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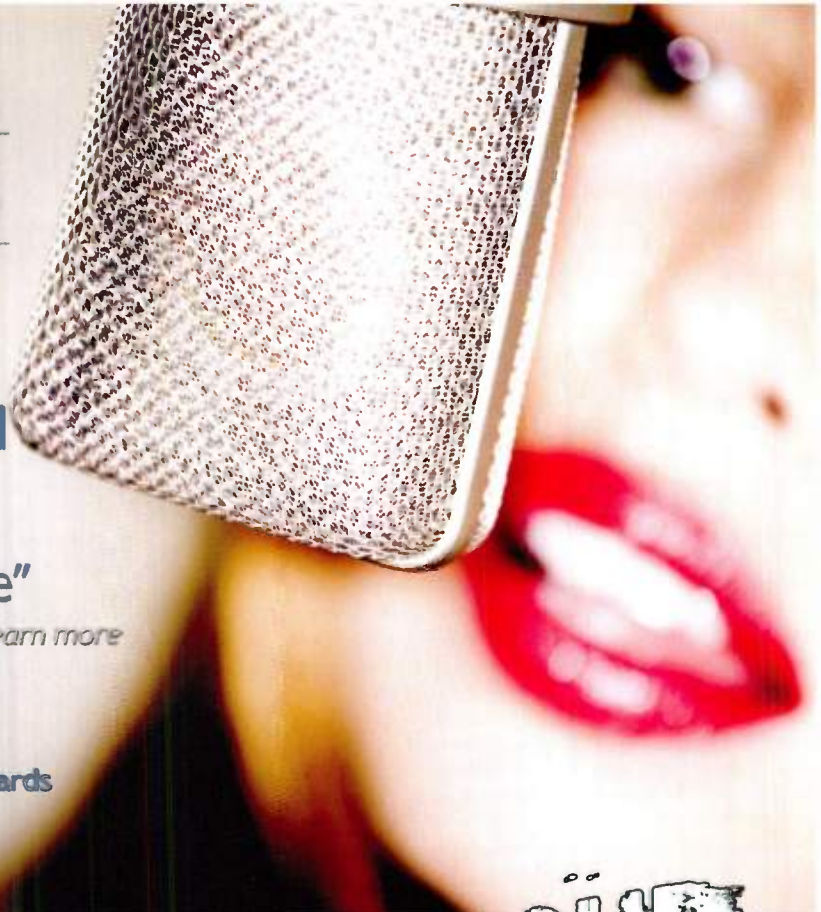
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www.canadianmusician.com

EDITOR

JEFF MACKAY
jmackay@nor.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

KATIE VANSLACK
kvanslack@nor.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

KAREN BLISS, GREGG BOWMAN, RICH CHYCKI, CHUCK DAILEY,
ALEX DEAN, BERNIE LABARGE, JAMES LINDERMAN, JEFF PEARCE,
CHASE SANBORN, PAUL SANDERSON, JOHN STOWELL,
CHRIS TAYLOR-MUNRO, ALEC WATSON, JIM YAKABUSKI,
DIANA YAMPOLSKY, KEVIN YOUNG

ART DIRECTOR

LANA BUTLER
lbutter@nor.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER

KAREN BASHURA
kbashura@nor.com

CONSUMER SERVICES DIRECTOR

MAUREEN JACK
mjack@nor.com

CONSUMER SERVICES COORDINATOR

LINDA BERETTA
lberetta@nor.com

PUBLISHER

JIM NORRIS
jnorris@nor.com

BUSINESS SERVICES REPRESENTATIVES

RYAN DAVID
rdavid@nor.com

DAWN JEWELL
djewell@nor.com

BUSINESS MANAGER

LIZ BLACK
lblack@nor.com

COMPUTER SERVICES COORDINATOR

GORANA JANKOVIC
gjankovic@nor.com

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Computers Have Killed Music?

Dear CM,

In your reply to R. J. "Dusty" Woods letter regarding "Virtual Bassist" computer software, I think you may have been a little too quick to click on the rebuttal button.

To say that it "never happened" that drum machines and software put drummers out of work is not quite correct. I don't know what the percentage would be, but I'm quite certain that the vast majority of dance, hip-hop, techno, rap and like product is recorded using synthesizers and other computerized technology.

