCT in 2001 – but all of my previous performances have been either in school performances or exam situations. The GSO performance seemed to mean that I might finally have arrived as a real, live classical saxophonist.

My early classical lessons were pretty eye-opening/devastating. I discovered that playing Glazounov on my Brilhart "Tonalin" is akin to playing piano with a hammer. When I came to the sustained low Ds (marked piano), I used a beautiful, warm subtone. "Why did you do that?" my teacher asked. "Because I thought it sounded nice." "No, you're wrong," he said, "Don't do that." When I played the slow movement, I used a predominantly clean tone, with a bit of vibrato at the end of the longer notes for colour. "Why did you do that?" my teacher asked again. "Because I thought it sounded nice." "It sounds nice when Linda Ronstadt does it. When you do it, it's wrong. Don't do it. In classical saxophone playing, vibrato is a fundamental part of the sound, not a colour." So I tried to sound like Johnny Hodges, but my teacher promptly interrupted me. "That's wrong, too." When I tried to play the quintuplet figures at the opening of Eugène Bozza's *Improvisation*, my teacher pointed out that they were woefully inaccurate. He told me, "The French composers used to say '*J'écris ce que j'écris*,'" which I think can be roughly translated as, "That's wrong. Don't do it." Thus, the first thing I learned about classical saxophone playing was that everything is wrong.

Fortunately, the second thing that I learned was that, while everything is wrong, some things are less wrong than others. Following the advice and encouragement of my teacher, I have traded my Brilhart for a Selmer Soloist with a C# opening when I'm playing classical music, and I have started listening to Eugene Rousseau and Claude Delangle. I am playing the written music more precisely. And I am considering melodies in a larger sense, trying to restrain myself so as to make the climax more striking. Most importantly, I've discovered that while this music can be frustrating, it also can also be profoundly beautiful in an entirely different way than jazz, and just as thrilling to play.

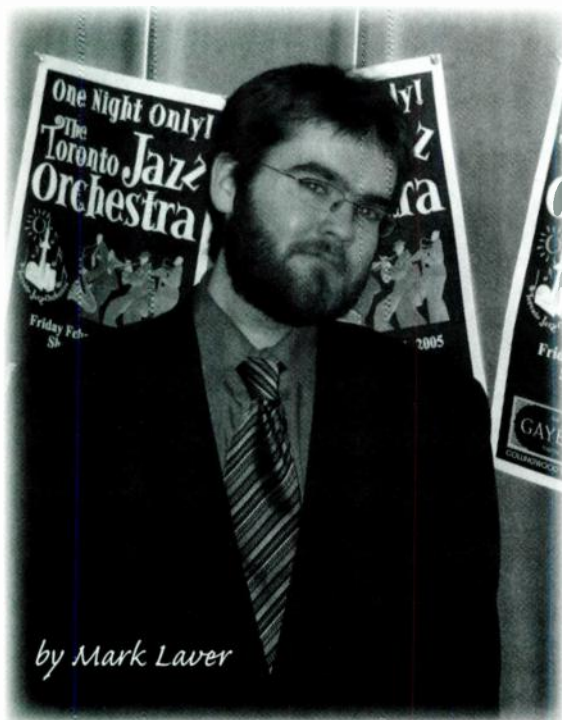
Finally, this year, I'm starting to get the impression that, while my tone is still not perfect, it is getting closer. In October, when I was going over the Glazounov with my teacher in preparation for the November performance, he asked why I was playing

the end of the fast section so quickly. "Because I think it sounds good." "Oh, I see," he replied, "Well, it's almost right. Slow it down a little."

One consequence of my work on classical saxophone has been a considerable improvement in my jazz playing. It has been particularly beneficial in terms of technique: I've never been very good at making myself practice purely technical exercises, but there are all sorts of complicated passages in Glazounov and other pieces that force the player to work on his or her hands, intonation, tonguing, and other fundamental aspects of saxophone technique, all in a musical context. I've also been somewhat surprised to discover that my improvising has evolved: after working on Glazounov and the two sonatas by Edison Denisov, I started to hear more chromatic melodies, less conventional rhythms, and phrases that move across the bar line. Denisov in particular led me to conceive of melodies in terms of smaller motivic cells, and I think my solos are generally better structured and more coherent as a result. Moreover, I pay much more attention to the "head" of a tune than I did before. I've been trying to shape standard melodies the same way I tried to shape Glazounov, thinking about points of tension, relaxation and climax, even though the form is 32 bars instead of 300. The tune also informs the melodic content and shape of my solo to a much greater extent. With respect to the business side of things, it's also nice to have the additional income from the occasional orchestral job to supplement my regular slate of weddings, restaurant dates, and teaching. Indeed, the third lesson that I learned about classical saxophone was that you get paid way more for playing in an orchestra than at a wedding.

Practicing classical music has had an immensely positive impact on my saxophone playing. My advice to any saxophonist considering picking up the Glazounov is to put it down right away. Don't play classical saxophone. I don't want you to steal my gigs.

Mark Laver, a fourth year student in the University of Toronto's Jazz Performance program, is establishing a reputation as one of the most versatile young alto saxophonists in Toronto. He has performed everywhere from the George Westin Recital Hall, to the Toronto Jazz Festival, with such jazz luminaries as Rich Perry, Alex Dean, Hugh Fraser, and Phil Nimmons. As a classical saxophonist, he won the gold medal for woodwind performance for the Royal Conservatory of Music's ARCT exam in 2001. He has been a featured soloist with the Guelph Symphony Orchestra, the University of Toronto Wind Ensemble, and the Royal Conservatory Orchestra.



by Mark Laver

by Mark Laver

It has been a long and frustrating process (though ultimately, a very rewarding one). Like most saxophone players, I was initially attracted to the instrument because of its associations with jazz music and beautiful women. I became obsessively involved with jazz in high school (perhaps because the beautiful women largely avoided me), and jazz has always been my primary pursuit. That was my musical frame of reference when I started looking at classical saxophone

Choosing A Mouthpiece

by Chase Sanborn

brass

In the back of every brass player's mind is a nagging thought: "Is there a better mouthpiece for me?" This question leads many brass players, especially trumpet players, to eventually acquire a shelf full of mouthpieces. Some players find themselves on a never-ending quest for the 'perfect' mouthpiece.

As the point of contact with the vibrating surface, the mouthpiece is the most crucial part of your equipment.

Changing mouthpieces will probably affect your playing more than changing horns, and it will certainly have a greater impact on the physical sensations of playing.

How Do You Choose?

Many fine players play off-the-shelf mouthpieces from a stock line. There are advantages to playing a stock mouthpiece, particularly if you lose yours and need to get another in a hurry. It is the most economical route, and will allow you to outfit your various horns with matching mouthpieces and perhaps duplicates at reasonable cost. I keep a set of mouthpieces in every case to eliminate the feeling of panic as I drive to the gig, wondering if I've remembered my mouthpieces.

Another option is to visit a small manufacturer to design a custom mouthpiece. While this is a more expensive approach, working with a knowledgeable craftsman may produce something that is just right for you. Prior to your visit, give some thought to what you are looking for in a new mouthpiece. Give the maker as much feedback as possible. Be prepared to demonstrate what you can and can't do with your current mouthpiece. While you shouldn't expect miracles, it can be a good feeling to know you've got a "partner", working together to find a mouthpiece that will maximize your abilities.

Many manufacturers offer 'signature' mouthpieces. A signature mouthpiece is initially developed as a custom design for a specific pro player. Generally a mouth-

piece design that works for one fine player will work for many other players as well. Of course, your hero's lips are different than yours and his mouthpiece may not fit you any better than his shoes do, but signature pieces are worth checking out.

It Will Take Some Time To Know

The hardest aspect of choosing a new mouthpiece is that it may take a while to really know whether it works for you, as your body adjusts to the new equipment over time. Sometimes there is a downhill slide after the initial few days, and you must resist the temptation to fall back to your old piece when the transition period gets rough. Gary Radtke of GR Technologies recommends freezing your old mouthpiece in a bucket of water so that it's hard to get at. (Besides, maybe it will become cryogenically improved!) Give the new piece at least a couple of months.

Is It Bad To Play More Than One Mouthpiece?

Some players switch mouthpieces to suit specific playing requirements. Others believe everything should be played on one mouthpiece. To me, it makes sense to match equipment to the job. You've got more than one pair of shoes, don't you? A well-chosen complement of equipment can increase the range of sound available to you. The sound that I strive for when playing lead trumpet is not the sound I want when playing in a quartet. I choose a horn and a mouthpiece that is oriented towards the music I am playing.

If you switch mouthpieces, each must be versatile enough that you can cover all bases. While your dress shoes may not be as comfortable as your running shoes when jogging, they must be comfortable enough to wear all day at the office, and must allow you to break into a sprint if you are about to be hit by a car. It is of no use to have one mouthpiece that produces a big dark sound but eliminates most of your upper register, while another allows you to scream high



notes but has a thin pinched tone. There are too many situations that straddle the line, and if the mouthpiece limits you in any way, it will be a problem. It is always desirable to have the same rim on all your mouthpieces. It takes some work to put together a variety of mouthpieces and/or horns that all work for you. I practice on all my horns and mouthpieces every day to keep myself familiar with them.

Whether or not to switch mouthpieces (or horns) is an individual decision; no rule applies to everybody. Bottom line: it's not what equipment you use, but what kind of sound you produce.

Chase Sanborn is a jazz trumpet player based in Toronto, and is the author of Brass Tactics and Jazz Tactics. (This article is excerpted from the Revised Edition of Brass Tactics.) Chase is a member of the jazz faculty at U of T and is a Yamaha Artist. He can be heard in good company on his latest CD Cut To The Chase. For information on Chase's books, CDs, GR-CS Signature Trumpet Mouthpieces and other products, please visit chasesanborn.com.

Web Surfing For Tubes

by Alec Watson

Hi, my name is Alec Watson and I am an E-bay-aholic.

I have been ripped-off when I thought I was getting a steal, my packages have been violated by Canada customs, but every once in a while, I get a deal which makes all the rip-offs seem worth while.

It would be easy, in fact, to write an entire article on E-bay purchasing itself, but that's not where I am going this time. Instead, it's time we had a little talk about some of the facts of life. Important things like: "Do tubes really sound bigger and fatter? Cause I am recording on digital, eh."

(Those two paragraphs and some that follow may seem like complete non-sequiturs, but I hope to delight and amaze by tying them all together!)

If you have spent *any* time scouring the music pages of E-bay, you will find that the underlying message of almost every description reads: "Use this piece of gear and you will get warmth and fatness back in your digital recording." This is not dissimilar to, "When you use this (use your best Dr. Evil impression) 'laser-comb', your hair will grow back within 30 days! GUARANTEED!"

So, will tubes put the warmth back in your digital recording?

Short Answer: NO!

Remember that commercial for cassette tapes where they said: "Is it live, or is it Memorex?" Not all that long ago, they (the marketing people) were trying to convince us that we couldn't tell the difference between a cassette recording and the live signal coming straight from the microphone. In 2004, now that we *can* no longer tell: is it live, or is it digital? The manufacturers, and especially the E-bayers, seem to be telling us that, "When it comes to tubes and analog gear; everything sounds warmer and fatter." But wait one gord-darned-cotton-pickin'-minute, the commercial used to tell me I couldn't tell the difference between live or Memorex, now you're telling me that you were wrong! Well why didn't Memorex say: "Is it live, or is it better?"

Seinfeld: "So what's the deal with tubes and analog?"

Well, here are some answers according to me. Tubes *won't* put the warmth back into your digital recording. If you have decent digital recording gear, your recording isn't

missing any warmth. With most reasonable digital recording gear, it's *really, really*, hard to tell the difference between the live signal from the microphone and the playback from digital.

So what do tubes do? Tubes change the "character" of the microphone or preamp. Analog recording *also* changes the "character" of the signal being recorded. I think this is where there is some confusion and some unscrupulous manufacturers draw a correlation. Tubes *won't* make your recording sound analog. Tubes *will*, distort your signal in some way. This distortion is *sometimes* referred to as "warmth".

I am sure most of you have heard of the "warmth of Neve consoles." I like the "sound" of Neve consoles and run most of my vocals through a Neve strip. Do you know how many tubes there are in a Neve strip? Zero. Yeah, as in none. In fact, there are a whole lot of really nice microphone preamps that have no tubes. In reality, a tube's "warmth" is one part truth, another part marketing, some confusion with "analog warmth" and lastly there is some sort of very incorrect correlation derived from the fact that tubes actually do get warm and impart this warmth to the audio.

So now that you are thoroughly confused with getting "warm", "big", "fat" sounds on your recordings, what's a *Canadian Musician* to do?

Well, here is a little of my experience: I suspect that the "warmth" of Neve consoles has a lot to do with transformers (Yes, they really are more than meets the eye). The line/mic preamps that come with your sound card or digital mixer are likely transformerless. I have spent some time experimenting with microphone and preamp combinations and have observed the following:

When using a transformer-less microphone (some of these sound *very* good, the Audio-Technica 4033 is a favourite), there is little "qualitative" difference between the mic-pre sound of small digital console and an expensive Neve strip. If however, you are using an expensive microphone that has a built-in transformer (Neumann, RØDE Classic, AKG), there *is* a difference between mic-pre-amps. The good mic sounds

distinctly "warmer" on the good preamp. In regards to tube mic pre-amps: my experience is that tubes in transformer-less mic preamps tend to make the mic sound "grainy" in comparison to the more expensive tube preamp that *has* transformers.

So, if there are any gems to take from all this, they would be:

Digital sounds a lot like the "truth"; if you want to distort the truth slightly, maybe add some tubes.

Best bang for your buck for recording truth? Good transformer-less mics with transformer-less preamps.

Best over all sound: good microphones (with transformers) into good mic preamps (with transformers).

Good transformer-less mics amplified by expensive microphone preamps? Save your money.

Cheap mic-pres with tubes (the under \$600 group)? Well, they are useful for effects where you want to "drive" the tube (intentionally record distorted sounds).

Dude's E-bay item that makes recordings sound big and fat and great? If it is so great, why is he selling it? He needs the money? He should have worried more about recording great performances and less about tone. We all should!

Producer/Engineer Alec Watson has been using his "laser-comb" for 28 days. There doesn't seem to be any new hair growth, but he can feel the "warmth". Maybe he should try tubes on his head.





Achieving Vocal Fitness

by Diana Yampolsky

It's all about balance. You will hear everyone from new age gurus to marriage counselors to characters in beer commercials proclaim this statement. It's pretty much a cliché but there is something of a universal truth in every cliché. With respect to being a vocalist, balance is extremely important. As I have said again and again successful singing performances are the result of a combination of the correct technical aspects, a healthy vocal anatomy and a willingness to share your "spirit" with the audience. Ultimately then successful singers must find the correct balance between the physical, emotional and spiritual components of singing.

Another cliché that often gets repeated is that "your voice is your instrument" and again it is so commonly stated because it really is a fundamental truth. Your voice is your instrument and its performance is a direct result of how well you take care of it. You wouldn't dip your guitar in glue and then expect it to sound good, would you? Unfortunately, this is akin to what many people often do! To be able to deliver a correct technical singing performance and prevent yourself from doing any damage to your vocal anatomy and thus maintain a healthy voice, you really do need to be in good physical condition.

So how should you exercise in order to be in the ideal physical condition for a singer? Again, you guessed it, the answer is balance. Not only should you be aiming for a balanced workout that includes aerobic (cardio training), anaerobic (weight training) and flexibility exercises but you should also be

trying to achieve a balanced physique. What exactly is a balanced physique you may ask? Essentially it is when the both the upper body and lower body are in proportion. For example, if you go to any gym in your city you will probably see some men that are so obsessed with having big arms and chests that they exercise their upper bodies way more than their lower bodies. They have huge upper bodies and skinny legs. Conversely, some people that are into activities such as skating or soccer may develop large muscles in their legs while being practically



emaciated with respect to their upper body. In both cases, the result is that they are not in balance.

Singers who are out of balance with very muscular legs and skinny upper bodies tend to slouch quite a bit and this type of posture

is very detrimental for singing. Their whole body is pointed downwards towards the ground and this is in direct opposition to what good singers do – they tend lift their entire body upwards as a way of lifting the sound off the vocal chords so that it can resonate within their vocal chamber. A metaphor for a singer who slouches is a plane that takes off but due to excessive weight cannot reach the proper height and crashes to the ground.

Singers who are physically out of balance due to a big upper body and skinny lower body are at an equal disadvantage. Again, while most people assume that singing is purely the domain of the throat and mouth, the truth is that most good singers use their legs to support the required posture necessary to lift the body upwards while singing. If the upper body is so heavy that the legs struggle to lift it upwards then the sound will again not be lifted off the vocal chords and into the vocal chamber. Furthermore, if the singer tries to overcompensate for a weak lower body by flexing his chest and neck, this overstressing of the upper body will result in weak, shrill and unpleasant sounding singing.

Therefore, the recipe for success is the right blend of a balanced body, mind and soul. The reward will be a great sounding voice!

*Diana Yampolsky is a vocal instructor based in Toronto at the Royans School for the Musical Performing Arts, located online at www.vocalscience.com. Her second book, *Vocal Science II – Flight from the Virtual Music to Reality*, will be available soon.*

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take greater control of her career and start Dead Daisy, partnering with Outside Music.

CM: You originally had a deal with Universal, is that correct? When did you form the label?

Emm: In 1996. Yeah, it wasn't Universal at the time. It was A&M, but Mercury out of the US.

CM: How many people work at your label?

Emm: I have a day-to-day person that works with me and then I have "the girls." They work with me in the US and do booking and promotion. I would say maybe five people. They're based everywhere; my manager's in New York, my day-to-day person is in Toronto, and the girls are all up and down the

work. Leaving Warner after that period presented a crossroads career-wise for me. I was looking at various options but Grant really hooked me with the vision.

CM: It's much more than a record company?

Kim: Overall, the company is called MapleCore and the lines of business are MapleSolutions, which is a technology company involved in Web design and e-strategies within the music industry and without – they also function as service supplier for everything that the other lines of business do internally. So, when we need a Web site designed, or an e-card or a poster, we walk 20 feet and get our own people to do it. It's a huge asset. MapleNationwide is a pure distribution company, leveraging our

on these avenues is to parlay them into more equitable recording contracts and managing your personal stock as you would an investment account.

"As time goes by, I'm trying to make records that are more specific," explains David Usher. "One of the few ways to do that is to have more control over what you do – I have my own management company, Kharma with Graeme MacDonald. I own my own publishing. Now I'm on an indie and it's very much a collaborative process between us. It's almost like full circle from the beginning. I've taken everything back. That makes me happy."

Swimming With A Buddy...

Regardless of the stage of your career you're at, managing your personal stock



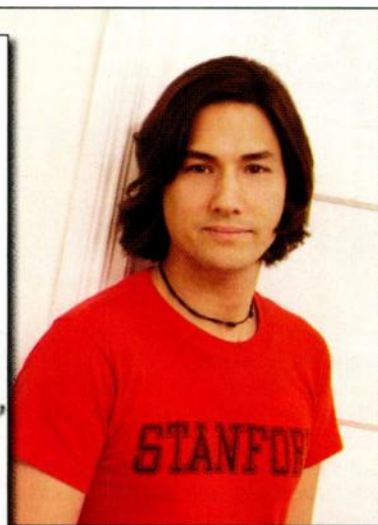
Alan Cross



Kim Cooke



Wade McNeil



David Usher

Northeast. Another thing that's new is that we have a girl in the Philippines starting to get us airplay there and sell my last record, *Asian Blue*.

The route Emm took isn't for everyone. It's can be a slow growth curve, but it's all yours. If the DIY route scares the bejesus out of you, though, then the flexibility of larger indies such as MapleMusic Recordings, might appeal. Their site stresses the partnership aspects of the company; aspects that are central to the company on a very basic level, as evidenced by the way in which Kim Cooke got involved in the development of MapleMusic Recordings.