Twenty-five years ago, that stuff would have been polished in a rehearsal room, then taken into the studio. Do you REALLY believe that any rapper – professional or otherwise – sees the need to hire a drummer or bassist for a recording session? (Never mind guitarists or horn sections.)

How many Britney Spears or Shakira songs were recorded with a full rhythm section? Not too many, I would think. If a recording studio can replace high-maintenance 2" 24-track tape recorders with cheaper digital units (even at the LOSS of audio fidelity), they often will. It follows that if a recording artist can create perfect, quantized rhythm tracks with cheap, ego-less, mass-marketed software, live drummers and bassists just aren't necessary.

So, given the "perfection" of product generated on today's machines, would the drumming on Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Proud Mary" be up to today's industry standard? I wonder. You mention that Trent Reznor "generates everything in the studio, but still assembles a live band." Sure – he'd look silly onstage, surrounded by laptops.

I'm not a Luddite, but Mr. Woods, as a bassist, has valiantly raised a valid point. Good music is created by talented, dedicated and inventive people working together, playing off each other, arguing, agreeing, brainstorming and revising.

Somebody making all his/her records simply by clicking on a mouse has missed the point of music. Remember John Henry!

Regards,
John Lindblad
Toronto, ON

**Ed. John, I still stand by my opinion. You've opened up even more questions with your comment stating: "I don't know what the percentage would be, but I'm quite certain that the vast majority of dance, hip-hop, techno, rap, and like product is recorded using synthesizers and other computerized technology." Consider this: would any of this type of music have been created in the first place without the use of synthesizers and computerized technology? I doubt it. This new technology allowed for new styles of music to be created. Plain and simple, times have changed and the way music is created along with it. Someone who, as you put it, makes music "simply by clicking a mouse has missed the point of music," may not make music the way you do, but it's still making music. I'll close with a quote from you: "Good music is created by talented, dedicated and inventive people working together, playing off each other, arguing, agreeing, brainstorming and revising." You couldn't be more right, but what's wrong with using a computer as a tool as part of this process? Absolutely nothing.*

Jeff Martin: Man On A Mission

Dear CM,

CM always has unique and interesting features. But today I found myself wanting to tell you how much I enjoyed the "Jeff Martin Aims High" feature by Karen Bliss. Not only does it contain much insight into the personal and musical sides of this deep and diverse talent, Karen's deft choice of content and ability to manage the context brought me very close to the spirit of a musician I've always admired from afar, but had never really investigated. Martin's affection for Led Zeppelin has always been obvious, but to see him wearing the traditional British countryman hat, living in Ireland, hanging with Roy Harper, delving into traditional instruments and music while pulling out the power whenever he requires it reminds me that this is a man who is not only rediscovering himself as a person and player, but is doing so in lifestyle that not only nurtures his spirit, but embraces him as only a man's dreams can. Whether it's Jeff Martin, Jeff Beck, Neil Peart, or Jimmy Page – players who have defined their own path in the game of fame – musicians should note – as Mr. Martin obviously has – that music, not money, is the real magic for the soul. A special thanks to Karen Bliss for such a fine feature, a "hats off" to Jeff Martin for reminding us that life is what you make it, and kudos to CM for running this insightful and inspiring story.

Best,
Wayne Blachard
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The Arrogant Worms Give Tips On Self-Management

Chris Patterson, Trevor Strong and Mike McCormick met at Queen's University in Kingston, ON in 1991. What started out as a joke, quickly became a career of comedy sketches and songs. They named themselves The Arrogant Worms and to date they have sold over 70,000 albums and have been aired on radio and TV in Canada, the US and Australia.

They started in a group called the Queen's Players doing campus cabarets in the Engineering Pub. "And then we started doing some stuff for the campus radio station and then we just never remembered to stop," reminisces Trevor.

"We hear that's where the 'big bucks' in the entertainment business is, and it appears we were misinformed," laughs Mike. "We all had a mutual love of trying to write comedy." So they got together and started writing material and performed it on their college radio station.