Kim: My exit from Warner coincided neatly with Grant Dexter's negotiations with Universal to become an investor and distributor of a label. Grant is a remarkable person, very dynamic, and he's created MapleCore from scratch in five short years. My friends at Universal suggested it might be a good idea if he had someone who had been around the industry and could help him with the nuts and bolts and how things actually

association with Universal. Then there is MapleMusic Recordings, the label, which is my primary responsibility, and its sister country label Open Road Recordings. The line of business that started it all was MapleMusic.com, which is Canada's largest online fulfillment house. We represent about 400 Canadian acts. They supply us with merchandise, CDs and concert tickets on an arm's length basis, and we fulfill orders around the world.

An indie label with an onsite partnership with other related businesses obviously gives a much stronger position than it might otherwise have. Kim explains, "We position ourselves as a services company to the music industry. Artists will come to MapleSolutions to design a Web site, but don't avail themselves of any of the other services. Or an artist may utilize Maplemusic.com exclusively. They can pick and choose where the fit is."

Effective use of new technology allows artists a greater personal connection with their audience, smart partnerships with savvy entrepreneurial labels allow them greater flexibility and clout. The trick to capitalizing

intelligently makes for better returns on your investment, both in terms of the deals you make with labels and how willing the people you deal with are to go to the wall for your project.

"The deal that you get is directly related to what the label sees as your potential," says David. "If you have a huge buzz and a lot of labels vying for you, you're going to be able to get your lawyer to negotiate a better deal."

It makes sense that every element of the team has the incentive to do all they can to achieve that goal, but the best way to create that incentive is a hot topic. Some believe artists and labels should share more of their separate various income streams collectively. Others prefer a more traditional division of income, but look towards new avenues for mutual profit.

Greg explains, "The band and I have slightly different roles. The band's income stream is selling merchandise and touring; that's theirs and I didn't want to be involved in that regard. Alexis has a publishing deal with EMI publishing and they're a big help. As a label, I'm not sharing in the publishing, but the band has another income stream and we're after the same goals, to sell

records. The more comfortable the band is, the more willing they are to go work, go play shows and to go travel."

If labels are going to take a piece of what is traditionally artist income Greg says it's only fair if it is truly reciprocal; in other words, the split is accurately proportionate and labels share equally in reverse. Much of what's fuelling this re-examination of how to split the risk and profits has to do with the downturn in business in the last few years. Inevitably, downloading takes some of the heat, but Greg views this issue philosophically... "Downloading's hurting our business, but in my world, downloading is exposing my band all over the world right now – and making deals with another country is a little easier because of the exposure and the knowledge that the band exists."

encryption. They also provide an accounting system that, if requested by the artist, will enable them to tell if their song has been listened to.

Of course, just because you deliver your song doesn't mean they'll play it, or listen to it, or even know or care that you or your music exist. It's not a magic bullet for artist's to get more attention. Regardless of how brilliantly your song sums up the hopes and dreams of an entire generation, you need human representation to work the record. Edge 102's Alan Cross discusses this new delivery method...

CM: Will this sort of system benefit indie artists? And how?

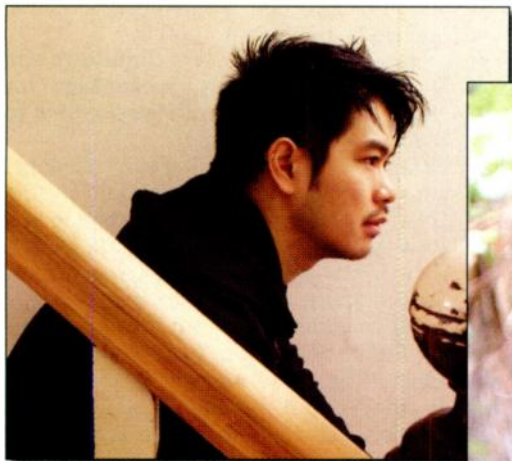
Alan: Let's put it this way; the major labels have representatives that come in to see us every week and they can

is actually going to take them up on it is a different story.

CM: Will you still accept CDs, or will DMDS become so entrenched that radio won't accept hard copy anymore?

Alan: I don't think that will happen. We're big fans of actual physical CDs because, our particular station, we're interested in the whole product; we're not only interested in the song, we're interested in the band, the people who make up the band, who produced the record, what the record looks like, feels like in your hands – we really do want that.

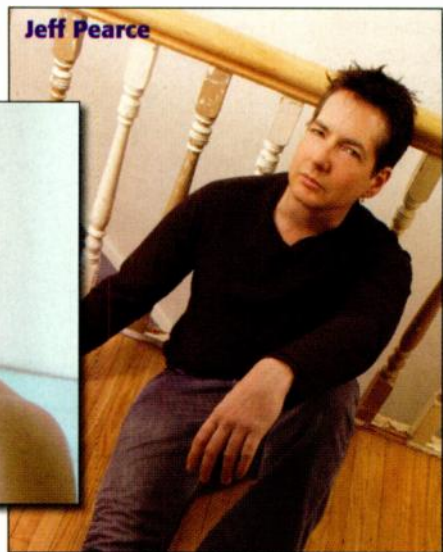
In the end, getting noticed is about people and not technology: Ultimately the way your music gets a shot is by being



Byron Wong



Emm Gryner



Jeff Pearce

As the digital revolution settles into the digital age, what's also changing is the way records are being delivered to radio. For artists there's still no magic bullet, in terms of how to get your music noticed, but Musicrypt's DMDS (Digital Music Delivery System) is the latest in the evolution of song delivery and is swiftly becoming the industry standard in Canada.

Essentially, for a setup fee and an additional per track, per station, an artist or label can take advantage of the DMDS secure delivery system to get their music to radio. DMDS allows clients to include additional information, artist bios, and talking points, so programmers have the nuts and bolts info at their fingertips: title, songwriter, publisher, overall length, Web site info and more in a far tighter package.

Arguably, digital delivery is far easier than chucking CDs in the mail and it eliminates a variety of costs: manufacturing of the single, the CDpro, including artwork and so on, postage per unit. DMDS also ensures secure delivery with a combination of biometrics, analyzing the keystroke dynamics of a user, watermarking to a specific downloader's ID and high value

actually deliver hard copies if need be. With independents, if they're in Toronto, perhaps they can send a representative down – sometimes the head of the label will come down and present us with some stuff, which is fine. But if you're in Drumheller or in Moncton, you don't have that kind of luxury. It's getting harder, especially when you're seeing a lot of acts beginning to break out of the indie world, to get the music in a timely fashion. For example, the Arcade Fire situation; it had blown up in other parts of the world, but they had a tiny little label called, Merge, that didn't service us, so we had to actually go out and buy the CD so we could play the damn thing. Had Merge, maybe been involved with DMDS, when they saw things starting to explode, they could have gotten to us immediately. Sometimes you need timely delivery, especially in markets where you have radio stations competing against each other – the one who gets the record first is the one who wins. So, if their goals are to get a song to radio as soon as possible, yeah, it can be advantageous. Whether or not radio

brought to radio, print and television by people who are convinced you are as brilliant as you think you are; record reps, indie promoters and the like. People who represent your music well because they've built their reputation delivering the right song, the right package, and the right artist, to the right audience – best then, to be sure that whoever is representing you: label, management, radio tracker and so on, really does believe in you and your music.

All this reinforces the point we started out with – you need a good team to adequately promote a record. And at this point, it's important to say a couple of words about the majors. First, nobody puts the hammer down like one of the big labels when they really believe in it. Though right now the thriving indie scene is breaking acts very effectively, the majors are still very much in the game. More importantly, they're watching and learning from the indies.

Yes, we know some of you might think they're the devil – dirty big corporations – soulless multinationals out to screw you blind. Just remember that the majors, the indies, and all facets of the industry are

populated with people who love music. Granted, loving music is easy – selling it isn't always easy though. It is, however, a lot more fun than selling grommets or cardboard boxes. Still, at the heart of it, the music business is a business. It's not just about culture, it's about money, and music is a commodity. This isn't a cynical view or a judgment, it's a fact; ultimately, all of us music lovers have to serve the bottom line, pay rent, or the mortgage, and feed the kids and the lawyers.

Simply put, the majors can be a big and integral part of the success of an artist, independent or otherwise, by taking smaller labels and using their larger machine to get the music out there...

States EMI's Steve Macauley, "Retail is a lot like radio stations now: Radio will play something as long as it's a hit and they're going to get more listeners – it's the same as retail – they want what sells. They also want to see how committed a label is. You've got to remember a lot of indies survive on government funding and they haven't got the money or the manpower to be able to set up an infrastructure, like an EMI, so we offer them the infrastructure. Back in the early '80s, a lot of independent labels started to get bought up by the majors. Now it's a whole different scene, there are a lot more independents, but you're not seeing them get swallowed up by majors because they can make it on their own. These real cool street labels can do things that the majors can't and the majors can do things that the independents can't. So, we align ourselves in a partnership as opposed to an ownership, because we want to learn how they're doing their business and so they can learn as well."

No matter who is part of your team, swimming with a buddy is becoming more and more co-operative as time goes on. Generally speaking, there's less money out there to play with, burn, or throw away. Labels, in general, are starting to look at ways of getting more out of their investments – meaning you and your music. And regardless of your feelings on the matter, co-production ("co-pro") deals that divvy up more of the potential income streams are becoming more popular...

CM: A typical co-pro – where is it going?

Byron: I'm hardly an expert on what the recent deals have been, but, you know if a band wants to do business and they don't have the funds, or the resources themselves – and the resources include people and contacts – I mean, no one's ever put a gun to someone's head to sign a record contract. Actually, that's probably not true, I'm sure there's been a few, but that's another story...

Greg: It might be a little bit early to go down this path, but Dallas Green has a new record and between management, Dallas, and I, we're forming a sub label to Distort to put out not so aggressive

music, including Dallas' record. This is a shared opportunity. Costs are costs for your distribution, but everything outside of that is split equally and everyone brainstorms together. You can share a little more and get the band to work harder because they see light at the end of the tunnel. I'm sure there's many bands that signed deals and sold 200,000 records and still don't see a cent. That's sort of unfair for everyone.

Fair is the operative word, and regardless of lesser CD sales and the popularity of downloading there are still products flying out the door that people can hold in their hands – the prevailing wisdom is that traditional retail isn't going to disappear.

CM: Is traditional retail going to continue to be relevant?

Greg: The CD still has a market, DVD sales are on the climb as far as I can tell – Alexis have been conscious of this, of history having value and having foot-age from when we were nothing to the level we're at now, videos we can share, some behind the scenes stuff that might be valuable to a fan who's been there from day one, tapes we have of almost every show that the band's ever played.

CM: Is traditional retail going to continue to be relevant?

Kim: It's constantly evolving, but are they going to continue to be a large part of music retail in the future? Absolutely. Certainly, digital music is going to grow, but I don't see bricks and mortar disappearing any time soon. Bricks and mortar retail are our long-term partners.

Steve: Absolutely. Retail is going through a whole change just like the music industry – the real estate in retail stores has changed from CDs to DVDs. The next change you'll see is the stores getting into digital formats. You'll walk into a store, sit down at a booth, make your own compilation, go up to the counter, pay for it and you're gone.

CM: When you're selling records though, are we still talking about CDs for very much longer – is releasing an online-only record a viable option soon?

Byron: Absolutely it is, but what we forget is the human interaction around that.

Greg: I think the "something" you want to hold in their hand may change – MP3 players, some sort of Flash player, or another source – something tangible's always going to exist at the retail level because there's a big audience that likes holding things in their hands and seeking out something you can't necessarily find somewhere else.

And while we're on the subject of what you can't find elsewhere...

CM: With a deal with Maple – what's in it for the artist that wouldn't be in it for the artist with a major necessarily?

Kim: A great deal of freedom on the international side; not being tied up for a period of at least two records to one corporation. I think that's a huge point. We have a wide mix of deals where some artists just sign for Canada and Kathleen Edwards is an example of that. We just loved the *Failor* record and wanted to be associated with it, and the fact that we couldn't have the rest of the world didn't matter to us. I think we offer the touch of a boutique with the distribution clout of a major. All the services of a major label: marketing, publicity, radio promotion, plus the technology aspects, and any artist that signs on automatically gets a store and coverage on Maplemusic.com and Umbrellamusic.com.

CM: Given the current climate in the industry, is there an advantage for both young and established artists to move over to an indie?

Kim: There's a real global spotlight on Canada right now, based on the quality of the music that's coming out of the country in many disparate genres. Notwithstanding that it's still a very tough environment. The industry is just beginning to climb back from the downturns of the last five years, but musically it's a golden time. Full respect to the majors – they're not signing large quantities of acts, but they are active and putting tremendous resources behind developing artists. But, at the same time, there's been this proliferation of indie labels and there are tremendous options at all levels of the independent business.

CM: Would it be fair to say that you can be more flexible than a major can be?

Kim: Absolutely. If you sign worldwide to a major, after two albums, you're usually granted reversion in a territory if you aren't released, but you are hamstrung until then. There are occasional exceptions to that, but that's certainly the rule. The mandate of the majors is to sign acts for the world and develop them that way. Our general philosophy is to find the right fit for the act, to see where the interest lies and it can be on a territory by territory basis, a major or an indie in whatever market. Wherever the fit is best.

Flexibility and adaptability are huge assets now. As markets and technologies change and develop, you want to be able to take advantage of any new opportunities as quickly as possible. Every artist and band has a limited shelf life – being reasonably free to take advantage of opportunities when they come along is important and some of those opportunities could potentially involve a major...

CM: Do you think the majors are using the indies as farm teams?

David: I definitely think so. It's much more like a cottage industry to work within.

Emm: I think so. I think it's an interesting time because it means that more, in my opinion, creative music gets brought to the forefront.

Steve: The whole idea is you have a worldwide network of other countries that you have partnerships with and you try to set it up through that system; extending or widening the partnership framework you already have. So an artist retains a lot of what they have. They've worked hard and these young labels that are coming up, they're handling themselves, but they need to expand and that's where we come in. To not fuck with it, but help them get their records out.

Ultimately, one of the most effective ways to sell yourself and your records to both fans, and the people that stand between you and more fans, is touring. When you're out there working a record with limited tour support, however, at some point you have to roll up the tour and go home.

CM: When do you know it's time to call it a day and go back and write the next record?

Wade: For us the focus is the most amount of time we can take off because we need to tour. We've kind of decided that when we finish the Warped tour that'll be about it for *Watch Out!* and we're going to start writing right away – You definitely don't want to overplay.

Emm: I think, for me, you have this gnawing need inside of you to make something new. That's just what propels me to make another record, because I'm dying to.

CM: What advice could you offer other artists – in terms of getting as many people exposed to your music as possible?

Wade: I think the most important thing, especially for independent bands, is reminding people that you're there – coming through their town, playing a lot, and just playing the best you possibly can every single day regardless if there's nobody there or not.

Jeff: When you start bringing other people on board, a manager, an agent, or a label, they're going to be speaking on your behalf, all the time, and you have to make sure there's a lot of trust both ways; trust that they are going to represent you well to the people they are dealing with. They also have to trust that if they work hard to get you opportunities, promising somebody else that given a chance that you will deliver, then you, the artist, have

an obligation to not make that person look like a fool.

Emm: Just trying to keep on making records and not waiting for people to do it for you. You can do so much on your own.

One of the most important things you can do on your own is to get informed. There's no end to the permutations of potential partnerships, and the business is evolving quickly. Regardless of how you go about getting your music out there, be aware of what you're getting into. "Beyond all the typical things in a contract you would normally be concerned with," Kim says, "One of the biggest decisions for a lot of acts is the flavour of a particular label."

Strong relationships, quality product, and sound strategies do more to benefit an act and extend their lifespan than simply throwing a mess of money at a project. Whatever path you take, when it comes to the long term, twin bottom line of income and satisfaction with what you've done, you're better off working with people who can work effectively and adapt their approach deftly, to the mutual benefit of everyone involved. ●



Kevin Young is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

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JOEL

It may just be an aside to producer, Bob Hoag, or longtime collaborator, Ian McGettigan, but, on the last track of his new record, the last thing Maple Music Recordings artist, Joel says is, "What does that sound like?" In a way it sounds like he's asking his audience, but from the very first notes of "Absentminded Melody", the album's opening track, the answer is evident...

It sounds like I'll go back to track 1 and listen again, all the way through.

La De Da is a road album in every sense of the word. In the way it was made, in the way observations from past and present mingle, and in the way it's book-ended by songs about Joel's beloved home base, Halifax. The opener, "Absentminded Melody", the first tune actually recorded for the album is about feeling nostalgic, Joel says, but it's about the challenge of trying not to dwell in nostalgia.

La De Da is definitely nostalgic in places, but it never dwells on it. Right off the top it hits you squarely between the ears, and holds your attention throughout. The first night Joel arrived in Arizona he sat down in the studio and laid down a few tracks so producer Bob Hoag could hear a few songs before they got well into recording. At the time, he says, "I really didn't know what I was gonna do when I got there; I was still sorting through all these songs that I was kind of finishing, or writing." He describes the final version of "Absentminded Melody" fondly, "It's pretty scrappy, right? A late night recording, but I really felt like it captured my first night in Arizona."

It also captures the vibe of Halifax in the way only someone who knows it intimately can – when Plaskett sings about watching a local band in a bar where "the smoke's so thick you need a lighthouse," he sets the scene so well it almost seems you're right there. And when the song's Floydian outro dissolves into the first verse of "Happen Now" there's no doubt that, just like Joel did when he set out to make the record, you've left the East behind and hit the road heading South.

Though it's a bit of a departure from the Emergency records; "Deliberately so," Joel says, "It's me on my own for most of the recording." You can hear how the songs would easily fit into the band's repertoire. That said, it's a pleasure to hear Plaskett stripped down; it makes the personal moments that much more personal and the story of the making of the record that much more compelling, intimate, as if Joel is sitting down singing right in front of you. Fans of the Joel Plaskett Emergency will be pleased to hear similar production values as those that made his earlier records so engaging. Spare, straightforward songs that draw the listener in, as much due to Plaskett's songwriting chops as his ability to say something so simply, to make an ordinary, everyday observation, about an ordinary, everyday event, and then turn the phrase on its head and leave you dearly wishing you could have put it that way yourself.

It's a quality that comes through again and again on *La De Da*: regardless of whether he's singing about some stop along the road, and whether or not it's a favourable memory, there's weight to them, weight in terms of experience; a familiarity with the road, that comes from having a bit of history with it. But then there's a lot of history there, both from being home and away. In the '90s, there was a great deal of excitement around the East Coast music scene, bands like Sloan, Eric's Trip and Joel's former band, Thrush Hermit. Speaking candidly of his days with the band, Joel talks about playing the bar scene in downtown Halifax with bands, like Sloan who, he says, "Really gave us a leg up in terms of taking us on tour and putting us on shows."

Early on, until the members were of age, Joel's father actually had to be present at most of the local shows. "Every bar show at least one of our parents had to be present – my dad tended to take the collective hit for the other parents and show up." Joel describes his father, a guitar and mandolin player, as a real folk guy, saying, between his father playing and the family record collection, there was always music around the house. That said, he points out, "When I was younger I always responded to music, but I didn't want to play it." His parents bought him a drum set and he took lessons, but, not being terribly interested in snare drum rudiments, didn't really dedicate himself to studying.

At that time, he and his parents lived in Lunenburg, home of the Bluenose and a world heritage site. It was only after moving to Halifax, and after one of his friends started taking up guitar or bass that music took hold. "I was jealous essentially. So I was like 'Well, my dad plays guitar; I'll get him to teach me.' A couple of years later, at age 14, he, Ian McGettigan and another friend had a band together. After the addition of a drummer, the dubiously named Nabisco Fonzie became The Hoods. "We played an entire school dance, three sets, and we did terrible – nobody could dance to us." "We had spirit, though," he says, spirit that inspired the band to start writing their own material. "They're embarrassing," he says, "but there were a few originals at that point."

For most artists, their very first band might not necessarily be something they want to mention in press, but when it has fostered a viable musical relationship that is still going strong, perhaps it should be. "Then we renamed the band Thrush Hermit and played a gig at the Shearwater Yacht Club for an empty keg of beer and a pizza." Thin pickings perhaps, but, says Joel, "That sealed it. That was where we really started playing our own music exclusively."

That spirit is present in liberal doses on *La De Da*; as a collection of songs it has a familiar, well lived in quality that's instantly engaging. There's a depth of feeling ranging from celebration, right through caustic humour and loneliness, the



latter expressed with uniquely, raw eloquence on "Lonely Love", a song, Joel says, is "entrenched in distance." All stories that are told, it seems, for the love of telling a good story and without leaving any of the difficult bits out.

You get the sense Joel makes records and finds an audience instinctually; that he's in it for the long haul. "Lying on a Beach", in fact, is about a time, when Joel had a numbing job from which daydreaming was his only escape. A job, though tedious, that bankrolled *Down By The Khyber*. The undercurrent of perseverance is refreshing, particularly from an artist who's previously experienced industry scrutiny and a degree of fame, as Thrush Hermit did, and then has to start over, re-making yourself and growing your audience and fan base.

Plaskett views the experience philosophically, "Thrush Hermit was this constant ebb and flow of sudden highs and lows; '96 and '97 were real low years in terms of our profile in Canada. What was happening in general was we'd gone on to DJ culture and the interest in rock music really waned. We had all these records – Guided By Voices and Pavement and Nirvana and all this cool underground stuff. Then a lot of bands were just dying and we kind of watched every one of our Halifax peers either move away or break up." When things did pick up again, Thrush Hermit had another success with *Clayton Park*. "It was a real critical success for us and, to our credit, I really feel like that record was also ahead of its time, if you look at the success of Jet and all the garage stuff that's happening right now. Not to toot our own horn, but it was a record that embraces a lot of stuff that's suddenly very much in vogue right now."

Once again, the spirit that drove the independent rock scene previously is driving a new scene and whole new crop of independent artists and bands, Joel Plaskett among them. A spirit that drove him to drive himself to Arizona to record and mix with someone he barely knew...

It took Joel roughly eight days to get from Eastern Canada to Mesa, AZ. Along the way he played a show in Philadelphia and stopped in Memphis to demo a few songs for a day, got in for a brief tour of the Willie Mitchell's studio, from the legendary producer's son, himself. While he travelled the songs for the record were taking shape – sometimes drawing on his past and, at others, events that took place as he travelled. "Some songs are specifically about Halifax or my memories of Halifax, some are about the distance that travelling creates between you and people you care about, some of them are more about the trip." Like "Nina and Albert", he says. "Yeah, that's me driving through West Texas into a tornado warning and pulling off and getting a motel for 25 dollars... the wind was nuts and I was in the middle of nowhere. I mean, West Texas doesn't even have overpasses you can stop under, you know. I was like 'Fuck this. I'm getting a hotel.'"

"Nina and Albert" is essentially two songs in one: "The first, Nina, I had kicking around before I left. I just sort of pulled it out of the air after listening to Nina Simone. I love the sound of her voice – kind of low, lusty – so rich. It sounds nothing

La De Da Was Recorded Using...

- Late 1800s Bruno/Martin parlour guitar
- 1935 B&J Serenader archtop guitar
- His father's 1930s Kalamazoo Tenor guitar
- His grandfather's banjo
- His drummer's 1980s Stratocasters, miscellaneous basses and other borrowed guitars.
- Old Ludwig drums and old Zildjian cymbals
- Hofner Pianet
- Hammond Organ

like her," he says. "I just love the way her name rolls off your tongue." Albert came next, while Joel hid out from the weather in West Texas. "The song came about in this hotel room, listening to this woman in the room next to mine – the walls were paper thin – arguing with her husband or boyfriend on the phone. Trying to convince him that she wasn't cheating, she'd just stopped because this storm was getting so intense." Though the song is autobiographical, in that he's telling the story, it gave Joel a welcome chance to slip into someone else's skin for a song or so and tell someone else's story. "I thought it played to the travelling aspect of the record and blew the autobiography of the whole thing a little bit. I like that; I don't want it to be something that's so exclusively my story that other people can't relate to it on some level."

There are moments when it's painfully clear that this is a very personal story, but it's rare that the listener ever feels abandoned to playing a bit part in Plaskett's personal road story. There are plenty of places the outsider can hang their hat; as easily in "Lying on a Beach" and "Paralyzed" as in between the lines of more personal songs like "Lonely Love" and "Natural Disaster". The record has an immediacy that may be much a result of the songs being so freshly finished as a function of the recording process itself...

At first, when Joel was offered free use of Bob Hoag's Arizona studio, he thought "This is never gonna happen – when am I in Arizona?" And though he and Bob kept in contact via e-mail, Joel had yet to take him up on the offer, until Ian McGettigan brought it up while they were discussing how to make this record Joel e-mailed a request for Flying Blanket's gear list. "It was 2-inch 24-track, no nothing digital whatsoever, completely hands-on. I went down there cold and wanted Ian there. I was



HAVE SONGS WILL TRAVEL

by Kevin Young

there for about three or four days before Ian got there and Bob and I recorded a few things, but I was waiting for Ian to get there because Ian's a big part of that for me." Beyond being in Thrush Hermit, Ian co-produced both Emergency records with me. "We've been recording in basements since we were 14, you know? Ian is the kind of guy where I don't even have to talk about something — I'm playing a guitar line and he's instantly dialing in sounds that he knows our tastes swing with. There's not a lot of chit-chat when Ian and I are recording, unless we're just listening to records to get ourselves excited." The kind of rapport that's invaluable in the studio particularly when going into unknown territory.



my records (Thrush Hermit and Emergency) inside out. But beyond being a huge fan — "he was pretty excited to have me there, which is flattering — Bob had a critical ear and he knew what he liked about my stuff. It was exciting to have a guy who knew some of my catalogue better than I did. He was super enthusiastic and a great guy and we've become good friends, and Bob and his wife came to Canada to see the Emergency play Halifax on New Years."

Though they tracked the record, quickly, in roughly two weeks, on a typical day they'd start out slow, getting in to the studio around 2 or 3 in the afternoon. They'd get some food, listen to a few things, "What we'd done the day before," Joel says, "then hit this sluggish low, then get some more food. Then that food — it was always Mexican," he continues. "That food would kick in and we'd be like 'Jesus, we need a nap.' Then everything slowed down until about 8 at night when we'd get knee deep in it for about eight hours."

It may sound like a relaxed approach, but when you take into account this is happening in Arizona, in the summer, when the heat about cooks your brain in your skull it's better to work at night. "It was two rooms — he had a control room and a live room," Joel explains. Sadly, only one of the rooms was air-conditioned. Even more sadly, the air-conditioned room was not the live room. "So they'd be in

Austin I went and saw JJ Cale play — this is a guy I've been obsessing over for a long time — then I drove to Arizona, recorded for two weeks, left, played LA, San Francisco, drove up to Seattle, flew to New York, played Central Park with Blue Rodeo, flew from New York to Toronto, shot a video, played the Canada Day show with The Tragically Hip — at this point I'd hooked up with my band. Flew from Toronto to Halifax, played the Stan Rogers Festival, flew from Halifax back to Seattle, drove to Victoria, spent a couple days there, and drove to Saskatoon. Peter Elkas (Maple Music label mate and former Local Rabbit) flew out and met me in Saskatoon and we toured back to Ontario."

As exhausting as it sounds, that wasn't the end of the trip. Eventually arriving home in Halifax, he was there barely a week before getting back in the air to the US to mix the record in the beginning of August. "I'm telling people it's three weeks. I don't dwell on the fact that it was done in two different times, but it was actually all part of this enormous road trekking summer."

As far as the road ahead goes, when I ask what the next few months will bring, it appears like the enormous road trek will continue. . .

"I'm going to the Folk Alliance this weekend. I have a tour that's starting in Victoria — I bought a car in Victoria," he



Though Bob Hoag brought a great deal to the process right off the bat — not to mention, for starters: the studio, the pool, shelter — at first, Joel says, he wasn't sure how it would all play out. . . "I didn't know him that well. That's why I brought Ian down, but having said that, I realized how many bands he's recorded; he's done tons of indie and punk bands in Arizona. He plays keys now, has his own band, he's a talented musician and arranger and knows his way around a studio very well."

In the end the former Pollen principal songwriter and drummer brought a great deal to the table. . . "He knows

there (the control room), saying 'Why don't you do that take again?' and I'd be like, 'Are you fucking joking?' It may have been hot, but Joel and company got the job done quickly.

In total, I ask?

"It was a three-week record. I want to say it was done all at the same time, but what happened was I went down there and recorded for two weeks. . . I had to be in Seattle — I needed to be back in Halifax," Joel begins, unsure where to start. "I had this convoluted summer where essentially I got in the truck, drove to Arizona, played a couple of shows on the way, Philly and Austin. Then, the night after I played

explains. "(Fellow Maple Music recording artist) Peter Elkas and I are doing a solo acoustic tour together. He's going to open and then I'm gonna do a set and then he'll come up during my set and we'll play together. We're gonna tour from Vancouver to Halifax — an incredibly extensive Canadian tour. We're doing six weeks, one way; over 30 dates. May 7th we hit the East Coast and I'll go to Newfoundland the weekend after that, and that's gonna be my spring. Then I'm hoping to do some folk festival and sporadic band stuff through the summer. Then, the plan is; we have a DVD that we haven't edited yet — It was shot, a live full band thing.

We're talking about doing a DVD in the fall and touring as a band in the behind the DVD that has maybe four new tunes on it."

Joel makes it clear that he wants to work this current record for a while. He's proud of it and deservingly so, but wants to make sure he gives it time to sink in with fans before taking it too the band. ... "There's songs on there



"There are expressions that are always floating around in my head, and I'm never afraid to steal from myself."

that the band are going to play and we're going to play well, I know it. So I'm sure there's definitely some touring this year for the band, but I tend to go back and forth, I react to myself so quickly that I don't always give people time to follow. I don't really care most of the time, but I am careful. I don't want to have people going "What the hell are you doing? Are you on your own? Do you have a band?"

Joel describes his records as a little leaner now, with more of a songwriter bent. He admits that it may be a harder sell, in terms of pitching it to other territories. That said he identifies his music as having a regional element to it. The kind of quality that draws people in when they understand it, the kind of music that grows out of a tradition, at times self referencing, comforting and familiar, but always evolving. "Every scene that's existed through the history of music is kind of referencing itself on some level, there's a tradition there and all these groups referencing each other."

In those traditions it is often a case of artists being regularly re-inspired by their peers, but there's also a recognition of respecting other forms and revisiting others musical traditions that may have only effected you peripherally. When he was growing up, Joel says, some of the music around him didn't register. He's come around to some of it, British folk from the '60s, he's also revisiting

his past loves, Zeppelin, Husker Du, nursing a continuing obsession for JJ Cale and revisiting his own past efforts.

"A lot of the songs were written, or, at least completed on the way there, but a couple of them existed before; 'Lying on a Beach', I think I had the chorus of that song in '98. What tends to happen to me when I'm writing is that lyrics and melody – if you have something that works – things become intertwined. You don't forget it once you know the lyric, I always looked at the lyric, and I knew how it went. I actually didn't have recordings of that one. Through the years, I'd just pick up the guitar and see if there was some way I could make that chorus work."


He often references his past records in a lyric and *La De Da* references the last Emergency record cleverly. Although, he doesn't always try and deliberately make a through line from record to record, "There are expressions

that are always floating around in my head, and I'm never afraid to steal from myself." It also means his past records have an immediacy that doesn't diminish over multiple listens. In a way that kind of continuity referencing a larger tradition, a kind of musical community, and, in Joel's case one that includes his fans, drawing them in by letting them in on his life and, but with particular deftness on this record, bringing them along for the ride.

For more info check out... www.joelplaskett.com ●




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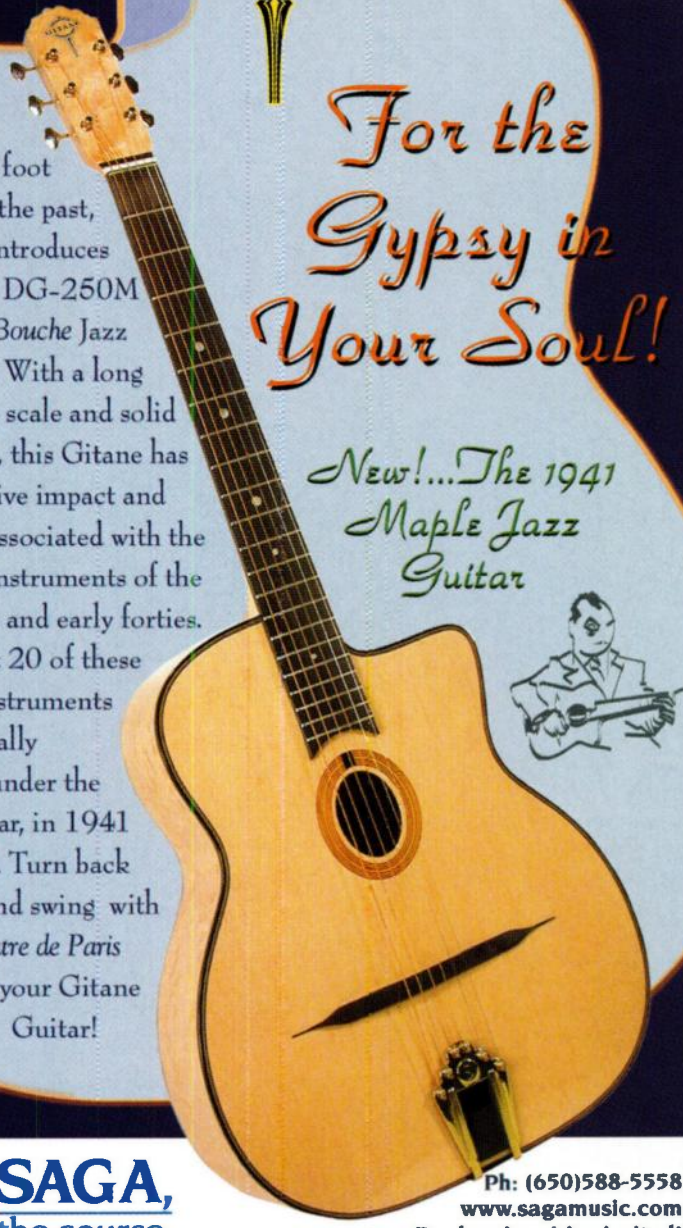



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A photograph of Amanda Stott sitting on a brick wall. She has long blonde hair and is wearing a dark jacket over a black t-shirt with a graphic. Her hands are clasped in her lap. The background features a brick wall with intricate, dark ironwork scrollwork. The name 'Amanda Stott' is written in a large, elegant, gold-colored cursive font across the top half of the image.

Amanda Stott

by Karen Bliss

Amanda Stott would not sing lines like, "Hit me, baby, one more time" or "My body's too bootylicious for ya babe." No, even though she was raised in a Christian home just like Britney Spears and the members of Destiny's Child were, this young woman from Brandon, Manitoba neither feels comfortable nor appropriate singing suggestive or controversial lyrics.

The songs on this 22-year-old singer-pianist's second album, *Chasing The Sky*, can be interpreted multiple ways, just never anything that could be construed as sexual or saucy. It was important to her that the material, whether she helped write it or not, is clean and positive.

"Well, that's the kind of person that I am," Stott states. "I wanted to have songs on there that made people feel good. That's the thing I had with my first record. A common thread through both records is that they are positive and the songs can be taken from different perspectives.

"I like a song that can be taken from the perspective of a relationship or a parent to a child or even a person's faith, where people can make the song their own and put themselves in it. I think that's what makes a great song," she says, noting that *Chasing The Sky*'s first single, "Homeless Heart", co-written

by famed songwriters Desmond Child (Aerosmith, Ricky Martin, Kelly Clarkson) and Andreas Carlsson (Bon Jovi, Celine Dion, Backstreet Boys), can be taken that way.

Stott's first album, 2000's eponymously-titled country-pop recording, made for Warner Music Canada, was comprised of 12 songs by outside writers, but all appropriate for a teenager from a faith-based background.

Now, five years later, signed to a new label, EMI Music Canada, with a more sophisticated pop sound, one would think, as is often the case, that she may have rebelled against her upbringing or revealed a little more of herself (quite literally – see Ms. Spears for details) as she entered adulthood, but Stott is still a stand-up gal – with the stand-up-and-take-notice voice.

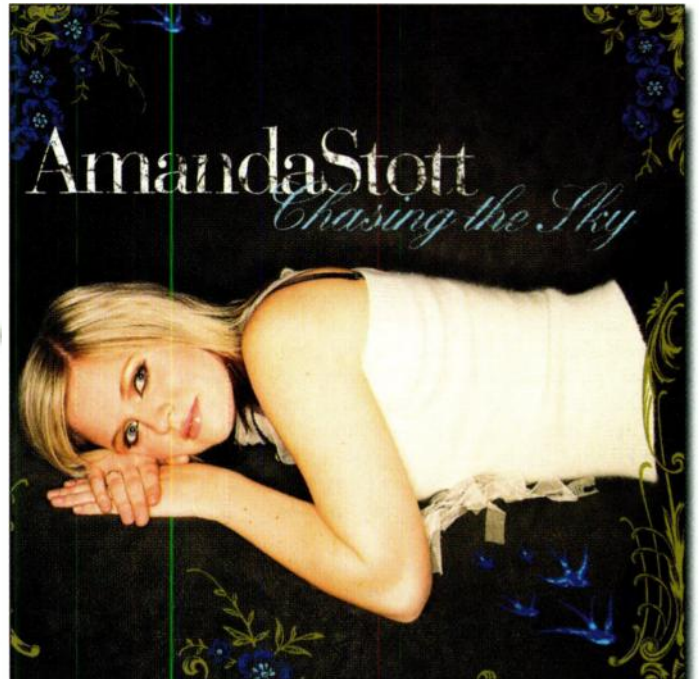
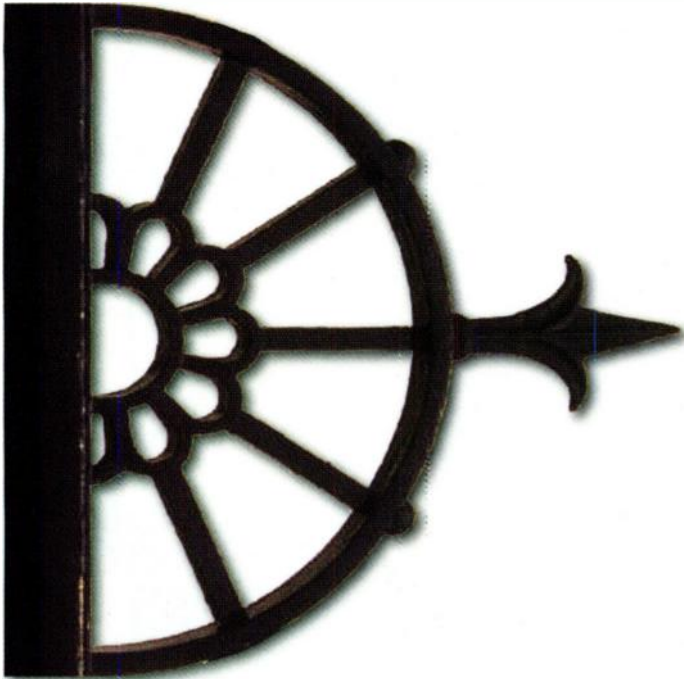
Fortunately, she had a sense of humour about it.

“Jon and I got along so well,” says Stott, who worked with him at Scarborough, ON's Phase One Studios. “We came from totally different backgrounds and the way that we work and our attitudes in general, we're not very similar, but sometimes those can be the best pairings.”

One thing they do have in common is they are both piano players. She has been tickling the ivories since kindergarten, about age 5, and went through the Royal Conservatory Of Music training, but admits she hasn't kept it up. “Jon is a great piano player,” she says. “He really challenged me in my playing, which was awesome. I really wanted the record to be a piano base so most of the arrangements started with the piano.”

Stott started singing in church at age 3, then alongside her musician brother and dad (Cyril, who now manages her). She did the usual rounds of weddings, funerals, old age homes, country fairs and festivals. In 1996, she landed a development deal with Warner Music Canada, and even at that tender age she claims that she spoke up about the lyrical content of the songs sent her way. “I was only 13 at the time and so it was a really big deal to me,” Stott says. “I wanted to be able to sing songs that I could identify with and so I was very, very picky. I didn't want to sing something too old for me.”