In their 15-year career, these boys had to learn the ropes of the business if they were going to survive in the industry. When they started out they had to find everything from a printer, finding out how to make a CD, starting a relationship with the bank and having to fund everything on their own. "Perhaps in the early days if we had a management company that had their own capital and things like that then there wouldn't have been that much work to get those things ... in the early days I don't think much of the 'big boys' saw much of a financial pay off in our little group," says Mike. "We've always had the attitude of why would we give away 20 per cent of our revenue to find us a booking agent, well we've got one, to find us a record label, well we've got our own distributor, to find us a studio to record our albums, we've got one."

On the contrary, The Arrogant Worms have had two managers, briefly. Trevor says that their first manager was a very detailed-oriented person, "and I think our chaotic way of doing things just didn't really suit him and he would spend a lot of time trying to make something perfect. And he made way more money just doing his own stuff. So we quickly both decided that we're better off not doing what we were doing." They soon got a second manager who would book them into places like the University of Ottawa. They were only with him for one to two years.

After their second manager left they decided to do a "holding pattern" where they wouldn't do anything specific. "That year turned out to be the best year we had financially!" exclaims Mike. "And then the next year after that we also did nothing and we did better. So we've tried to keep pushing that to see if we can continue to do less and still make more."

After learning the hard way how to manage themselves, they found that things would be a lot easier if they hired an office manager. That's where Vicky comes into the picture. They say that she has made a huge difference and give them peace of mind that the phones will be answered and the bills will be paid. "In the early days when we'd get back home from a tour we'd spend the next three or four days apologizing for the things we didn't get around to, so we don't have to do that." When they first started out they got an 888 number and a post office box, both of which have never changed. This allows them to be reachable, wherever they happen to be.

They do admit that their second manager helped set them up with book-

ing agents that they didn't have before. "If we wanted to pursue a big project like TV or film then maybe a manager would be in a better position to negotiate that on our behalf," says Chris, "an LA office might have in-roads to film or television, or at least get a foot in the door where perhaps we can't."

Even without a manager they have made the big decisions on their own. Trevor adds, "When you get down to it, it's whether we agree on something or not. Sometimes a manager can help but also a manager can make four separate opinions instead of three."

Chris says that one of the most difficult aspects of self-management is coming to a decision between the three of them. "But we've sort of figured each other out, so it's getting easier to anticipate how people might feel about a decision. But for the most part, as Mike said, it's gone fairly smoothly. We divided up the administrative duties between the three of us and also with Vicky." With no President, but all Vice Presidents, Chris does PR,

Trevor does bookings and Mike handles the money and travel. Chris continues, "Each of our duties are a play to our own business strengths anyway. I mean Mike likes to find a deal so if he can get \$3 off a rental car then that's what he should do. And Trevor knows how to talk to agents and that sort of thing, and I do a lot of the out reach."

Mike adds, "He likes to talk about himself, so he's good with the press." "Exactly!" Chris agrees, "With the publicists and doing interviews and answering the fan mail and that sort of thing."

"I think the number one tip is as soon as you're at a position where you can hire people to do things that you're terrible at or really don't want to do, then do it," suggests Trevor. "You can probably do it anyway but I think a lot of people get frustrated with the work they have to do. They think

they need a manager, a lot of time they just need people to do the smaller tasks to free them up."

Mike says, "In the case of bands where you find there's one or two guys that this is what they want to do, they want to work their asses off, they'd be willing to be on the road 320 days a year and there's two other guys saying 'aw geez, we're doing all of these crappy gigs,' and two years later either they're not in the band or the band's not together. It's really knowing between the members of the band how hard you're going to push it and how you're going to do that."

Trevor adds, "as long as everyone knows what they're supposed to do it makes it a lot easier. You don't have to ask for agreement on the little things, just the big decisions."

So if you're not looking to get a manger that will tell you what to do and you don't even have to think about it, make sure that you and your band members are on the same page. How hard do you want to work to get to your goal of stardom? How much are you willing to travel? Can you divvy up the responsibilities and make sure that each member lives up to their role? And remember, if you feel like you're falling behind with those tedious everyday tasks, consider hiring an office manager, like Vicky, instead of going all out for a manger, which can be much more expensive.

Find the Arrogant Worms online at www.arrogant-worms.com.



Trevor Strong, Mike McCormick and Chris Patterson are The Arrogant Worms.