By 1999, Stott had a full-blown contract with the label and set about recording the songs on her debut with renowned country music producer Tom McKillip at the Tragically Hip's studio, The Bathhouse, in



She is, by all accounts, just a *delightful* human being, one of those words grandmas like to use, just a joy to be around – good, sweet, polite, pious. She says she doesn't drink or swear, but doesn't fault anyone who does. Her producer, Toronto's Jon Levine, she chuckles, “didn't hold anything back.”

Total opposites is how everyone from her A&R guy, Fraser Hill, to Stott and Levine themselves, describe the pairing. It's not like Levine is a drug-crazed, foul-mouthed rock 'n' roll. It's just, as he laughs, he's a non-practicing Jew, used to letting the odd cuss word fly and working at all hours of the night, and she's “definitely a good girl.”

Levine, the former pianist in the Philosopher Kings who has gone on to produce tracks for Nelly Furtado, Jacksoul, and In Essence, often joked with Stott “about the whole religious thing,” he says. “At one point, I bought her some Jesus paraphernalia. I got her one of those Jesus action figures that you get at Urban Outfitters.”

Starting fresh with a new label, the pretty blonde could very easily have gone in a dance pop direction (Britney) or aggressive pop-rock direction (Avril) like many young female artists, but that wouldn't be *her* either. “No, she knows who she is,” says EMI's Hill. “We weren't inventing somebody. She knew that she wanted to get into mature pop.”

As Stott explains of the switch from country to pop:

“I grew up listening to country music. That's what my parents always had on the radio, so that was natural that my first record would be country. But when I got into the music business, and started hanging out with other musicians, I was introduced to other types of music. Even somebody like Carole King, or something as huge as The Beatles that I really didn't listen to as a child, that's where I think this new album's influences come from. It was all of these new styles of music that I was introduced to and this album is a reflection of that.”

Bath, Ontario. Additional recording was done at M.R. & D Studios in Burnaby, BC.

“With my Warner record, I had a say in the songs for sure, but I didn't write anything for that record. It was songs coming from the outside and we made changes if we wanted to, but most of the time we just took the songs for what they were,” Stott remembers. “I am really happy with it. I see a lot of growth between my first album and my second one, but I wouldn't change anything on that (first) record.”

The album sold about 11,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan Canada, and Stott lost her recording contract. “Warner was going through a transition stage. I'm not going to say that they didn't drop me, that it was a mutual decision – it *wasn't* a mutual decision,” she says.

So what was it like for a kid with her whole life ahead of her to suddenly be without a deal? Disappointing to be sure, but did she ever think, “Oh, no, what am I going to do now?”

"For sure," she admits, "because at the time, it was like, 'This is it.' But over the last five years, which has been the time span between the two records, I've really been able to grow as a person and as an artist as well.

"I really enjoyed the time I had with Warner but, even though at the time it seemed like (getting dropped) wasn't a good thing for me, it ended up being a great thing for me because EMI has been a lot more into developing my songwriting. That's really a mission statement for their company is to develop their artists into songwriters so that they can carry their own."

A business associate of Stott's father helped set up the showcase with EMI in 2002, says Stott. She brought her trusty Kurzweil keyboard and performed in one of the boardrooms for the president, Deane

"If a singer sings something in one take that's perfect, I'm still going..."

Cameron, and a few other staff members.

Was she nervous? "Oh my goodness, yes," she responds. "First of all, record label people are the worst to play for. They give you no indication on their faces, whether they are enjoying it or hating it (laughs). You have no idea! And it was just me with my piano and I was playing some songs that I had dabbled writing at, hilarious stuff now that I think back to what I was playing, and some stuff from the first record. I'm happy that they saw what they did see, through it all."

Signing her that spring, over the next couple of years, the A&R department went through more than 300 songs, forwarding the most appropriate to Stott, who is now based in Winnipeg. She also co-wrote with numerous songwriters. Among the first were Canadians Marc Jordan (Rod Stewart, Cher) and Stephan Moccio (Celine Dion, Sarah Brightman), which yielded the grandiose piano ballad "Undeniably Real" (the album title was taken from the lyric), and Christopher Ward (Alannah Myles, Amanda Marshall), Rob Wells, and Casey Marshall, which produced the gentler piano ballad "My Real Life".

"She was really scared about the writing process because she hadn't done it before," says Hill. "She knew what she wanted to say; she wasn't sure how to say it, but she needed somebody to help her get it out. Between Marc and Stef, they really embraced her and that got her initial confidence. Then fast on the heels of those two were Chris Ward and Rob Wells. We got all those people together, and built her confidence. She came back and we played a few things here and we were amazed because finally she was able to say something."

"Yeah," agrees Stott. "Marc and Stephan, that was the first real co-writing

situation I was put into. I had never really written before and I was thrown in this room with these guys who had done amazing work.

"First of all, it speaks a lot for them because they took a chance on this little prairie girl that they've never heard of before 'cause they don't have to. For me, it was like going to university, working in a room with those guys because I learned just how a song comes about and saw two professionals putting the song together. It was amazing to be a part of that.

"I had worked on a couple of little things on my own and had tried to come up with some stuff. Marc has this way to bring about lyrics. I really think songwriting is a gift to be able to put what you have in your head and what you want to say on paper so it makes sense to people. I was able to give

my opinion on what I wanted the song to be about and helped out with the melody line, but most of all it was me watching them work."

Asked what she learned overall and she says, "I guess, for me, I always thought that you had to make songs so complicated that people almost couldn't understand (them). They had to really research and figure out what you were trying to say in the song. But really, you can have a message very clear and in simple terms and then it makes the song a lot more enjoyable because the person gets the message right away.

"I've always found it simple to find melodies and where songs sit nicely melody-wise. You have to find one thing that you're confident in yourself, especially when you go into a room with somebody you've just met and you're supposed to write this song together, so it's good to know that this is something I'm pretty good at. Lyrics, for me, I think about something for like 10 minutes before I actually say it 'cause I'm so nervous they're going say, 'Oh no.'" [laughs]

No matter if Stott contributed lyrically or not, she says all of the subject matter on *Chasing The Sky*—11 songs plus a hidden track—she had to have experienced or someone she knows has, or "it's just something that needs to get out there. Sometimes, there's just a message that needs to be heard. So they all have to be songs that I can identify with."

Of the six songs she did contribute to such as "Cry", she says that is about a "push and pull relationship," while "My Real Life" describes "taking a dream and turning it into a reality," which is what she has done. Ones she didn't write on at all, like "Maybe Tomorrow", the reason she recorded that song was "for the message definitely. We get caught up in our problems yesterday and we



forget about actually living for the moment." she says. "House Of Cards" she liked because of her own four-year relationship that seemed to never end.

Levine wrote "House Of Cards" for Stott before he was ever tapped to produce the album. It was at least two years ago. She demoed the track, and the two worked on another song that didn't end up making the record. Finally, after Hill and A&R VP Tim Trombley had decided on the final track listing for the album, they called upon Levine.

"It seemed like we were on the same page to where to go with the record," says Levine. "I was pretty opposed to doing that kind of more sampl-y-kind of music, with loops and stuff like that. I wanted to make it more organic because she's a piano player and I wanted to bring that element out and

guys' and girls' voices are not similar octave-wise, so I'd be like, 'Okay, that's a nice range for you. That's really high for me.' He'd be like, 'Try it!' So it all worked out."

Levine didn't produce two songs on the album, the hidden track "Lift You Up" and "Homeless Heart". The latter was produced by Sweden's Andreas Carlsson, who flew into Toronto to cut the track with Stott at Orange Studios in a matter of days.

"We did piano, all the vocals, we did bass, guitar, everything in those three days so they were so fast-paced, but I have never had a harder vocal session in my life. He was very hard, but in a good way, just with vibrato and stuff. Jon and I had done 'Paper Rain' together for *Women e3 Songs (Vol. 8)*, but we had a very short amount of time to do that song as well, so when Andreas, because I had never really sang pop music,

...to have them do it again just in case they can get more perfect."

-Jon Levine

focus on that and have it very minimal and organic and we seemed to click on that.

"It was extremely quick. I think they decided on all of the songs, except a song called 'She'll Get Over It', which is a song I brought to the table after we even started recording and I worked on that with Amanda a little bit. That was the last song and by the time I started producing the record, I think the whole thing took probably a month."

They holed up at Phase One in the middle of November, 2004, and finished all but the vocals a week before Christmas. They returned in January for just a week. "I think the reason we worked together at all is because we were on the same page so there wasn't really any argument as to how things were going to go down in terms of producing any particular song," says Levine who adjusted his night-owl work clock to her 9 to 5.

"It was just so incredibly smooth and quick, the whole process. She's an unbelievable singer in the studio, truthfully. I've never worked with anyone who is that quick. It was just ridiculous. Literally we do like an entire song, backups, everything, in like three hours. Every song was that quick. We would always do multiple takes. If a singer sings something in one take that's perfect, I'm still going to have them do it again just in case they can get more perfect." [laughs]

Stott enjoyed working at Phase One, especially because it had a grand piano she was able to play on the album. She also enjoyed some of the vocal challenges Levine presented.

"He'd be like, 'Okay, let's take it higher.' And I'd be like 'WHATTTTTT!?' [laughs]. At the end of 'She'll Get Over It', there's this one lick at the end. He'd be like, 'Can you do this?' and then he'd sing it. And

I guess you sing it differently than country which I didn't really realize. Country you use a lot of vibrato and I guess it's a bit of a different style of singing, so I learned a lot about how have to take the vibrato out and hold the notes a little more solidly and stuff like that.

"But along with the pressure, because he's worked with some amazing artists, it was a whole bunch of stuff all put together and I was like, 'Oh my God, I can't do this,' but it worked out."

While it's been five years between albums and Stott is still young, she doesn't want to hazard a guess as to where she'll go in the future. She has much to learn in terms of songwriting, but relishes the tidbits she picked up from collaborating with so many accomplished musicians. And with her faith intact, she will chase the sky as long as she is able.

Does she see herself making a worship album?

"I would definitely like to in the future," she says. "I just don't feel like it's the right time for me right now. All of this has really worked out for me and everything is really going great. And I'm just following where I feel I need to go at each time in my life and where I feel like I need to be. At this point, I'm just really happy with where I'm at and what music I'm doing and in the future I'd love to do a Christian record and definitely explore that." ●



Toronto-based music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian news correspondent for *RollingStone.com*, and operates a Canadian music industry news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/JamColumn/Bliss/home.html>. She also edits *Gasoline*, and contributes to *Elle Canada*, *Audience*, *Tribute*, *Words e3 Music* and others.

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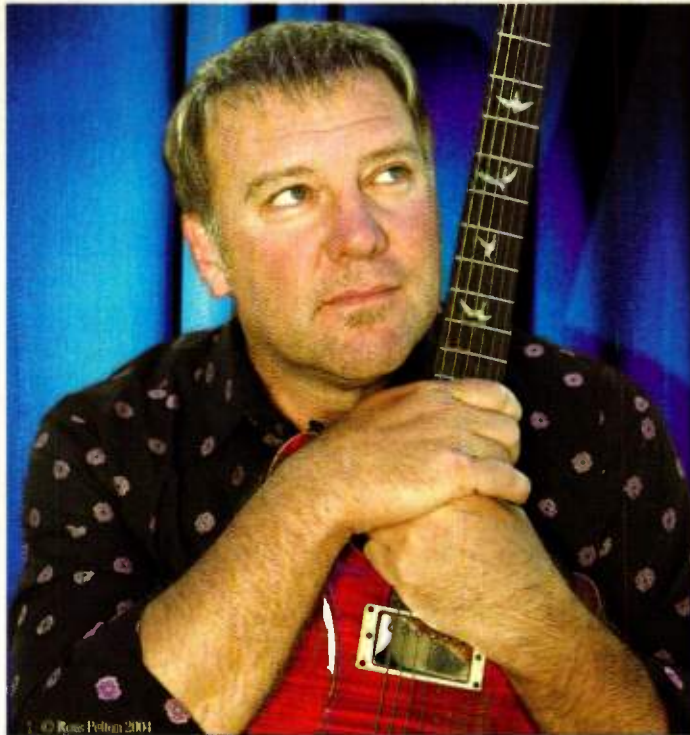
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- Step 2 The string should be positioned into the front edge of the bridge pin hole and the corresponding notch in the bridge pin. Push the ball end of the string down into the hole approximately 1 - 2 inches. Position the string.
- Step 3 The string is held in place at the bridge by a small notch in the front edge of the bridge pin. Push the bridge pin all the way into the bridge. Then pull up on the string to make sure that the ball end of the string is pulled tightly up against the bottom of the top of the guitar. (After guitars may have small dips in the front of the bridge pin holes, but this is no longer necessary with these new 6/32 bridge pins.) After inserting the string and pin, a few pulls with your thumb on the pin is all that is needed to keep it in place.
- Step 4 Note: Most bridge saddles are not glued to the bridge middle slot. The tension of the strings will hold the middle in place and the strings in their proper alignment. The tension of the strings will hold the middle in place.
- Step 5 Be sure to attach each string to its correct tuning peg as shown in photos. The string is passed through the string hole located near the top of the tuning peg. I use enough slack in the string so there will be 2 or 3 wraps around the tuning peg when needed to pitch. The string is passed through the string hole.
- Step 6 After going through this string hole, the end of the string is wound one-half way in the reverse direction around the tuning peg (clockwise for the three bass strings; counter-clockwise for the three treble strings). This will enable you to form a lock on the string to avoid slippage. (See to next step.) The end of the string is wound back, one-half way around the string peg.
- Step 7 (Note: The position of the guitar is reversed to show how the string is locked onto the shaft.) After pointing under the larger part of the string, the short portion is bent back over the long part. As you tune up the string, you will notice that this step forms a lock that will prevent string slippage.
- Step 8 After the string is brought up to pitch (standard A-440 tuning), the extra length of string may be clipped off, usually about 1/4" above the last bend. Note that a string should go around the shaft at least two to three full times. Each winding should be under the previous one, or it will sit on the line of the peg. This holds the string in tune better and holds much water. The string is wound two to three times around the tuning peg. You might occasionally encounter an older guitar with a little bridge or a string with a longer double winding adjacent to the ball end. As consistent with the bridge saddle by this winding is not recommended, we have shown an old fashion trick or remedy. An extra ball from an old string is placed over the string and drawn against the first ball. This will effectively lock the string into the bridge, removing the heavy area of the string from direct middle contact.



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Alex Lifeson needs no introduction. As the guitarist for progressive rock pioneers Rush, Alex knows a thing or two about guitars (and guitar strings). "I have been a user of Dean Markley strings for over 20 years and hope to continue for another 20 years. They are simply, the best!"

A MODERN DAY WARRIOR: Young Alex in the early days



No question, strings are an essential part of the sound of a guitar. With the exception of a rare few, the majority of players will agree that their guitars sound noticeably better with new strings. Though it's common, this fact is frequently overlooked and taken for granted. Changing strings is probably the cheapest and simplest way to improve your tone. So if you're not satisfied with the sound of your guitar you may want to consider trying another type of string before replacing pickups, or having the amp or your own amp player, since different strings may give your guitar an entirely new sound and feel. Remember, the string is really where the sound of your guitar begins. It's the vibration of the string that initiates everything.

A string is constructed of a core, the outer around which the windings of the string are wrapped, and the windings, the wrap of wire around the outer core. The core is usually either round or hexagonal in shape, while the windings come in three shapes: round-wound, half-round (but not also known as half-round or ground-round wound), and flat-wound. Round-wound is the most common of all string types and produces the brightest and clearest sound. A half-round string is constructed from a round-wound string that has had the outer round wrap ground or burnished down to create a more even and flatter surface. The smoother surface allows the hand to slide more freely with less squeaking as it moves across the string, and are generally not quite as bright as round-wounds. Flat-wound strings have a completely smooth outer wrap to provide the sheen and even final surface the affection stringers without squeaks. Flat-wounds produce a flat and dark sound and are most frequently used by traditional jazz players.

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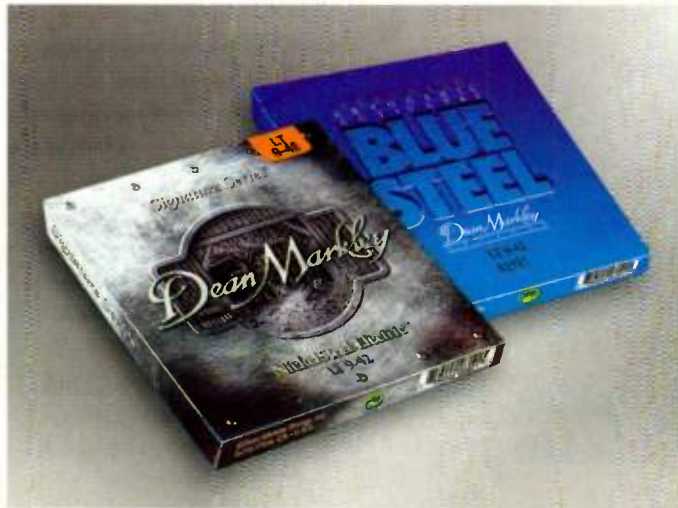
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IAN THORNLEY with his guitar collection

ROY TIMM

GUITAR 2005

Every guitarist can remember the exact moment they were inspired to play the guitar. It may have been a band they saw, a guitar riff they heard or simply the look of the instrument. Regardless of the inspiration, it's what happens after that moment that determines whether guitar playing will remain a hobby in someone's life or if they have what it takes to make guitar playing their career.

The guitarists featured in this article represent a spectrum of music genres from Flamenco guitarist **Nicolas Hernandez**, to the unique fusion of East meets West style of **Harry Manx** to the signature rock riffs of **Ian Thornley**, they provide different perspectives on guitar playing. Amid their diversity, there are two things they share in common: they are all Canadian and all are recognized leaders in their respective fields. Find out what the influences, past and present, are of Blues sensation **Jimmy Bowskill** and musical chameleon **John Gzowski**. Compare the practice/warm up routine of **Andre Coutu** who holds the guitar chair in pop diva Celine Dion's band, versus that of classical guitarist **Remi Boucher**, first prize winner in Andr s Segovia's music competition in Palma de Mallorca in Spain. See how the weekly musical activities differ between **James Bryan** who wears many musical hats, cross-pollinators of music genres of **The Montreal Guitar Trio (Glen Levesque, Marc Morin and Sebastien Dufour)** and **Rob Piltch**, first call guitarist in any style of music. Listen to Order of Canada recipient, jazz legend **Ed Bickert's** thoughts on rhythm playing, Country Tele picker **Steve Piticco's** and multi-instrumentalist **Kevin Breit's** approach to soloing and improviser **Brian Katz's** ideas on composing. Consider the responses from Brazilian and West African groovers **Ceslo Machado** and **Alpha YaYa Diallo** on making a living playing guitar.

by
**Levon
Ichkhanian**

Between them, these guitarists have covered a lot of ground lending their guitar playing, producing and composing talents to Juno and Grammy award winning projects with such artists as Celine Dion, Jacksoul, Fefe Dobson, Molly Johnson, Cassandra Wilson, Norah Jones, k.d. lang, Blood Sweat and Tears and Nelly Furtado, to name a few, and some have also carved out their own successful solo recording and touring careers.

Read on to consider how the practice, patience, determination, curiosity, hunger and perseverance have led this cross-section of successful guitarists to reach these heights.

Perhaps this article will serve as the inspiration to guide you to further explore the most beloved of musical instruments, the guitar.

What inspired you to start playing guitar?

Andre Coutu: The form of the instrument! I always thought a guitar was beautiful. But I liked the sound too. Especially electric guitars, I was really attracted to the tone of an electric guitar with a hint of distortion and those clean bright sounds.

Ian Thornley: When I was younger I played piano. A friend showed me how to play "Stairway to Heaven" on guitar, and I couldn't believe how easy it was. It sounded just like the record! That inspired me to start learning guitar. Once you learn how to play your favourite song, you're impressed.

James Bryan: Listening to my parents' Beatles and Hendrix records inspired me to get into music, and seeing KISS perform in their movie *KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park* inspired me to get on a stage.