SoundScan's Pact With Musicane Allows Indies To Climb Charts

Almost everyone is familiar with what Nielsen SoundScan is and how it works. Just to recap, it collects the sales data from over 20,000 retailers in the US, over 10 million physical transactions and digital sales per week and represents over 90 per cent of retail music product sales in the US. All of this information is what comprises the weekly Billboard Magazine music charts. Until now, the only way independent artists could be included in this accumulation is through aggregators like iTunes, MSN, Napster, etc. There was a calling in the marketplace for a way that indie artists could get on the charts their own way. The solution came when SoundScan made a pact with Musicane.

Musicane is a subsidiary of myMPO and allows indie artists, record labels and content aggregators to sell digital downloads directly from their own Web sites. "Charting from one's own Web site has never been available to independent artists before," said Michelle Robertson, Chief Marketing Officer for Musicane. "This partnership with Nielsen SoundScan is the first of many initiatives to empower independent artists in an increasingly complex and crowded marketplace."

Musicane reports all artists' sales proceeds through its trade platform to SoundScan, including music and music video sales, allowing artists to climb the Billboard charts. "Digital music has multiplied the opportunities and expanded the scope of the entire industry," said Rob Sisco, President of Nielsen Music. "With artists developing and managing their own fan bases now, and with full featured artist digital stores enabled by services like Musicane, there is every reason for them to strive to reach the pinnacle of their fame and fortune."

Similar to the iTunes digital storefront, Musicane allows content creators to sell their digital tracks from their own Web site. Now artist can build their fan base through networking sites, like MySpace, and link to their own Web site where their content is for sale. At that point it's up to the artists to promote their music so they can work their way up the charts.

"We are honoured to be working with the primary authority on music sales tracking in North America," said Sudhin Shahani, CEO of Musicane. "In an increasingly competitive market, this is a truly compelling way for an independent

artist to be validated to the industry, whether it be demonstrating sales to record labels or booking agents."

So whether or not you already have an existing Web site, Musicane can implement your online store onto your Web site, just sign up. If you don't have a Web site you can use one of Musicane's Web site templates. They're easy to personalize and you don't need a html PhD. The templates include a homepage, image gallery, contact page, guest book and the music store.

It's \$19.99 a month to use Musicane's services for your site, and you keep 70 per cent of all sales. You will get paid for your music monthly by either direct deposit, Paypal or paper check. You'll get an advertisement for free, be able to take advantage of advanced promotional tools and will be able to have downloadable coupons for your fans. Sell MP3s, WMAs (optional DRM), videos and even ring tones from your site! You will get real-time sales reporting, and have an image gallery and announcements on your site and will also be able to accept all major credit cards.

For more information, visit www.musicane.com.

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Changes

2006 Xtreme Band Slam Winner Announced

Canadian Music Week (CMW) 2006 saw the winner of the 2006 Xtreme Band Slam announced, Pete Möss, the third national band slam winner of a Montreal CHOM entry.

The five members of Pete Möss include Garth on drums, Johnny Maximum on lead guitar, North Coaticock Sly on rhythm guitar and vocals, Bob on bass and vocals and Tim as lead vocals. Their music has been described as high voltage southern rock, straight rock with great hooks, a unique and dirty sound, high energy rock with ballsy guitar riffs, simple beats and searing vocals. Whatever you want to call it, these guys know how to lay it down.

In the past two years Pete Möss has toured across Canada, the US and Germany. Since 2003 they have shared the stage with Sloan, The Darkness, The Bloodhound Gang, C'mon, The Illuminati, New Model Army and more. Their debut album *Live Dirty* is set to release soon with 11 rockin' tracks.

The application deadline for the 2007 CMW Festival Showcases is Oct. 15. Apply via www.sonicbids.com.

For more information, visit www.petemoss.ca or www.cmw.net/xbssc.htm.



Lead singer of Pete Möss, Tim, with reps from Erikson Music.

14th Annual Vintage Guitar Show

The 14th Annual Vintage Guitar Show was held on June 3 and 4, at the Thornhill Community Centre in Thornhill, ON. Players, collectors and buyer investors came from around the world to buy, sell, trade and check out some of the most rare and best vintage guitars around. Guitars played by the Rolling Stones, Eddie Van Halen and Rick Nielsen of Cheap Trick were on display as well.