Ed Bickert: There was a guitar in my house, which my older brother used to play. I guess since it was right there, it was handy. My brother showed me a few basic things and I guess I just took to it. It seemed like the instrument that I wanted to play. I used to like listening to guitar music of all kinds when I was a kid.

Jimmy Bowskill: There was always a lot of great music playing around the house like Hendrix and Zeppelin, and my dad played guitar and all of his friends played guitar, so this inspired me to play as well. My first real influence was Jimi Hendrix. I learned a few of Jimi's songs and then discovered Robert Johnson. I learned a few of his songs and then started listening to all sorts of different blues artists like B.B. King and Buddy Guy.

Montreal Guitar Trio: Glenn Lévesque, Marc Morin and Sébastien Dufour. We were also inspired by heavy metal, rock bands, girls and stardom.

Remi Boucher: My mother is a guitarist, when I was a child she brought me to bed singing and playing guitar for me, those were magical moments.

Rob Pilch: I was at a music store with my father when I was six years old and I saw a classical guitar for the first time. I told my father I'd like to try holding it and that was the beginning of a life long love affair.

How have your influences evolved over the years?

Ian Thornley: They have always basically stayed the same. Some guitarists leave me speechless and they are the ones that remain at the top – Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, Mark Knopfler, Scott Henderson, Robben Ford, Steve Moore, Eric Johnson.

Brian Katz: I listened to a tremendous variety of music growing up: classical, show tunes, Jewish music, jazz, folk and much more. Everything that meant a lot to me has found a way into my music. If it were not for my composing I'm sure I'd be too all over the map to make a career out of this. Composing allows me to bring my varying loves together. Of course, I loved the guitar all along, but music as a whole has always been much more important to me than specific guitarists. Still, Ed Bickert, Lenny Breau, and Ralph Towner and Gene Bertoncini – with whom I studied – have a special place in my development, and in my heart.

Celso Machado: Probably my strongest influence is Baden Powell, but also Augustin Barrios and recently I've learned a lot from the music of Raul Garcia Zarate (a unique player of traditional Peruvian folksong, esp. Wayno) and Ricardo Moyano (great Argentinean player). These are truly creative musicians who are really making music! On the classical side I am inspired by Antonio Carlos Barbosa Lima.

Ed Bickert: Early influences were people like Les Paul, and there were a bunch of others along the way. Oscar Moore and later on Barney Kessel, Tal Farlow, Jimmy Raney, Kenny Burrell, Jim Hall and Wes Montgomery. I certainly stole a bunch of their stuff and then later on I guess I sort of started adding some of my own things to form my own sound. But I listened to all kinds of music over the years, a lot of piano music as well, which I still really get off on. Classical music to some degree, maybe even a bit of country and rhythm and blues.

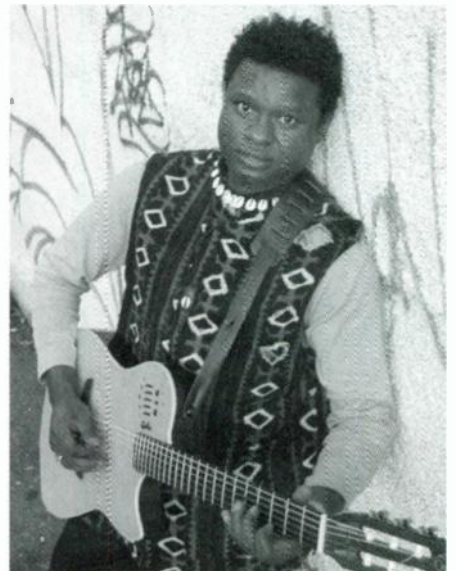
Jimmy Bowskill: I started listening to Jimi Hendrix, then Robert Johnson, and then I started getting into the electric blues like B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, and Howlin' Wolf. And then I started listening to old jazz and bluegrass and started collecting 78 RPM records with all my favorites like Louis Jordan, Louis Armstrong and Bill Monroe. But right now I am back into the heavier stuff like ZZ Top, Freddie King and Ronnie Earl. This has inspired my guitar playing in many different ways and made our shows more diverse.

John Gzowski: I started on classical guitar, studied some jazz, got into rock, got onto the Queen Street scene, got into jazz, got into free jazz, got into new music, got into microtonal music, got into eastern European Roma music, got into Greek and Arabic music, got into North Indian classical music and went to India to study Carnatic music last year.

Nicolas Hernandez: When I first got into flamenco seriously I was determined to allow only the "pure" stuff to influence me so that I could be as flamenco as possible. But over the years I realized that living outside of Spain I would have to build a pretty big bubble to not let other influences seep in. One master guitarist I studied from – Manolo Sanlucar – actually inspired me to lose the blinders. He said that an artist needs to feed on art no matter what form of expression – be it literature, music, dance, painting ... since then I've opened myself to allow all forms of art to influence me because it inspires



JIMMY BOWSKILL



ALPHA YAYA DIALLO



BRIAN KATZ

new and fresh ideas. So besides listening to the flamencos from Spain I now listen to Pat Metheny, Oliver Jones, Albeniz, Debussy, Bach...

Do you play any string instruments other than the guitar?

AYD: A little bit of Kora.

Celso Machado: Yes, many – West African Kora, Moroccan guembri, Brazilian viola caipira, ngoni from Mali, ncomfi from Congo.

Harry Manx: I play the Mohan Veena and the banjo. I used to play the santoor, an Indian instrument, and the tamboura. I play a bit of Sitar and I used to love to play the autoharp when I was a kid.

John Gzowski: Oud, Saz, cello really badly, mandolin, electric 5-string mandolin, lap steel, dobro and a bunch of homemade instruments.

Kevin Breit: Yes. I love to play mandolin and all its cousins – banjo and its relations as well.

Ian Thornley: I play pretty much any stringed instrument. It's all based on the same philosophy: keep choking the thing higher and higher to get higher pitched notes. It only takes a few minutes to figure out how to make some noise. Like bass guitar, however, it's easy to play bass, but it's difficult to play bass well. This applies to all instruments. I certainly don't master the instruments, but as a guitarist you know enough to experiment and give it a little tone.

MGT: Seb also plays the dobro, the charango and percs, Glenn plays mandolin and he's a very good singer too, and Marc plays the accordion. even though it's not a string instrument.

Steve Piticco: I play bass, pedal steel, lapsteel, dobro and banjo. I play all but the bass with a flatpick.

What is your live stage rig?

AYD: Godin nylon string, Fender Stratocaster, Takamine steel string and a Roland amp.

Andre Coutu: With Celine, I'm using a lot of guitars, simply because I'm using different key tuning to play open chords as much as possible. So I have the standard E guitars but also Eb and even some in D, which sounds kind of cool. I'm using Tom Anderson guitars for the Strat style sound but also Gibson Les Pauls and some nice Gibson Chet Atkins nylon strings. There are a lot of nylon strings parts with Celine. For amps, I have a rack with different preamps, one Custom Audio 3+SE and one Marshall JMP-1, those are split in-stereo with some effects, pretty much old stuff now: Quadraverb 2, BOSS SE-70, Rocktron Intelliflex and Yamaha SPX90! A Boogie Power Amp and a Marshall cab with vintage '30s. I'm using a few classic pedals too, MXR 90, Voodoo Lab Chorus and Univibe.

Ed Bickert: A Fender Tele, and in the last few that I was playing I was using an amplifier called Evans that I liked very much. It was on a long-term loan from musician Glenn Murch.

Jimmy Bowskill: My live stage rig is: I use a 40-watt Alessandro Working Dog amp with four 10-inch Jensens and an attenuator that Alessandro makes called the Muzzle. I usually use it on the third setting, which makes it about 15 watts. For effects I use an MXR Dynacomp, a Morley Wah, and a Fender Pedal Tuner. I mostly run straight in and use these effects only the odd time. I use George L's cables as well. For guitars I use a '68

Les Paul custom with three Fralin humbuckers (this is my main), a '95 Les Paul standard with a '59 classic pickup in the bridge, and a T-top in the neck, and an old Harmony Bobcat from the '60s for slide. I keep all my guitars tuned a tone lower than regular tuning.

Kevin Breit: A mid '60s telecaster and Fender '61 Vibrolux.

Ian Thornley: A Vox Wah Wah and a Line 6 Vetta Head. I used to travel with three amp heads, two Marshalls and a big refrigerator rack full of shit plus foot pedals, but when something goes down ... I don't want three guys with flashlights trying to figure out what got unplugged during a show. I've tried to simplify what I use.

Nicolas Hernandez: I put a piece of flexible foam large enough to be inserted into the sound hole of the guitar which serves to 1) hold in place a lavalier microphone (AT831b) inside the guitar (pointing to the bridge) and 2) block the amplified sound from reaching the microphone (i.e. minimal feed back). Sometimes if the sound system is really inadequate I'll also use a Digital Reverb/Delay Pedal from BOSS to bring the sound back from the dead.

Remi Boucher: In the classical guitar field it's really simple: the guitar and a footstool. Even now I don't use a footstool anymore, I prefer to use a Gitano guitar support.

Steve Piticco: I use BOSS effects: DD3 & Compressor. I also use a Goodrich volume pedal. I use a Fender/Vibra-King for my amp. I bought my 1976 Telecaster new and I have been using it since then. I sometimes use a Yamaha and my Mayhew acoustic live.

What is your studio rig?

Andre Coutu: It depends on the project. I might go direct sometimes and use some plug ins to get a tone. But I really like to mic amps. Small amps like Fender Deluxes are really happening to me. I often use a Guytron GT-100, which has a really sweet and organic sound. Some Marshalls are always fun too. I think in studio, a lot of stuff can be interesting if you have time to experiment a bit.

John Gzowski: I'm not much of a session player these days, but do a lot of my own recording and writing, so that includes a couple of Macs, Metric Halo interfaces, Digital Performer and a lot of plug-ins – all legal! I have a Pod and am using Nigel quite a bit now too.

James Bryan: The equipment I used on the last record includes the Alessandro, a Pine electronics Canadian made tube amp, and a Blues Junior. For guitars I used the Les Paul Custom, the Harmony, a '54 Gibson ES-125, a Cranium Divine which is a guitar a friend of mine named Wayne O'Connor built. These are very nice custom guitars, and I used a Gibson Explorer Studio with mini humbuckers.

Ian Thornley: I've acquired a lot of shit over the years, so I use whatever the song calls for. On the last record, I used four or five different heads including a Soldano, a Naylor, a Marshall and an old Bassman. We would run all of them at the same time and bring up whatever sound flavour suited the song.

Rob Pilitch: I usually use smaller amps for recording. My Fender Princeton, Fender Tweed Deluxe, Gibson G40 are what I try to get by with. If I need something more I will try the Boogie

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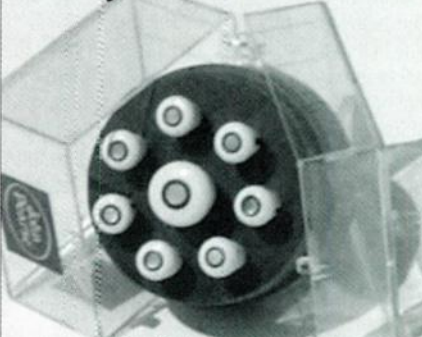
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Steve Piticco: My studio rig is not all that different from my live rig although I sometimes use a Fender Blues Jr. and I have a Les Paul and Musicman Silhouette ... I also have some effects and distortions such as DST by ART.

Is there a new guitar, or guitar-related gear that you just got and are very excited about?

James Bryan: There's a newer version of the Line 6 delay pedal, I just wish they'd make a pedal with specific BPMs you can save, like in the rackmounted version – and a built in tuner. Then I'd be set.

Jimmy Bowskill: I just picked up a Martin D-28. Unfortunately someone had thrown it really hard on the ground in its case and put a split in the side from the upper shoulder to the endpin. I have a friend who is really great at doing these kinds of repairs and it is in getting fixed right now. I can't wait to get it back!

Nicolas Hernandez: I got the Intellitouch tuner, which helps me to stay in tune even on a dark stage (the display lights up). The main reason I got it though was that it can "learn" a different frequency for when I play with a harmonium, for instance, that is at 441!

Remi Boucher: Yes, I have a new guitar from Jeroen Hilhorst, from Amsterdam, (www.hilhorst.demon.nl/) That's a really great instrument! It's very powerful and has great tone and sustain. It is built in a very special way: the soundboard is fine as paper and the back is very massive so it concentrates all the vibration of the soundboard. The result is impressive. As most of the time we play in a theatre without amplification or with other instruments, it is very helpful to have an instrument that projects well.

Steve Piticco: Yes, my Mayhew flattop. It is a dreadnaught style guitar and has more punch than any acoustic I have ever played. It is an even sounding guitar for recording yet has the oomph to cut and be heard over a group of guitars. Jack Mayhew hand-made this baby at his home in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada.

What are your practice/warm-up routines?

Andre Coutu: I do my own exercises that I've done for a while, which are a mix of scales and arpeggios, nothing very exciting. But I always thought that a good way to exercise and warm-up is to improvise on some groove that you enjoy. It can be on a CD or anything really. Just to play along with some groove is fun to do and it forces you to be creative, genuine and play in time.

Ian Thornley: I'll just look off into the distance and it will start flowing. I don't do a lot of whittling anymore, but having said that, I still do include some fast playing in shows once in a while. I'll just sit down and run scales: whole tone scales, chromatic scales, and just keep going until things are really loose and quick.

Celso Machado: Arpeggio exercises by Abel Carlevaro and Brazilian rhythms starting slow and gradually speeding up. I occasionally play scales too.

Harry Manx: In India I did about four to five hours religiously practicing scales and ragas, these days I usually play about 30 minutes before I go on and on days off I spend an hour or two practicing and working on new material. Because I perform so much I often able to stretch out and work on songs right there, rather than alone when practicing. It's an amazing opportunity to bring a song to life on stage.

John Gzowski: I try to vary it, so I don't regiment my playing by what I practice.

MGT: No warm-ups anymore really, or a couple of minutes of arpeggios and scales but that's all. We plan our concerts starting with efficient music and not too demanding technically. But we rehearse a lot together.

Nicolas Hernandez: Generally technique exercises to warm up my right hand. My right hand has always been the limiting factor so I tend to focus on exercises that help improve my technique and speed. So for example, with a metronome, I might do 15-20 minutes of scales (picados – picking with index and middle finger) using various patterns, 15-20 minutes of arpeggios using different picking patterns and rhythmic variations, 10-15 minutes of alzapua (a thumb technique) and thumb picking and about 10 minutes of tremolo (similar to the classical tremolo but with an extra i added to it – p, i, a, m, i, p, i, a, m, i). Sometimes I might just practice a solo at varying speeds like Paco de Lucia's Zapateadom, which is technically demanding.

Remi Boucher: My program is very heavy now as I play a lot of chamber music this year, along with two solo programs. I don't have too much time for practicing technical exercise as I am use to do. I am now playing the complete works for lute of J.S. Bach, so there are plenty of scales and arpeggios in it. I practice slowly. I take care to be the most relaxed as I can. I concentrate on always having good contact with the strings by feeling the bars and the phrasing. That's important to me to play all the program everyday – but slowly! In the case of the piece that are more virtuoso in nature, I practice them separately; I bring the tempo higher as I can, and after I play it on a control tempo. After having done that, I play as a concert and I record and I polish my interpretation.

List two or three CDs you'd take with you to a deserted island...

Brian Katz: John Williams: *The Baroque Album*, Keith Jarrett: *Facing You*, Egberto Gismonti, Jan Garbarek, Charlie Haden: *Magico*.

Celso Machado: The three CDs I take on the road with me (often the same as a deserted island when driving long distances) are *Griot* by Saliev Suso (kora music), *Soul of Cuba* by Adriano Rodriguez and Edesio Alejandro, and *Clube da Esquina* by Milton Nascimento and Lô Borges. I also have my guitar of course, but I am always happy to make instruments from what I find around me so I think I would do all right on a desert island.

Ed Bickert: Shirley Horn's *Here's to Life*, the soundtrack from *The Bad And The Beautiful* by David Raskin, and anything by Duke Ellington.

Harry Manx: Brij Bushan Kabra – *Classics*, Shiv



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Kumar Sharma – *Feeling*, Vishwa Mohan Bhatt with Ry Cooder – *Meeting By The River*.

James Bryan: Miles Davis – *Kind of Blue*, Tuck Andress – *Reckless Precision*, Stevie Wonder – *Songs In The Key Of Life*.

Ian Thornley: *Physical Graffiti* by Led Zeppelin, *Communiqué* by Dire Straits.

MGT: The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*; Bob Marley and the Wailers, *Burnin'*; Egberto Gismonti, *Infancia*.

Nicolas Hernandez: Juan Manuel Canizares, *Noches de Iman y Luna*; El Viejin, *Algo que decir*; Camaron, *Potro de Rabia y Miel* – Camaron was one of flamenco's greatest singers and was dying of cancer when he made this album. Paco de Lucia and Tomatito accompany him on it exceptionally.

Rob Pilitch: This is a tough one! I'd have to say Glen Gould, *The Goldberg Variations* (late recordings), *Shoenbergs' Transfigured Nite* by Pierre Boulez and the New York Philharmonic, and the Beatles *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Steve Piticco: Don Williams, *Vol. I*, *Vol. II* and *Vol. III*.

What advice do you have for players that are just starting out?

AYD: Focus. The more you practice the more you are fluent.

Brian Katz: Feel free to experiment and fool around – you can discover tons that way. At the same time, become good at a style you enjoy; that will teach you some discipline and begin to give you the depth required to transfer your knowledge to other styles you may wish to embrace. Use your ears, not notes, as much as possible (even in learning classical works!).

Celso Machado: Listen to everything, especially traditional music. Try to understand why it was played that way and the people who played it. The roots of every culture...

Harry Manx: Practice, practice, practice. In the West we don't have the same level of accomplishment on our instruments as they do in India and that's only because we don't practice as much. In India, kids start out practicing for hours every day and they keep that up until they're in their forties. Here, once you learn three chords we get out on stage to show everyone. In India you don't get onstage until you're a master. Also, you have to love it, because it's a long journey!

Ian Thornley: Keep at it. Don't sell your guitar and buy a fucking turntable. Don't listen to the radio for guitar player inspiration because it's all just fucking cheap power chords, which I know I'm a big part of and a big fan of mind you. But I think the more you learn the less you think. So learn as much as you possibly can even if it's not really your style or your favourite music. I am always pleasantly surprised by guitar players who can sit down and read a chart and can play rhythm changes, and then they can get up on stage and tune the guitar to low B and just start rocking out. Just as much as you can learn, the wealth of knowledge that will never hurt it will only serve you.

John Gzowski: It's better to spend your time playing music you like, rather than music you think will make you a living, as you could end up stuck playing stuff that drives you nuts. Make your own work. Learn all aspects of the business.

MGT: Don't confine yourself to only one style

of playing. Use all the resources of all guitar techniques as potential tools for your own style. And most of all: be curious and free.

Rob Pilitch: Work on listening deeply to music and develop your ears, learn how to be self-critical ... be patient it's a life long affair ... play with other people as much as you can and learn from everyone you can.

What musical activities does your average week consist of?

Brian Katz: It varies quite some but in general I teach improvisational approaches at York University and teach pre-service teachers at the University of Toronto Dalcroze Eurhythmics (a movement and music educational approach) and guitar. I also teach guitar, piano and composition

privately once a week at home. I regularly give workshops in various school settings. I freelance as a performer at all kinds of engagements. I do a lot of gigs where I play classical, jazz, folk and klezmer during the course of the evening. I try to get a little composing done but this does not happen every week. I'm usually learning some repertoire. I still can't play my own as well as I would like! When I concretize, I primarily play my own music. When I'm on the road I generally give workshops as well.

James Bryan: I'm a producer, songwriter and manager (www.lefthookent.com) as well as a player, so my week is usually very busy and diverse, everything from writing a song with an artist at home, to producing it in the studio, to rehearsing an artist I'm working with in a rehearsal

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space, to playing a gig at a club with my band. Then there's the other side of things, the meetings with record labels, publishers and lawyers.