The Roots of Rock Collection was also on display. This collection was donated by Tony Melman, a Toronto businessman, and was appraised at \$4 million US. The proceeds from every guitar sold from this collection are donated to POGO, a Childhood Cancer Charity. Dr. Tom Van Hoose, author of *The Gibson Super 400: Art of the Fine Guitar*, held a book signing and answered questions about the Roots of Rock Collection along with the curator of the collection, Ray Kopko.

"It was a huge support for the whole Roots of Rock thing," said Ed McDonald, Founder and President of Tundra Music. He adds that guitars sold from the Roots of Rock Collection as well.

"The media was incredible ... John Derringer at Q107 gave us 20 minutes on the air in the morning, which was just phenomenal, there's not enough money that can buy that," he said. "I made new contacts, which opened up a few doors." He adds that it would have been great to see more people there, which may have happened if more retailers got involved. "There's several thousand people who are filtering through, and they're guitar-oriented people," he said. "You put an ad in the newspaper and get four people to come out for the same amount of money you'd spend to have a few thousand people who are qualified."

McDonald said that they're trying to promote kids to play live music because the live music scene has probably never been weaker. "People better wake up and take notice and participate in things that are hands-on," things like the Rock Star Camp that Love Music was promoting at the show. This camp gets kids who have a love for music involved in playing in bands. It's participation that's needed to get more kids involved.

There were almost 2,000 attendees at the show, which may have been more if it wasn't raining. "We didn't hit our target the way we wanted to this year, and it's funny because we had a lot of publicity." They were also expecting a thousand people for the Les Paul guitar photo shoot, but only got about 500. This too could have been caused by the rain, as the shoot was originally supposed to be outside. Instead they stacked about 500 people with Les Paul guitars into the small hall. The photo will be submitted to the Guinness Book of World Records for the most Les Paul guitars in one place. It will also be presented to Les Paul as part of a Get Well and Happy Birthday message. Paul turned 91 on June 9.

Bell Express View also filmed for the Antique Vintage Guitar Roadshow and Auction, which will be rolling across Canada. The scenes involving the Les Paul photo shoot will also be presented to Paul as part of the package. This event is the first of 13 episodes that will feature interviews along the way. "We're trying to put a different spin on the Canadian aspect of things," said McDonald. He expects that the series will air on the Discovery Channel. Dates and timings are TBA.

For more information, contact: The Vintage Guitar Show, 2857 Kingston Rd., Toronto, ON M1M 1N3 (416) 222-8222, (416) 222-0016, vintage@tundramusic.com, www.tundramusic.com/guitarshow.

Inside SABIAN...



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8.

25th Anniversary

Canadian Musician recently attended SABIAN's 25th anniversary celebration at their factory in Meductic, NB, which included a tour of the factory. Check out this inside look at how some of the world's greatest cymbals are produced ... right here in Canada! Visit www.sabian.com to learn more about their products.

1. A crate holds the slabs of metal that will eventually become cymbals.

2. The slabs of metal are cooked in a large oven.

3. Once the metal has been cooked, it's flattened out. They're starting to look a lot more like cymbals now!

4. An employee hard at work hand-hammering a cymbal.

5. A cymbal is lathed, giving it its ringed appearance.

6. This employee is cutting off the sharp edges of cymbals, making them safe for musicians to handle.

7. From Terry Bozio and Neil Peart, to Chad Smith and Dave Weckl, this box holds the name graphics that are screened onto the various cymbals SABIAN produces.

8. The famed SABIAN Vault ... one corner of it anyway! This is the drum kit that all SABIAN endorsing artists use to test out cymbals to help out with the manufacturing process.

“We All Need Love” A Tribute To Domenic Troiano

On April 20, friends and family of the late Domenic Troiano gathered to celebrate his life with some performances, visual representations, kind words from his friends and family and to present the Domenic Troiano Scholarship to the two winners.

Troiano will always be remembered as one of Canada’s most influential and pioneering rock musicians during the 1960s and ’70s, and a respected session player, record producer, TV and movie score composer and jazz recording artist in the following years. He was a “musician’s musician” and friend, Seaton McLean, says that he was one of the greatest and most charitable spirits he has ever encountered.

Because he became the 75th Anniversary Patron of Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH), all funds from this event were donated to the new Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit at TEGH. “Domenic felt strongly about his involvement in supporting the fundraising efforts for the TEGH Foundation and gave freely of his time over the past years,” said Frank Troiano, brother of the legend, in a past issue of *CM*. “The Troiano family is very proud and honoured to be presenting this very special event and we know that he would be very touched by this celebration of his musical legacy.”