Jimmy Bowskill: My musical activities for a week consist of a lot of jamming with my friends and playing at home and at school. I always play after school and sometimes when I first wake up. Sometimes we will have a show on a weeknight, and almost always on the weekend. And on Monday nights I have guitar lessons.

Kevin Breit: Some writing ... some live gigs ... and an occasional session.

Ian Thornley: If I'm on the road there's always a guitar sitting on the bus that I work on. If I'm at home, I'm usually writing in my home studio.

That's where I also record and demo ideas.

From sun up to sun down, there's pretty much music going on. Whether there's a guitar in my hands or not, it's going on in my head. It can be tough to focus sometimes when my mind's always on music.

MGT: Unfortunately, a lot of management, more than we'd like to. But for the rest of the time, it's arranging, researching and working on other exciting projects.

Remi Boucher: I am teaching guitar at Laval University in Quebec, six hours a weeks. I do my practice everyday in solo or in chamber ensemble. Most of the time the concerts are in the weekend. When I leave on tour that routine is completely changed. That refreshes my mind and gives me new energy.

Rob Pilitch: I try to get some jazz playing in with other people ... I might do a recording date (TV show or album work) I often sub in at the theatre doing *Mama Mia* ... I try to do some composing and practice. Every week is different – sometimes busy, sometimes slow for work these days. I need to make sure all my guitars are playing well in case I need to use them.

Steve Piticco: I like to book sessions at the first of the week so that my weekends are open for any live shows I may have to do. I really like playing live under all kinds of different circumstances and with different players too.

How has making a living playing guitar in the present changed from the past; and what are your thoughts for the future?

AYD: As I am more focused on my career and am more known and have credible shows and have won Junos, now I do more festivals and concerts than clubs in the past. The future will be even better.

Andre Coutu: That's a good question. I was lucky because I've been doing that for a while now. At first, when I started, I was doing a lot of reading gigs. You go there, you read and play and try to figure out things fast. But now it's a lot different – probably because of computers.

Pro Tools is fabulous but I think we don't do music the same. It's good in a way but it doesn't make the same kind of player

STEVE PITICCO

as before. But I think it's always cool to be a good musician and to play with others but sometimes I have the feeling it's getting pretty rare.

Ian Thornley: It's harder, I'm sure. I know a lot of guys who are unbelievable guitar players, and instead of scratching away a living in today's market they'd probably be huge fucking stars because guitar music was really big in the '70s. Then with the '80s came Eddie Van Halen with his whole style of playing. It spun another guitar hero phase.

The actual guitar player thing went downhill in the early '90s with the advent of grunge. Although it's great music, and it was a return to passion and to real rock n' roll, the attention to detail was left by the wayside. Different eras have different sorts of guitar heroes. Right now, if you took the time to learn how to be a great guitar player, it may be harder to find a gig. Instead, if you have the right look and the right vibe – and you can skateboard – you're in. That's how it's harder now because you need to know how to skateboard too! [laughing] I always hoped the focus of music would go back to musicians. I've always hoped that but I can't take away from anybody who sits down in his garage and picks up a guitar and just writes a great song. It's all really about songs. All the greatest guitar players are always serving the song with their guitar playing, and then adding in flashy bits!

Brian Katz: Being a versatile and flexible performer has always helped me (and others) to get some kind of work, and I imagine that this won't change in the future. Since I'm not really much of an electric player, I've carved out a certain niche for myself. (Lucky for me, sampled classical guitar sounds awful so I doubt that I will be replaced by a machine).

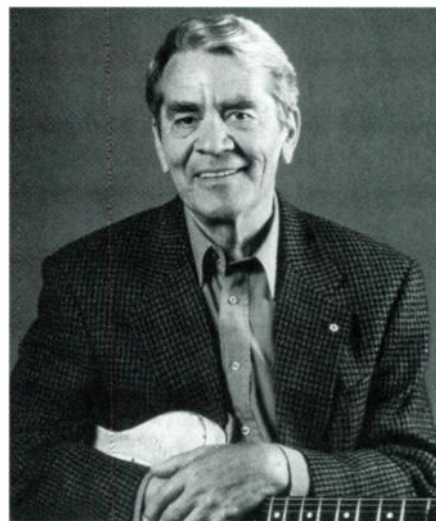
Celso Machado: The biggest change from the past is I understand the business side of my career better and am able to make my own projects happen and am not at the mercy of an agent who does not understand what is important to me or my career. In the past I had the mindset that I was working for the agent instead of the other way around. Today when I work with agents, or other music professionals, it is as an equal partnership with unique roles to make the best outcome for everyone. For the future I hope to continue on my path – performing, recording, composing though it would be great to get better distribution of my music, wider recognition and opportunities, and maybe a good label or manager who really understands my music and the way I work best. That said, I get a lot of satisfaction out of what I have been able to achieve independently.

Harry Manx: I spent many years as a street musician learning my trade and that was a great experience because if you don't play well people don't stop and they don't pay and maybe you don't eat that day. Now people usually know me by the time I arrive to play a show, but I still have the responsibility to make sure they get a quality performance. I am very lucky to be able to do what I do, so I want to give people the best quality. In the future I hope to reach more and more people with the music and to move those people emotionally and to inspire them.

James Bryan: In the past, a musician could just play their instrument well, and make that a career. Now, with digital recording, it's possible for one person to make an entire record on their own, so it's just as important to be able to learn a computer



REMI BOUCHER



ED BICKERT



HARRY MANX

program like Reason, or Pro Tools, as it is to practice the guitar, and it's a trend that I only see getting bigger in the future.

John Gzowski: I make more of my living writing than I used to, which is better for my life. This has made doing gigs a lot more fun again. I'm hoping I can just keep on doing what I do.

Rob Pilitch: There's not as much freelance recording work as there used to be. I'm not that familiar with the club scene except I know the jazz club scene is pretty skinny right now. I got a lot of chances to work when I was younger because the main guys were so busy they needed to get subs for stuff. But it's not like that anymore. I think the



younger players have to find more situations to get the experience they need. I think and hope there will be a return to more live players recording when people get sick of all the machine stuff that's going on and realize music is a live and social practice ... there's nothing like the magic of having the right people come together to work on something.

Steve Piticco: Playing guitar and making a living now is different because in the past, I would be playing many bars and nightclubs. Now I don't play hardly any. It is mostly one-night gigs such as dances, theatres and tours. When I did a tour in the '70s and early '80s, it would be a tour of clubs mixed with some one-nighters.

What is your approach to composing?

Brian Katz: Get up and get to work. I've had enough inspiration for a few lifetimes; getting to work can be the tough part. Once I'm there, I might begin by exploring a little but I generally know in advance the kind of work I wish to create and thus set out to figure out how to best achieve results. I draw on my studies in counterpoint, harmony, composition, analyses and the like, and, of course, my life experience. I do not necessarily work linearly; in fact, as Ralph Towner had taught me, it is good to sometimes work backwards from the cadence points.

Harry Manx: I write the lyrics separate from the music. I like to look at lyrics as poetry. I read a lot of poetry and take notes all the time of things that I would like to write about. I work on chord progressions and rhythms in practice that are going to become songs. Closer to recording, I

bring them together and I have to adjust one or the other to make things fit.

James Bryan: I start a song one of two ways: with a melody, or with a lyrical concept for a chorus. The rest falls into place from there.

Jimmy Bowskill: When I compose a song, I usually come up with a cool riff or chord progression, and either me, my dad, or Alec comes up with a cool idea for lyrics and we write around that.

Ian Thornley: I don't think there is an approach. Staying honest and authentic is the only "approach". It happens all different ways. For me, most times, it's me sitting there with a guitar and something pops out that's different and then all of a sudden I start humming along with it and I'll be able to see how everything will fit together as a song. Then you write from there. The first few minutes of inspiration are great, and then you spend the rest of the time putting the fucking thing together. But there's also been times where I just think of a line, a really cool line, and it will fit in the back of my hand or a napkin or in my notebook, waiting for a home, you know. So, you never really know, and I'm not adverse to trying anything, anything new, anything different or co-writing or any of that there's no approach to it. I think the inspiration comes from everywhere and from everything.

Kevin Breit: Don't know! I write only when I have to and that has always been a strange type of inspiration for me. Blessed is the deadline!

John Gzowski: I like to keep it varied. Some ideas come from my head and go straight to paper, some from playing an instrument and some from certain sounds. I have never really been interested

in developing something that could be called "my sound" in composition. I figure my voice will come out regardless of what I write, so why try to force it.


What is your approach to soloing?

AYD: I try to make small melodies within the harmonic structure.

Andre Coutu: A mixture of skills and inspiration. I would like to be more inspired sometimes but when I'm not, skills are important!

Brian Katz: I generally think very contrapuntally and try to make the "solo" an extension of my themes. I sometimes build new themes from those extensions. I like things to grow organically. I often compose separate solo sections in my own works, and they often have different but related harmonic schemes. I don't particularly like to play over changes these days. I like to invent new changes and forms in the process of improvising. When playing more single lines, I sometimes (as in Dixieland) like to play off the melody more than the changes and sometimes the opposite (as in Be-Bop). I'm very fond of circling around key centres but try to make my "outside" playing motivated by what the composition requires, not the "solo" per se.

Ian Thornley: Generally, it's what serves the song and I would hope that a solo that I would play would be something you can sing, that you can hum, other than just sheer flash, because I tend to shy away from the flashy stuff on record because it doesn't do anybody any good. It's the different between saying "here's who I am and here's



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what I can do." I try to serve the song first and foremost, and then try to do something that will be memorable – something that will stick in your head other than the chorus or the fucking hook.

Ed Bickert: I try and play something melodic usually. A lot of time I feel that maybe I'm not really a jazz player because I like to play melodically and stuff that's easy to listen to, nothing angry or noisy or intense.

Jimmy Bowskill: When I play a solo I try to go into it as relaxed as I can and build up from there. It really all depends on the kind of mood you're in. I find dynamics are really important to keep a solo interesting. I don't really think about it much on stage, I just play and see what comes out, but it did take a lot to get dynamics worked in.

John Gzowski: As fast and loud as possible, unless I'm playing music, then I try to do something that works with the tune, and is interesting or exciting. I try to incorporate a little of what I'm working on at present, but not so much that it sounds like I'm still workshopping.

Kevin Breit: To quote my friend Danny Greenspoon, "tell me a story..." He never said it had to make sense or have a good ending. This is something to fall back on.

Rob Pilitch: For pop or rock stuff I try to find something that feels like it belongs to the song, not just a bunch of riffing, it often begins with choosing a cool sound that makes you want to play a certain way. For jazz it's much looser

sometimes. I'm into exploring for a while and will play many choruses on a tune and sometimes I feel more compositional and the solo will be more concise.

Steve Piticco: When I solo I first look at the neck of the guitar and I treat my positions as if I was carrying a capo with me. The capo being my first finger. When I look at my first finger as my capo, everything that I play is more or less open in my mind. So whether I am looking at a G chord or a C chord position it looks just like a G chord or a D or a C chord and so on. The number system is based on 1 being the chord you are in or the root chord. A major scale of whatever chord you are in will give you what the next chord will be such as, if I asked, "give me a (1-5-1-1) intro, commonly called a "fifteen eleven intro" in C it would translate, (C G C C) those being the chords you would play for that intro. If I am yelling or trying to give you the next few chords to a song in a live situation, it is easier to say or show numbers to the other players on stage with you.

What is your approach to playing Rhythm?

AYD: When I play African music I try to make the guitar sound like traditional instruments such as the Balafon and Kora.

Andre Coutu: I take it very seriously. I mean, in the kind of job I do, 90 per cent is rhythm and the rest MIGHT be soloing. So, I try to be in the pocket and have the right feel.

Ian Thornley: My approach to rhythm is always just to lock in with the band, the bass and drums. Lock in with the rhythm section – have it be one big throbbing beast.

Celso Machado: Rhythm is the foundation of Brazilian music. There is nothing without rhythm, no matter how clean you develop a melodic line. To play Brazilian guitar you have to at least feel the rhythm inside you, better yet train as a percussionist. My first instrument was the frying pan leading a Samba group during carnival.

Ed Bickert: Listening to so many players over the years, the nature of the instrument is such that comping is more natural or easier on the piano, I would think. Certainly for solo piano, to compliment what you're doing with your right hand. Listening to how a piano player plays behind a singer or a horn player, that's the stuff that I try to play.

James Bryan: Everything I play has also got to make you move, whether it's your head bobbing or your hips shaking, so groove is very important to me.

Kevin Breit: Every song is different, therefore requiring a different treatment. Generally speaking, groove and taste are the order of the day.

Remi Boucher: It is important to me to feel how the energy gravitates from bar to bar, especially on baroque and classical music. I include that on the relief of the phrasing. Then I use this phrasing to gravitate in the structure to assure that my musical intentions are going somewhere. Sometime the harmony suggests sustaining some notes more than other but all that as to be done with authority.

Rob Pilitch: Lock into the guys who are bass and drumming you're the connection between the time and the harmony ... lot's of fun with guys you share values with ... tough when you don't feel things the same way.

How did you develop your style?

Ian Thornley: I think it's fair to say it's an amalgamation of everybody that I like. I don't even know if I have a style. To me everything I play is lifted from somewhere. Everything is either a little twist on somebody else's idea, or it's directly lifted. I think just years and years of doing that, eventually, maybe, if you're lucky you can pick up a guitar and have it sound like you when you pick it up. That's something that takes years and a lot of time and a lot of luck and a lot of focus and a lot of learning. As soon as you forget it all you have your own style.

Brian Katz: By listening carefully to what is most me.

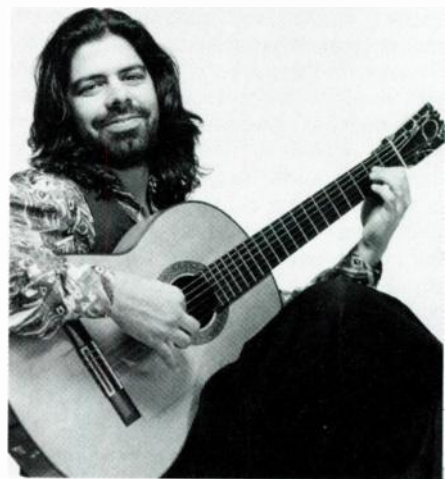
Celso Machado: As a child I was surrounded by the music of the people, not necessarily professional performers but great musicians nonetheless. Samba, cavaquinho, viola caipira, many kinds of percussion, beautiful singers and choro on guitar. To play in front of these people is a major challenge; they are the real critics. They will tell you if you are playing too fast or without feeling. Young players don't understand that each piece has its own tempo and feeling and tend to play too fast.

Ed Bickert: I think that's just a big mixture of putting together all the things that I listened to over the years. I tried to play a combination melodic horn kind of things and piano stuff, and the way an orchestra sounds. The combination of the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, it comes when I play. The thing I do best though is to Tacet – I'm very good at that!

Kevin Breit: I just played and played and tried



CELLO MACHADO



NICOLAS HERNANDEZ

to keep myself musically happy. I'm not happy imitating or stealing somebody else's lifelong struggle. The only struggle I know, really, is my own and hopefully if it doesn't, it will come out in my own approach.

Remi Boucher: By meeting guitarists on the international competitions I did. When you have the opportunity to meet hundreds of guitarists from more than 20 countries that helps a lot with ideas!

Steve Piticco: I think my style was developed by everything that I have heard and liked through my whole life. If I heard something that I liked, I naturally would love to emulate the sound if not the lick as a whole. We are like sponges when we are motivated. ●

Multi-instrumentalist Levon Ichkhanian is a D'Addario clinician. He plays Guitars, Oud, Bouzouki, Mandolin and Banjitar. An avid explorer of improvisation, Levon's musical experiences range from producing, composing and recording to touring. He has played on over 60 commercial recordings. Levon's Travels, the follow up release to after hours (with guests John Patitucci and Paquito D'Rivera) blends contemporary jazz with world beat overtones and features Alain Caron. Contact Levon through www.levonmusic.com.



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Harmonic Quality and Function

by James Linderman

Part 1

I would agree that the terms “quality” and “function” sound remarkably analytical and you may already be wondering if the concepts in this column will be too academic and theoretical for use in any real practical application in the writing of a song.

In this two-part series I will attempt to prove that the understanding of chord quality and harmonic function can be practical cornerstones in real life songwriting and I would only ask that you give this column a good reading, give the concepts a descent try or, if you don't write the harmonic portions of your songs, pass it on to your collaborators who are “dealing” with chords.

Chords have two main features, they have a quality and they have a function and we will deal with quality here in Part 1 and look at function in the next issue of *CM* in Part 2.

The quality of a chord is based on whether it is major, minor, diminished or augmented and the quality of the chord has everything to do with the mood it helps create.

Major chords tend to sound happy while minor chords evoke a feeling of sadness. Diminished chords can help create a feeling of anticipation or a discontented mood depending on their application and augmented chords tend to sound anxious or sometimes remind me of what a hangover would sound like ... if a hangover made a particular sound.

If you are not sure how to apply all of these chords to the guitar or piano or whatever your *harmonic weapon of choice* happens to be and want to hear how they sound, I would recommend a (guitar or keyboard) chord dictionary which can be picked up at any self respecting music store or ordered from www.musicbooksplus.com.

If the quality of the chord has to do with the mood it evokes, then it stands to reason that the choice of chord quality could enhance the mood being conveyed by a certain note in a melody or a particular word in a lyric.

A great way to apply this is to take a song that already exists and, within the context of the key that it is in, alter all of the harmony to a different quality. You could try changing “C” chords to “Am”, “Em” chords to “G” chords and replacing “F” chords with “Dm”. You would use the Transposition chart below as your resource.

The point of this would be to determine if the song implies something different when the harmonic qualities are altered. For instance, in places where there was genuine sentiment there might be some irony now implied.

No matter how you use this information, any deliberate or deliberately random use of harmonic quality will enhance your songs by making your chord choices every bit as evocative as your choice of notes to sing, and your choice of words being sung.



Key	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	Signature
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	B	C	Ø
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#°	G	F#
D	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#°	D	FC#
A	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#°	A	FCG#
E	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#°	E	FCGD#
B	B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m	A#°	B	FCGDA#
F#	F#	G#m	A#m	B	C#	D#m	E#°	F#	FCGDAE#
C#	C#	D#m	E#m	F#	G#	A#m	B#°	C#	FCGDAEB#
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	B°	C	Ø
F	F	Gm	Am	B♭	C	Dm	E°	F	B♭
B♭	B♭	Cm	Dm	E♭	F	Gm	A°	B♭	BE♭
E♭	E♭	Fm	Gm	A♭	B♭	Cm	D°	E♭	BEA♭
A♭	A♭	B♭m	Cm	D♭	E♭	Fm	G°	A♭	BEAD♭
D♭	D♭	E♭m	Fm	G♭	A♭	B♭m	C°	D♭	BEADG♭
G♭	G♭	A♭m	B♭m	C♭	D♭	E♭m	F°	G♭	BEADGC♭
C♭	C♭	D♭m	E♭m	F♭	G♭	A♭m	B♭°	C♭	BEADGCF♭

James Linderman lives and works at theharmonyhouse, a music lesson, songwriting and recording pre-production facility in Newmarket, ON. James writes songwriting articles and music book reviews for The Muse's Muse Web magazine, www.musesmuse.com (3 million readers monthly), Canadian Musician magazine, Songwriters magazine, Professional Musician magazine, Songwriters of Wisconsin International and The Dallas Songwriters Association. His writing is also featured in the James Linderman Wing of the library at www.songu.com. James has a Canadian University and American College education in music theory and composition and is also pretty good at making up songs and playing the guitar. Contact James at theharmonyhouse@rogers.com.

Good Mixing Habits

by Tim Crich

Writing on mixing is a difficult task. Try explaining to someone, without actually being there, how to paint a picture, how to play the blues, or how to remove a spleen. These basic few points just scratch the surface of good mixing habits. Bottom line, the best mixes come from well-written, well-arranged, well-played and well-recorded songs.

Getting Started

Paint a mental picture of how you want the mix to sound, then start with a fresh, relaxed attitude. Check your session notes and ideas that seemed to work while tracking and overdubbing. Maybe listen to some of the earlier rough mixes. Sometimes a 10-minute mix at the end of a session can sound better than a 12-hour marathon mix. Rough mixes may be heavier, lighter, drier, more groove. Determine which elements of a favourite rough mix best captures the feeling and aim the boat that way.