The event was held at Joe Badali’s Ristorante in Toronto, ON and had many performances, including the house band, which included Bernie LaBarge, Howard Aye, Whitey Glan, Michael Sloski and Doug Riley. John Donabie was the Emcee for the event and the finale featured all performers as well as Roy Kenner performing “We All Need Love”.

The event was also the place where the first annual Domenic Troiano Scholarship was presented to the two winners, Lucas Haneman of Kanata, ON and Aimee Piche of London, ON. John Harris of Harris Institute presented the award of \$1,500 to each recipient. The scholarship will be granted each year to two Canadian guitarists, one male and one female, who is pursuing a post-secondary guitar education. The deadline for this year is October 31.

For more information, visit www.domenictroiano.com.



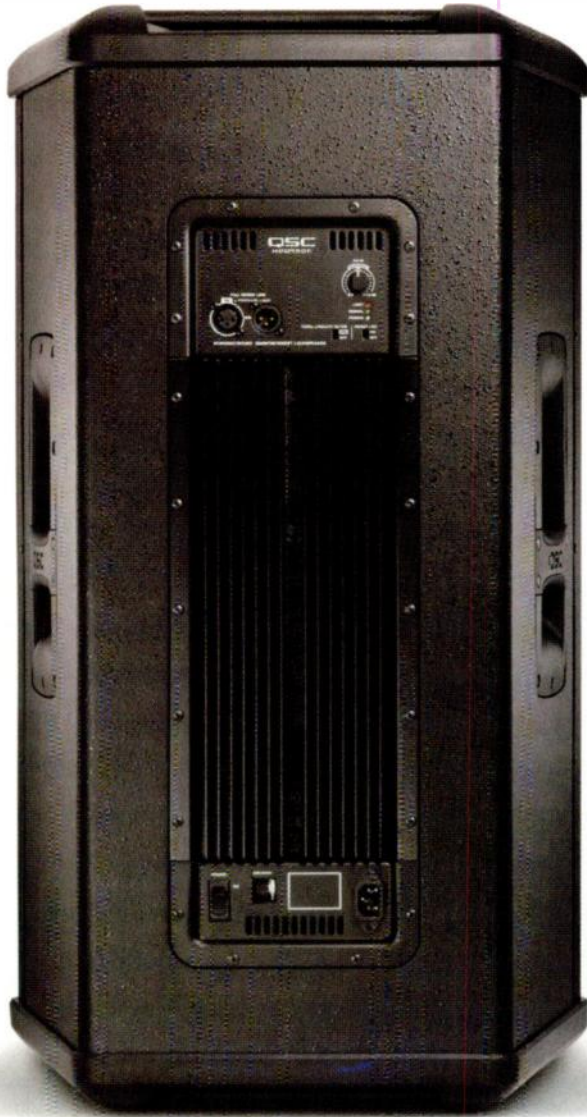
Domenic Troiano Scholarship winners, Lucas Haneman (left) and Aimee Piche (right) are presented with their awards by John Harris of Harris Institute.

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2005 ISC Winners Announced

The winners for the 2005 International Songwriting Competition (ISC) have recently been announced, Catie Curtis and Mark Erelli.

Curtis and Erelli's song titled, "People Look Around" was selected out of 15,000 songs from 82 countries. A total of \$150,000 in cash and prizes was awarded to 50 winners, including a cash prize of \$10,000 (US), which was awarded to Curtis and Erelli.

"People Look Around" is a song that deals with real life issues and addresses the impact of Hurricane Katrina and the need to look at the larger truths. "Catie Curtis and Mark Erelli exemplify the very highest caliber of contemporary songwriters, and we are honoured that they chose to enter ISC," says Candace Avery, Founder and Director of ISC. "Their winning song is a moving and powerful response to the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina and is both timely and timeless in its melodic and lyrical content. The song is a welcome throwback to the days when singer/songwriters wrote and sang about issues and social change."

Curtis has been writing songs since she was 15. She has released seven albums, performed in many coffeehouse shows, festivals, house concerts and tours, while building a grassroots fan base. A film has recently been released, *Tangled Stories*, documenting her indie career.