Set up, label, and double check the signal flow of all your needed reverbs, delays, or harmonizers before you start. Set all compressors, limiters and gates to unity gain. If applicable, go through all tracks and erase any unwanted noises such as coughs, instrument sounds, etc. Activating the playback machine's loop mode allows the uniform repetition of the song to help get into a flow for the mix. Like the musicians who played the song, the mixer can get into a "creative groove" as well.

Levels

Run the console at its optimum operating level. Pushing fader levels all the way up adds unnecessary noise. Keep all the gain trims as low as possible, and the master buss level at zero for clearer, more transparent mixes – crucial on budget consoles when distortion increases as gains are boosted. Plus, with the master fader always set at zero, you know if it has been moved or not, and lets you know where to return after every fade.

Turn down not up. Before changing a track's level, see if you can turn something else down to make the track jump out a bit more. Continually raising certain tracks because they are getting lost means there may be an equalization problem. Check to see if frequencies are overlapping, or if any frequencies could be pulled rather than added.

Try this: Set the volume at a reasonable level. Plug your ears with your fingers, close your eyes and listen to the track. This seems to give a different perspective of levels, and is a good method of checking the vocal and snare drum levels. But sometimes you just lose the groove in the levels. Pulling all the faders down and re-setting levels doesn't take long and may help you regain perspective as you bring each instrument back into the mix. Once you have your levels set where you like them, leave them.

Mix at lower volume levels. Lower volume protects your valuable hearing and the sounds tend to be more accurate. Plus the loud levels might wake up the producer.

The Groove

The groove is the defining entity of the song, the central core of what keeps it going. Create movement throughout the mix by slightly changing panning, effects, processing and track levels. Enhance the groove and preserve the emotion by bringing the best things forward in the mix. Identify one or two fundamental elements and accentuate them.

Create layers by bringing in one instrument at a time. Give the listener a little at a time as the song progresses, rather than everything at once. Make the song more like a staircase, building as it progresses. And what if a part just doesn't fit? Don't try to make it fit. Cut it and be done. Each element must be solid, not wishy-washy. For example, if you have three guitars playing roughly the same thing, either clean them up or use only one of the tracks as a main one. In the long run, each remaining instrument will have more impact. Of course, don't eliminate parts unless you are authorized.

As Time Goes By

Take a silence break every few hours. Ears need time to relax and rejuvenate every few hours. Your ears are organs, not muscles – overuse does not make them stronger. If that were the case, I would have a liver of steel.

As with the recording process, don't go solo too often. It's great to have the solo button to get a basic sense of an instrument, or to zero in on a problem, but get in the habit of changing equalization with

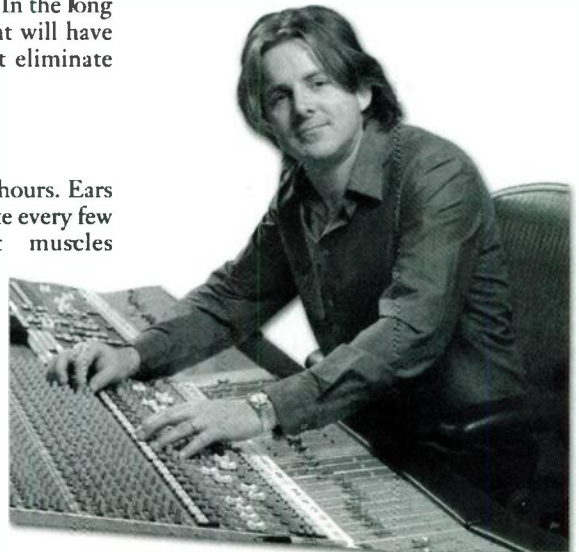
the rest of the tracks in the monitor mix. When you can't hear the other tracks, you can't effectively equalize a track to fit in, yet stand out. Don't spend too long on any single instrument. Get a basic sound, then move on, tweaking each instrument as you mix.

Occasionally, listen to the mix through headphones to catch any buzzes, clicks, pops, hums etc. Tiny flaws sometimes not evident in the monitors can come through loud and clear in the headphones. At low levels, headphones may help give you a true feeling of the placement of all instruments. Many listeners enjoy their music through headphones.

Long hours benefit no one. Spending 20 hours on a mix will not make it twice as good as spending 10 hours on a mix. At some point, the best has been done, and continuing on is fruitless.

Finally, and most important, when deciding which instrument takes precedence in the mix, make the guy who signs your cheque sound best!

This article is excerpted with permission from Tim Crich's book Recording Tips For Engineers. He also wrote the bestseller Assistant Engineers Handbook. He has over 20 years of experience in the recording studio and has worked on records by the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, John Lennon, KISS, Billy Joel, Bryan Adams, Cher, Bon Jovi and many more.





Before The Lights Go Out



by Jim Yakabuski

If your Front of House area right before show time resembles Cape Canaveral (i.e. extremely organized) just prior to a shuttle launch then you're going to feel like I'm preaching to the choir in this article.

If you're the kind that kicks back with a latte just before the lights go down and mumbles casually, "It all worked in soundcheck so it should be fine now," this article is prepared with you in mind.

We're going to have a little heart-to-heart about pre-show preparation. Remember as you read each one of the following stories that they came from the school of hard knocks.

Preparation, preparation, preparation. One more time: preparation. That's all you really need to avoid early show fatalities. Read on to learn every sordid detail.

Ready, Set, Go!

This tip is so simple and fundamental that we often forget to do this. You've done a soundcheck earlier in the day, and if you have an opening act, you've probably just concluded a second line check prior to your band hitting the stage. They hit the first downbeat of the first song. Is everything working? Is everything coming up as it should in the correct channels? Is each channel's corresponding gate or compressor working correctly? These should be checked right away.

If you're doing a lot of one-offs, you probably fall right into this habit once you've spun up something resembling a band mix with a vocal on top. This should always be the first priority. Get some semblance of a mix going and then do some mental checks. Just the other night I was doing an arena that had an unusually thick sub slab that really masked the definition down low. I noticed that after about three songs I was missing something. Well (I'm blushing here), it was my bass guitar.

It's easy to sit back and say, "How do you miss an entire instrument?" But if you've done any arena mixing you will know that

many rooms are very thick in the sub-bass area and the bass guitar tends to get washed out a lot. I mistook the washy low end for my inability to define the bass, when the actual problem was that the output knob on the bass compressor had been bumped. This resulted in a -10dB output level coming from the compressor. I turned it up and things came together in the mix, and it was at that moment that I cursed myself and decided to write this down. It's perspiration and inspiration all at the same time.

The method I would suggest is to immediately follow the "getting the mix together" thing with a quick blast up the input channel PFL highway. Start at the first channel and have a quick listen and then move on. This might not be as convenient as listening to the groups and then moving on, but you might miss something that way. Having a pre-show checklist will help you catch these little moved knob situations, but a quick once-over at the beginning of the show will confirm everything is there. It's that simple.

Darth Vader You Don't Need

Effects can take an average show and add all the glitz and sparkle that make a great show. If you have a nice, acoustically dead environment to mix in your choice of effects, it can make or break your mix. One of the bad habits I've found myself getting into over the years is checking effects returns during the day and then assuming the parameters are not going to change at all before the show. You can be pretty sure that all is okay with most effects units because you physically have to call up edit parameter pages to get in there and muck around with things, but some units have parameter adjustment wheels on the front, and they have been known to get bumped here and there which can cause some embarrassing moments.

One unit in particular that I am speaking of is a certain kind of harmonizer. It has a spinning wheel on the front panel that is very easy to turn, and on one occasion I

just happened to catch myself before I made a horrendous mistake. The last thing that I was editing that afternoon was the pitch of the harmonizer. Without changing that edit page, the wheel got bumped later on in the day and just before show time I happened to listen to my effects returns and catch the mistake before the show started. If I had not, the two lovely ladies who were singing backup vocals for the show would have resembled Darth Vader much more than their normal sweet-sounding southern selves. The edit wheel had spun down and the pitch dropped considerably.

Another way that you can get caught is if someone, like an opening act engineer, makes adjustments to your effects during his show and forgets to tell you, or you forget to recall your program or parameters. Usually these days most opening acts get their own effects gear, but in many club situations everybody is sharing effects. Be sure to store your settings, and in those types of situations, double-check that nothing is out of whack. It's a good habit to get into. Unfortunately, aside from the benefit that all these programmable units have given us, they can catch us once in a while because we rely too much on their stability. Add this to your pre-show checklist. And use the force!

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

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Would A Band By Any Other Name Sound Just As Sweet?

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

There is a scene at the beginning of the movie *This Is Spinal Tap* when the members of the fictional heavy metal band discuss the band's early origins: "We were called 'The Originals', but there was another group in the east named the Originals so we had to rename ourselves 'The New Originals'."

Music industry spoofing aside, this scene underscores the possible dangers of adopting a band name without taking proper legal precautions. If you adopt a band name without first searching whether other bands have better rights to the name, you risk having your use of the name "attacked" by such other band(s). A band with prior rights to the name may ultimately require you to either modify your name to a certain degree or stop using it altogether. In addition, this other band could force you to remove all of your existing CDs, DVDs and T-shirts from the marketplace and even require you to pay them a portion of your profits or royalties earned to date, plus other monetary damages, not to mention the other band's legal costs. Artists looking to avoid this type of hassle are advised to conduct a proper name search and, assuming that is cleared, to protect it to the fullest extent possible by way of a trade mark registration.

What Is A Trade Mark?

A trade mark is a name, symbol or logo design, or a combination of any or all of these, used to identify and distinguish the goods and services of one person from another. Trade mark rights are a form of intellectual property, but they should not be confused with other forms of IP, such as copyright, which protects original literary, artistic, dramatic or musical works, or patents which protect new technologies or scientific inventions.

Trade marks should also not be confused with names of incorporations or business name registrations. Contrary to popular belief, the registration of a business name or forming a corporation will not provide you with trade mark right protection. Another popular myth is that if you obtain a domain name (e.g., www.mybandname.com), you will be granted the exclusive rights to that name. Both names of incorporations and do-

main names are, at best, trade names, and may afford you common law rights to the name in certain geographical locations, e.g. a particular city or state where the band has acquired a public reputation through the use of its name. But given the inherently international nature of the music industry, this limited scope of geographical protection is far from ideal. Indeed, the best method of obtaining the exclusive rights to your band name is by way of a registered trade mark.

Before applying for a federal trade mark registration, one should hire a trade mark lawyer or trade mark agent to conduct a name search for a band's desired name. While the results of such name searches are never "fool proof", they should provide the band with a fairly good idea of whether or not there is some risk in proceeding with their desired name.

Names To Avoid

Before embarking on a name search, the band needs to choose a name in accordance with certain guidelines. Bands should not choose a name that includes someone else's registered trade mark. For example, the band that was originally called GREENJELL-O had to rename itself GREEN JELLY after General Foods initiated a trade mark infringement action against the band for its unauthorized use of the General Foods trade mark, JELL-O. Similarly, bands should steer clear of a name that is not only identical to other band names in existence, but also names which are considered "confusingly similar". The general rule is to avoid names which appear and sound like the names of other bands. For example, U2 would probably not look too kindly on a band that was named YOU TOO. In addition, bands are prohibited from adopting names containing official government symbols, and names which are considered immoral or offensive by public standards. (Curiously, the latter always seems to spark the interest of rock bands!)

After you have eliminated all of the above from your short-list of proposed names, you are then in a position to conduct a name search for your proposed name.

Procedural Steps In Protecting Your Name

Assuming the results of your name search are reasonably clear, it is advisable to pursue a trade mark registration for your band



by Lynn M. Burshtein,
B.A., LL.B

name, not only in association with the sale and promotion of music, but also in association with band-related goods, such as clothing and DVDs.

The trade mark application process is somewhat lengthy. After an application is filed with the government trade mark office, an official trade marks examiner will review your application to ensure that it meets the criteria for trade mark registration. Assuming the examiner is satisfied the name is available for registration, the name will then be advertised in a journal distributed to members of the general public who will have the opportunity to oppose the trade mark registration. Assuming no oppositions are filed, and other procedural requirements are met, a trade mark registration will be granted.

Obtaining a trade mark registration to a band name will be something bands do not only in their home country, but, ideally, in every country that their music is distributed, sold and marketed. Applying for a trade mark registration is not cheap: generally speaking, the costs can run from \$1,500-2,000 per country. This may be expensive for most bands at the beginning stages of their career, however once bands gain a higher profile, they will want to seriously consider doing this.

Lynn Burshtein is a lawyer and registered trade mark agent at the law firm of Sanderson Taylor Entertainment Lawyers, which represents clients such as Avril Lavigne, Nelly Furtado, Sum 41 and Sam Roberts. For more information, visit www.sandersontaylor.com.



“I Got a Six-Figure Indie Label Deal Because I Joined TAXI”

Jenna Drey – TAXI Member – www.jennadrey.com

My name is Jenna Drey. That’s me sitting next to TAXI president, Michael Laskow.

For as long as I can remember, I’ve wanted to be a recording artist. I’ve studied music my whole life. I’ve read all the books. I’ve been to the seminars. In short, I’ve done all the same things you’re probably doing.

Who Hears Your Music?

I’ll bet you’ve also noticed that no matter how much preparation you’ve done, it doesn’t mean anything if you can’t get your music heard by people who can sign on the dotted line.

I found out about TAXI a few years ago, and have kept an eye on it ever since. The longer I watched, the more I became convinced it was the vehicle I needed for my music. When my demos were done, I joined. And guess what – it worked!

A Record Deal With Lots of Zeros!

Seven months after joining, TAXI connected me with a great Indie label that’s distributed by Universal. The president of the label heard my song, “Just Like That,” and just *like that*, I was offered a record deal, and that song became my first single.

Madonna, Bowie, Jagger, and me!

The icing on the cake? The label hired legendary producer, Nile Rodgers (Madonna, David Bowie, Mick Jagger, and the B-52s) to produce it! All these amazing things happened to me because I saw an ad like this and joined TAXI.



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TAXI doesn’t take a percentage of anything, and it will probably cost you a lot less than the last guitar or keyboard you bought. Think of TAXI as the most important piece of gear you’ll ever need. It’s the one that can get you signed.

If you’re a songwriter, artist, or composer who wants to succeed in the music business, then do what I did and make the toll-free call to TAXI right now.

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"The styles of music that have influenced me the most—metal and punk—are where you go more for a 4pc kit. If I had a 30pc kit I'd want to hit every drum. That would take away from the foundation of what my job is: keep the groove solid so the other guys can do their solos and know where 'the one' is."

"The Performer birch shells have punch AND control. That control is also important for the bigger drum sizes I prefer. My 18" x 24" is literally the best sounding kick in the world."

Jeremy Colson
(Steve Vai)



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World Radio History

tama.com



Pearl River Line Of Digital Pianos

Pearl River Piano Group America Ltd. recently stepped into the world of digital pianos and introduced a line of their own with nine models ranging from entry-level student models to feature-packed baby grand pianos.

Pearl River's line of digital pianos includes furniture-quality cabinets that are available in unique finishes and styles. According to Pearl River, they have stuck with their commitment to provide quality and value ensuring that the new digital models provide the same features and conveniences as they always have with their original lines. Key actions are equivalent to a performance prepared acoustic piano, sound and rhythms are comparable to those on the finest digitals and the control panel is user friendly.

For more information, contact: Pearl River Piano Group America Ltd., S. Haven Ave., Suite F, Ontario, CA 91761 (909) 673-9155, FAX (909) 673-9165, aerl@mindspring.com, www.pearlriverpiano.com.

VOX AC30 Custom Classic Series



The highly praised VOX AC30 line of amplifiers, originally released back in 1959, has been re-released with the AC30 Custom Classic series combining attributes of the original with carefully selected "boutique" features that bring the AC30's venerable design to a new level of sophistication.

The AC30 Custom Classic series includes two blendable channels (Top Boost and dual-mode Normal/Treble), Custom/Normal tone network switch, Master Volume, fully variable Tremolo on both channels, Spring Reverb with Depth & Tone controls plus Dwell switch, Baltic Birch ply cabinet, extension speaker jacks with impedance switch, and more.

The VOX AC30 Custom Classic amplifiers are also available in several configurations including AC30CC1, which is a 1 x 12" compact combo with custom Celestion-built neodymium magnet "Neodog" speaker; the AC30CC2 is a 2 x 12" combo with VOX original vintage style 30-watt speakers, the AC30CC2X is a 2 x 12" combo with VOX Blue AlNiCo speakers, and much more.

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

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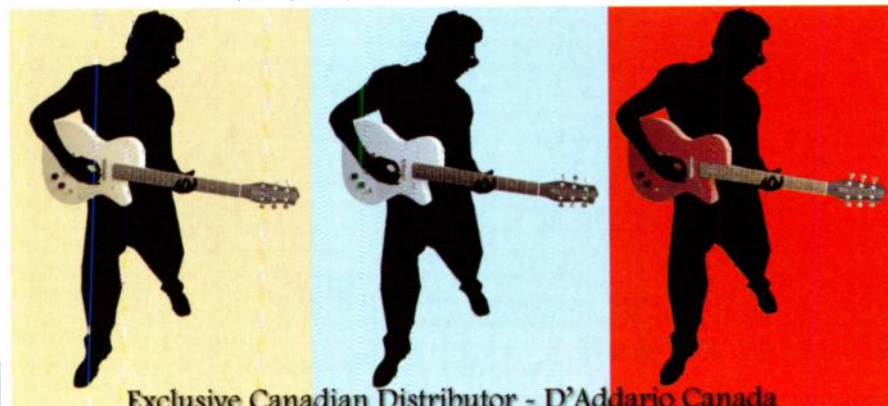


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BBE Acousticmax



BBE recently introduced the Acousticmax foot pedal style acoustic preamp, built on the success of the renowned 386 acoustic preamp.

BBE's Acousticmax is designed for those whom are serious about playing as well as those who would like to become more serious about playing. The BBE Acousticmax benefits from a three-band recording console quality EQ integrating a sweepable mid-range band, low frequency notch, filter, phase reversal, group lift, line level out, dedicated tuner out and TRS effects loop, plus a pro/post switchable balanced DI output with pad. Other features include non-slip rubber base, hard wire bypass and an external 12 V power supply is included in the package.

For more information, contact: Kief Music, 13139 80th Ave., Surrey, BC V3W 4N5 (604) 590-3344, FAX (604) 590-6999, sales@kiefmusic.com.

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Warwick CrossWalker FX Rockbag



Warwick recently introduced the Crosswalk FX Rockbag, fabricated with tried and tested water repellent RockTex surface material. Protecting the instrument is 20 mm of thick padding, a neck-support-system and a PVC-bottom with metal feet. Comfortable transportation is ensured with the 50 mm wide padded backpack-style belts on the ergonomically shaped backside. Alternatively, the gigbag can be carried by either padded handles.

Additionally, the CrossWalker FX features a detachable bag that holds a 10 mm thick black gigboard with four rubber feet to ensure a secure stand in the rehearsal space or on stage. There is enough space for up to four stompboxes on the gigboard and these can easily be fitted with the included self-adhesive Velcro tape that will hold the effects in place on the board, even during transportation.

According to Warwick, this gigbag is ideal for beginning guitar/bass players.

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

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Spector Performer 4 DLX Bass



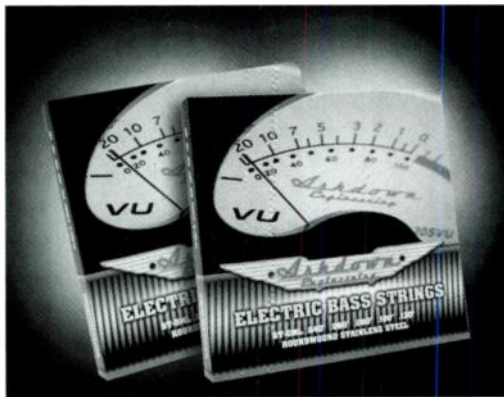
Spector recently released its latest addition to the Spector bass guitar line – the Performer 4 DLX bass guitar.