Erelli holds a master's degree in Evolutionary Biology but has put it aside for his music career. He has recently released his fifth CD, *Hope & Other Casualties*.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2006 ISC. The Overall Grand Prize has been increased to include a \$25,000 cash prize – the largest cash Grand Prize of any songwriting competition. The early bird deadline is July 14, charging \$30 for the first song entry and \$20 for each additional song. The final deadline is Oct. 16, where all entries are \$30 each. A complete list of the 2005 winners and judges, as well as information and entry forms are available online.

For more information, visit www.songwritingcompetition.com.

Canadian Holds Global Drum Clinics

The Hamburg School of Music in Hamburg, Germany was recently presented with a Rudimental Snare Drum Workshop, led by Canadian educator, Scott Atkins.

The workshop lasted almost four hours and was complete with demonstrations of rudimental solos from the civil war era to modern day corps style snare drumming. Drum students and musicians got involved in warm ups, technical exercises and short musical selections. This workshop was pre-ided and organized by Benny Greb.

"Overall, I am extremely impressed with the level of the students and their willingness to come out and participate in something that is so different from their usual way of understanding rudiments and snare drum technique," says Atkins. "The whole purpose was just to share a different perspective on the approach to the instrument, and bring light to the activities that exist for drummers in North America in the marching arts. It was a real pleasure to have such an interest!"

Atkins has been involved in the marching arts for over 20 years as a performer, educator and music arranger. He started drumming in a local drum and bugle corps at 12 and first began teaching and arranging for marching percussion in 1991. In 1997 he joined the DCA senior drum corps circuit, the Kingston Grenadiers. Since 1998 he has been arranging the percussion music, teaching at monthly music camps in Canada and the US and this year is heading the musical design team for the corps. He is also the Product Manager and Canadian Artist Relations for Sonor Drums and Percussion for Coast Music in Baie D'Urfe, PQ.

"Being that I am also a drumset player and enjoy many other areas of percussion performance, I decided that I would get more involved with teaching outside of the drum corps community, and put together a rudimental workshop that can involve drummers from all different backgrounds in a fun, interactive session that can be modified in several ways to reflect the level of the students," says Atkins.

He is also involved in the Vic Firth Education Program and organizing the Private Drum Teacher Seminars that kicked off in Toronto, ON on June 25.

For more information, contact: A.P.E., c/o Scott Atkins, 174 Seigneurie Ave., Pointe-Claire, PQ H9X 4B7 atkinsound@sympatico.

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Compilation Album Released By Feist

Intimate demo and acoustic versions of songs, as well as dance and groove remixes have been included on the new compilation album, *Open Season*, by Feist.

"At first I didn't really understand what remixes were. If I squinted into the air I knew I could hear old songs with beats put to them piping out of radios, but didn't know why or how that happened. After I made *Let It Die* with Gonzo and Renaud they made some remixes that clued me into the fist pumping glory that acoustic songs can possess if supplied with the backbeat savvy," says Feist. "Then in London, a few months into touring the album, someone frisbeed an unmarked CD in a plastic slip onto the stage at me and later in my hotel I listened to it as a pre-sleep nightcap. It was so bizarre and exciting to hear a song ("Lonely Lonely") we had carefully dressed, be undressed and re-addressed. Put into clothes it would have never thought to wear on its own."

Open Season has been released by Arts & Crafts with a collection of Feist's music from in and around the *Let It Die* period. She is an Indie artist and multiple Juno Award winner. She also performed with Broken Social Scene at the 2006 Juno Awards in Halifax and was nominated for Single Of The Year for "Inside & Out". *Let It Die* has surpassed the Gold status of 5,000 copies sold in Canada and France.

For more information, visit www.listentofeist.com or www.arts-crafts.ca/feist.



TMX Quickly Approaches

The 2nd Annual Toronto Music Expo (TMX) is quickly approaching as it will be held on an earlier date this year, at a better location and with many show features.

Toronto's only consumer music show will be held from Sept. 31-Oct.1, at the Toronto International Airport. This new location offers free on-site parking and is easily accessible. TMX is set up to cater to all ages, abilities and tastes, offering live performances, features, a broad range of exhibitors and many seminars and workshops.