The Performer 4 DLX, available in matte black, cherry red, blue, honeyburst and holoflash black finishes, features a bolt-on neck and an authentic figured Maple top over a basswood body. The 24-fret Rosewood fingerboard neck is rock Maple with an angled back peghead for maximum tone and, in addition, the pickups are designed by EMG humbucking style models with dual volume and tone controls.

The black plated hardware includes a locking bridge and enclosed tuners.

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.

Ashdown Performer Series Bass Strings



Ashdown recently launched the Performance Series of bass strings, offering a high-quality alternative to their renowned Wide Boy Series of hand wound strings.

The Performance Series, made of stainless steel, are available in a selection of four, five and six-string sets. Four-string sets are available in four types – ST-4SH, ST-4SM, ST-4SML and ST-4SL, each offering a progressively lighter gauge. Five-string players are catered for by two medium gauge sets – ST-5ML and ST-5M, and last but not least for the six-string bassist is the ST-6SM set.

For more information, contact: Ashdown USA, 9 Mars Ct., Montville, NJ 07045 (973) 335-7888, FAX (973) 335-7779, www.ashdownusa.com.

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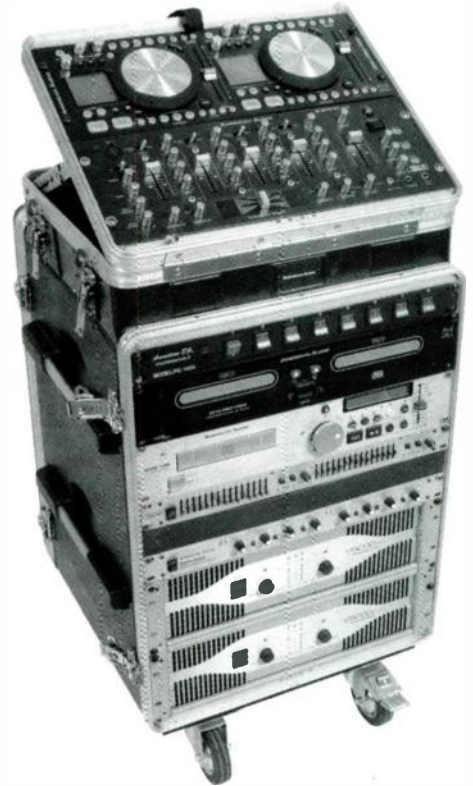
American Audio recently introduced the TLC Pro 8 x 14, a rackmount case on wheels designed to hold an entire DJ audio setup from mixers and CD players to amplifiers.

The lightweight yet rugged TLC Pro 8 x 14 features easy-to-carry handles and durable construction protecting fragile audio gear from damage during haulage. The TLC Pro 8 x 14 supplies an accessible stand for the DJ's entire audio system. It also features an adjustable top portion, which holds the mixer. The TLC Pro 8 x 14 can be set at different angles for the most advantageous user comfort and convenience. The ratcheting top section closes down totally flat, so transportation and storage is a breeze.

The TLC Pro 8 x 14 features the ability to hold any typical 19-inch rackmount gear and it offers eight spaces on top plus 14 more down below leaving enough room for DJs to mount their complete audio arsenals comfortably and safely. Additionally, durable plastic construction, locking castors and three detachable lids with lock-tight latches offer added protection and make the TLC Pro 8 x 14 extremely rugged and roadworthy.

The TLC Pro 8 x 14 measure 23" L x 21.5" W x 38" H and weighs only 56 lbs. unloaded.

For more information, contact: Sounds Distribution, 3411 McNicoll Ave., Scarborough, ON M1V 4B7 (416) 299-0665, FAX (416) 299-4416, sales@soundsdist.com, www.soundsdist.com.



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Latin Percussion 40th Anniversary Djembe



Latin Percussion recently unveiled the LP 40th Anniversary Djembe, manufactured from kiln dried Siam oak.

Each of the limited edition drums are finished in a lavish red fade that matches the 40th Anniversary Congas and Bongos. Additionally, each djembe shell is inscribed with LP's custom designed 40th anniversary logo, which is sealed into the wood and protected for the ages with a rock hard gloss topcoat. The heads are specially selected goatskin in 12 1/2" diameter and like the shell, it carries the 40th anniversary logo imprint. The drums are completely tunable through conga-style wrench, and the "heart" style plates are gold plated to match the rims.

In addition to the eye-widening aesthetics is the strong sound. LP feels that these djembes offer crackling highs, undulating mids and robust, resonant lows. Drummers can play these djembes while seated or while standing with a strap since they are extremely lightweight. They may also be mounted with congas and provide the perfect adjunct to any percussion set up.

For more information, contact: B&J Music Ltd., 2360 Tedlo St., Mississauga, ON L5A 3V3 (905) 896-3001, (800) 268-8147, FAX (905) 896-4554, FAX (800) 777-3265, bjmusic-kmc@kaman.com.

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May/June 2005

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- Give us a Call at 1-877-RING-NWC (746-4692)



Boss DB-30 Metronome

Boss recently released the DB-30 metronome, a portable and reliable timekeeper for musicians on the road. The DB-30, in addition to having a few timekeeping tricks up its sleeve, is also capable of laying down an assortment of rhythm patterns and time feels for musicians to practice with. Players can choose from a menu of nine rhythm types and 24 beat variations, including combinations of odd-time signatures and clave patterns for practicing Latin rhythm.

The DB-30 features a smooth-flowing LCD needle and two bright LEDs for visual tempo assistance. Other helpful functions include Tap Tempo for finding the right pulse fast, internal reference tones (12 semitones), Auto Power Off for optimizing battery life, and stereo headphones jack so you won't miss a beat, even in noisy environments.

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



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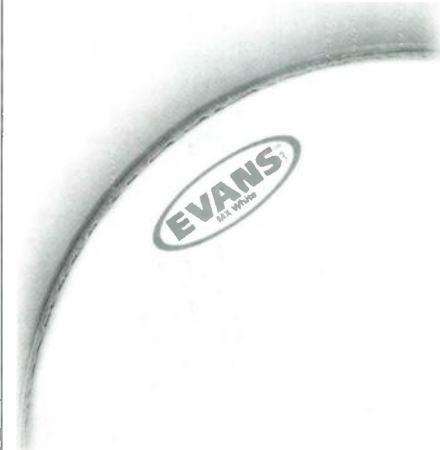
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Evans MX White Marching Snare Batter



Evans recently introduced the MX white marching snare batter head, which produces a much softer feel in comparison to thicker heads, according to Evans.

The MX's distinctive thin-weave Aramid Fiber and polyester construction offers toughness and playability that, in the past, would have been impossible in marching applications. The playing surface is a vivid, clean white colour allowing any snare line to look neat and professional.

The MX white snare head provides great projection, yet blends well with the rest of the band. The heads were "corps tested" throughout the DCI Summer Music Games by McIntosh and the Bluecoats and endured the rigours of rehearsals day after day in addition to extreme heat and rain. At most, the heads needed only minor tuning adjustments.

For more information, contact: D'Addario Canada, 50 West Willmot St., #13, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1M5 (905) 889-0116, FAX (905) 889-8998, orders@daddariocanada.com, www.daddariocanada.com.



Meinl Mb20 Series



Meinl recently unveiled the Mb20 Series of cymbals, featuring a combination of advanced materials, craftsmanship and strength, resulting in what Meinl feels is an aggressive sound.

The Mb20 cymbals are cast from B20 bronze alloy, totally hand-hammered into shape and applied with a brilliant finish to meet all of the requirements for today's hard hitting drummers who are playing loud music. Their high-polished surface and deep hammer hits created a stunning look while adding more brilliance to their sound. All Mb20 cymbals are harmonically matched, allowing the drummer to choose a musical set of cymbals without any disturbing harmonies. The cymbals blend in with each other perfectly as well as with the other instruments in the band.

The Mb20 ride cymbals, which feature a wide spread bell with an enormous thickness possess a defined, cutting, and focused ping sound with no wash. Meinl feels that the Mb20 Series is appropriate for fast ride patterns, particularly those that are played on top of a double bass figure due to its ability to cut through loud band settings without unnecessary build up.

For more information, contact: Meinl USA, 3354 Ambrose Ave., Nashville, TN 37207 (615) 227-5090, FAX (615) 227-0290, info@meinlcymbals.com, info@meinlpercussion.com, www.meinlcymbals.com, www.meinlpercussion.com.

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Music Man Stealth Black Bongo



Music Man recently unveiled a new option for the Bongo bass – a sleek new flat black finish, which is aimed at players whom prefer the feel and appearance that only a non-gloss satin finish can provide.

The Stealth Black Bongo features a black bridge, tuning system and neck plate, black nut, black knobs and black pole pieces. The Stealth Black Bongo features the evolved artistic shape that Bongo basses are renowned for as well as advanced electronics, colour coordination and a patented compensated nut that greatly improves intonation, according to Music Man.

For more information, contact: MOL Marketing, 6773 Wallace Dr., Brentwood Bay, BC V8M 1A2 (250) 544-4864, FAX (250) 544-4865, mike@molmarketing.net, www.molmarketing.net.



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Applied Acoustic Systems String Studio



Applied Acoustic Systems recently unveiled String Studio, replacing all oscillator, filter and envelope stage with real-life stringed instrument components. String Studio features a new and innovative String Model interacting with picks, bows, hammers, fingers, frets, dampers and soundboards and it is through this approach that String Studio provides dramatic guitars, basses, harps, clavinet, bowed instruments and percussion as well as rich tones.

String Studio produces sounds instantaneously using precise modelling of the numerous acoustic components involved in recreating stringed instruments, calculating their interactions as well as the control signals it receives as the user plays. Capturing the richness and diversity of acoustic textures, String Studio reproduces the quirks, subtleties and responsiveness of real-life instrument. The String Studio interface is suitably laid out around the components of a stringed instrument and the controls are directly related to their physical properties. String Studio, with a limited number of intuitive parameters, is capable of a remarkable range of sounds.

String Studio is outfitted with quality performance features including Keyboard modes, portamento, vibrato and legato functions and a programmable pattern arpeggiator. For optimal performance controllers, String Studio features a complete set of MIDI features, including an easy-to-use MIDI learn function for user defined MIDI maps, min/max parameter range settings, MIDI program change and automation, a high-quality effect rack, featuring distortion, chorus, delay and reverb completes the package.

For more information, contact: Applied Acoustic Systems, 486 St. Catharine W., #301, Montreal, PQ H3B 1A6 (514) 871-4963, FAX (514) 845-1875, info@applied-acoustics.com, www.applied-acoustics.com.

Radial ProD2 Stereo Direct Box

Radial Engineering recently released the ProD2 Stereo Direct Box with two discrete channels designed specifically for musicians and sound companies.

The ProD2 is built following Radial's tradition for maximum durability and is finished in deep green enamel. Very compact, it measures only 3 1/4 x 5" for a stereo unit and easy to fit in a guitar or accessory case and is ideal for stereo electric guitar, bass, keyboards or drum machines.

The Radial ProD2 features standard hi-Z inputs and thru-puts 1/4" connectors, -15dB input pads and ground-lift switches for each channel. The balanced output is 600 Ohm to interface with professional snake systems and consoles. The ProD2, linear from 20 Hz to 18 kHz, features low harmonic distortion and practically zero phase distortion in the critical bass and mid zone, making it ideal for performance venues and studio work.

For more information, contact: Cabletek, 1638 Keblet Way, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 5W9 (604) 942-1001, FAX (604) 942-1010, info@radialeng.com, www.radialeng.com.



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Warner Bros. Instructional DVDs

Warner Bros. Publications recently introduced two instructional DVDs from Jazz Artist Walter Beasley – *Sound Production for the Saxophone* and *Hip Hop Improvisation*.

Sound Production for the Saxophone offers a full hour of advice on subjects such as optimizing sound, improving pitch and unifying registers. The DVD and accompanying CD is suitable for players of the alto, soprano or tenor saxophone. Since Beasley has performed with a large amount of artists such as Brian McKnight, Gerald Albright, Art Blakey and Dexter Gordon, Stephanie Mills and Vanessa Williams, it isn't a shock that *Sound Production for the Saxophone* provides important lessons that can be applied to performing jazz of all sorts.

Hip Hop Improvisation offers a 45-minute look at grooves and hip-hop improvisation. While Beasley uses the saxophone as a tool to present the content, *Hip Hop Improvisation* is useful for any melodic instrument. Beasley provides an inspired mix of music and advice that serves as a "one beat, one chord at a time" guide to hip-hop improvisation. *Hip Hop Improvisation* is loaded with features such as printable PDF scores, licks and scales in C, E-flat and B-flat, and a play-along CD.

For more information, contact: Alfred Publishing, 16320 Roscoe Blvd., #100, Van Nuys, CA 91410 (818) 891-5999, FAX (800) 632-1928, customerservice@alfred.com, www.alfred.com.

Peavey Signature Omniac Guitar



Peavey recently released the Signature Omniac JD guitar, which was designed with rock'n'roll legend Jerry Donahue. The Signature Omniac corrals five groundbreaking rock tones into a fully modern, expertly crafted guitar.

Peavey feels that the most influential guitar and pickup designs were shaped prior to the mid-1950s in two instruments – a two-pickup design and a three-pickup design. Working guitarists would have to drag at least two guitars to a gig or session in order to capture all of the famous rock tones until now. The Omniac captures the finest of these tones in one two-pickup instrument. Peavey believes that the secret is a unique electronics package that comprises a Seymour Duncan pickup set including the specially wired Jerry Donahue Signature pickup in the bridge position and a proprietary five-way selector switch that exposes these five stunning, classic guitar tones.

Features on the Signature Omniac include a 25 1/2" scale, Seymour Duncan neck pickup, Jerry Donahue Signature Seymour Duncan bridge pickup, dual-expanding truss rod, birdseye Maple fretboard, custom five-way switching, real body binding and chrome hardware. The Signature Omniac model is available in several colours including sunburst, blueburst and vintage natural finishes.

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

Blueridge

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From the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers to the Stanley Bros. and on to Windy Mountain, Rebel recording artist Melvin Gims is a First Generation Bluegrass Legend.

The most talked about guitar in Bluegrass is Blueridge, and these guitars speak for themselves. The booming Blueridge bass puts that old thunder back in Lester's G run and the dry, woody tone even smells vintage...

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Native Instruments Complete Sound

Native Instruments recently unveiled Complete Sound – a collection of ensembles, sounds and samples from NI's array of software instruments combined into one single package.

NI Complete Sound greatly expands the sonic arsenal of Reaktor, Kontakt, Battery, FM7, Absynth and B4, making it a perfect addition for anyone who owns the NI Complete 2 bundle. NI Complete Sound ships on one DVD with a single installer that offers a convenient installation process for all components included in the bundle.

NI Complete Sound features Reaktor Electronic Instruments Vol. 1, Reaktor Electronic Instruments Vol. 2, Battery Studio Drums, FM7 Sounds Vol. 1, FM7 Sounds Vol. 2, Absynth Sounds Vol. 1, and the B4 Tonewheel Set "Vintage Expansion".

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



Conn-Selmer Greenhoe Trumpet Valve



Conn-Selmer Inc. recently introduced the addition of the Greenhoe valve to the C.G. Conn professional model 88H tenor and 62H bass trombones.

The Greenhoe valve, invented by instrument designer and professional trombonist Gary Greenhoe, is a completely engineered, patented valve section that has been commended by professional trombone rotor systems available today. The Conn/Greenhoe model 88HTG is an open wrap trombone with an 8½" rose brass bell and rose brass outer slide tubes. The favoured Conn .547" hand slide with fixed leadpipes and chrome plated nickel inner slides is standard, but optional hand slides with removable leadpipes are also available. The Conn 62HG features dual independent rotors, a 9½" rose brass bell, and lightweight .562" hand slide with three interchangeable leadpipes.

The Greenhoe valve is mechanically comparable to a customary rotor with very tight tolerances and tapered bearings, therefore none of the energy is spilling or compromised through air gaps. The outfits include genuine C.G. Conn mouthpieces and professional hard shell cases. They are available through all C.G. Conn dealers.

For more information, contact: Conn-Selmer, Inc., PO Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515 (574) 522-1675, FAX (574) 522-0334, custsvc@conn-selmer.com, www.conn-selmer.com.



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by Karen Bliss

Doubling Paris

Who: Doubling Paris
Where: Langley, BC
What: no doubt
Contact: www.doublingparis.com

Dakota singer Ryan McAllister engineered the original Doubling Paris demos that wound up in the hands of producers Daniel Mendez (Eve 6, Lit, Dakota) and Dwight Alan Baker (The Box Gods, Podunk). McAllister had worked with Mendez before and gave him the tracks, which led to a spec deal for the rock band, whose organic sound is reminiscent of The Counting Crows and The Tragically Hip. Vocalist/guitarist Timothy Lindberg, guitar/keyboardist Zaac Pick, bassist/vocalist Benjamin Rogers, and drummer Jay Stewart recorded the nine song album in the summer of 2003 at Matchbox Studios in Austin, TX, where the production team also mixed it. Mastering was done at The Mastering Lab in Los Angeles by Gavin Lurssen. The self-titled debut came out in the fall of 2003, but still doesn't have mass distribution. However, the band did hook up with major management, Gold Mountain Entertainment. Lindberg is hoping that a label will step up and give this album a shot. From the reflective poetical "August" to more pumping "Queen Of The Radio", Doubling Paris has a way with words, melodies, and hooks no doubt.



Go!

Who: Go!
Where: Toronto
What: '80s revivalists
Contact: Coalition Entertainment, 10271 Yonge St., #202, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3B5 (905) 508-0025, www.gorockandroll.com.

Starting out as a trio known as The Scenes, these '80s-inspired new wavers – frontman Mike Condo, synth player Evan Huson, and drummer Lee Campbell renamed themselves Go! and cut their second demo at the singer's brother Dom Condo's SoundWex Studios and Arnold Lanni's Arnyard Studios. Produced and mixed by Lanni, best known for his work with Our Lady Peace and Simple Plan (with additional production by Dom), the Toronto band is immensely influenced by synth-driven pop act The Cars. Lanni and Dom share writing credit with Mike on all three songs, "So Free", "Hot Step" and "Crazy" (original guitar players Pat Alessi and Gasper Barone also co-wrote "Hot Step"). Since that sampler EP, Go! has added bassist Craig Mailman and guitarist Dan Kanter (ex-Fefe Dobson) to the lineup. They are currently working on another four songs that Lanni produced at Arnyard and are back at SoundWex tracking them with Dom as the engineer. The band's management, Coalition Entertainment (Our Lady Peace, Simple Plan), says Go! is close to signing a record deal and expects it to cut the album in the summer.



Kuba

Who: Kuba
Where: Vancouver, BC
What: soul man
Contact: Digniti Recordings Ltd., 1128 Leonard St., Victoria, BC V8V 2S4 kuba@digniti.com or nickblasko@telus.net, www.kuba.ca or www.digniti.com.

Winner of this year's National Songwriting Competition for the song "Never Meant To Hurt U" co-written with Darren Glover, Kuba is once again getting label attention. Six years ago, after building a buzz with his unique groove collective, Velvet, the man born Ohani Kuba just bowed out of the industry, leaving a trail of "what the hell happened to him" behind. While Velvet has been resurrected in Victoria, BC, Kuba is back in a big way as a solo artist. His album, *Ride On*, is full of soulful rockers ("Wonderful") and emotive ballads ("Wherever U R"), much in the way that Lenny Kravitz stacks his recordings. "My goal was not to have one fast-forward song on the album," says Kuba, who wrote or co-wrote everything. Co-producing the material over the last year at various studios (Baker; Mushroom, Profile, and Jeff Dawson's home studio) with Joby Baker, Chin Injeti, and Dawson, Kuba has made a stellar recording full of potential hits, unlike anything Canadian labels have in their stable.



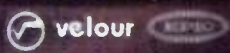
Toronto-based music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian news correspondent for *Rollingstone.com*, and operates a Canadian music industry news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/Music/Lowdown/>. She also edits *Gasoline*, and contributes to *Elle Canada*, *Audience*, *Tribute*, *Words & Music* and others.

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