The Toronto Star has signed on as Presenting Sponsor for this year's show which will see a massive promotional campaign run up to the show.

TMX has teamed up with the Coalition for Music Education (CMEC) to hold the CMEC Silent Auction. Everyone attending the show will be able to bid on the items that will be provided from CMEC supporters and TMX exhibitors. Bidding will be electronically conducted in the Silent Auction area and all bidders will get an access code so they can monitor the auction and revise their bids from home. All proceeds will go to the CMEC, which supports music education in Canada.

Many performers will get attendees grooving at and after the show. One opportunity will be at the TMX Acoustic Mainstage. The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and the Toronto Musicians' Association have joined to present this acoustic staging event throughout the show. A wide range of talent and genres including jazz to rock and indie to icon will be present. A wide range of performers will also be apart of the first TMX Live event. When the show closes the excitement moves into music clubs around Toronto for a night of rockin' out.

Roland Canada has also signed on as an Event Partner and key exhibitor. Calling all drummers and percussionists! Roland Canada will be hosting the Roland Rhythm Experience at the Toronto Music Expo from Sept. 30-Oct. 1.

This event will feature a large, open hands-on display area where many drumkits and electronic percussion instruments will be available for you to try out. Come check out and try the gear, take a few lessons from the pros and try out the Rhythm Coach Challenge. Prizes and draws will also keep you entertained. Register online for the special prize draws. On the Saturday night Roland will also feature a concert featuring a special guest percussion artist.

For more information, visit www.torontomusicexpo.com.

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info_simmm@equipespectra.ca,
www.mmmis.ca

29th Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, BC
July 14-16, 2006
(604) 602-9798, Toll-free (800) 883-3655,
FAX (604) 602-9790
info@thefestival.bc.ca,
www.thefestival.bc.ca

Guitar Workshop Plus

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(905) 897-8397, FAX (905) 785-2831
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

Home County Folk Festival

London, ON
July 21-23, 2006
(519) 432-4310, FAX (519) 432-6299
info@homecounty.ca, www.homecounty.ca

18th Annual Beaches International Jazz Festival

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(416) 698-2152, FAX (416) 698-2064
info@beachesjazz@rogers.com,
www.beachesjazz.com

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www.guitarworkshopplus.com

23rd Annual Hillside Community Festival

Guelph, ON
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(519) 763-6396, FAX (519) 763-9514
hillside@hillside.on.ca, www.hillside.on.ca

2006 National Flute Association Convention

Pittsburgh, PA
August 10-13, 2006
(661) 299-6680, FAX (661) 299-6681
nfaconvention@aol.com,
www.nfaonline.org

Mountain Rythm Drum Making Experience

Lakefield, ON
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info@tanglefootlodge.com,
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Canadian Country Music Week 2006

Saint John, NB
September 8-11, 2006
(416) 947-1331, FAX (416) 947-5924
country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

Toronto Music Expo

Toronto, ON
September 30-October 1, 2006
(416) 782-4072, FAX (416) 782-2266
info@torontomusicexpo.com,
www.torontomusicexpo.com

20th Ontario Council of Folk Festivals (OCFF)

Ottawa, ON
October 12-15, 2006
(613) 560-5997, Toll-free (866) 292-6233,
FAX (613) 560-2001
info@ocff.ca, www.ocff.ca

Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC)

Austin, TX
November 8-11, 2006
(580) 353-1455, FAX (580) 353-1456
percarts@pas.org, www.pas.org

CINARS 2006

Montreal, PQ
November 14-18, 2006
(514) 842-5866, FAX (514) 843-3168
arts@cinars.org, www.cinars.org

Canadian Music Week

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(905) 858-4747, FAX (905) 858-4848
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2007 National Flute Association Convention

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SABIAN HHX Legacy Series

by Chris Taylor-Munro



With the retail success of the award-winning HHX Evolution Series, SABIAN and Dave Weckl have once again collaborated on a second line called HHX Legacy Series, making Dave the first artist to have two complete lines by SABIAN at the same time.

The Legacy series, with its darker characteristics, can not only be used as your one and only cymbal selection, but can also be a nice contrast when combined with the brighter, cleaner Evolution series or other cymbals.

My first impression upon opening the shipping box was one of eager anticipation as the cymbals, specifically the ride cymbals, reminded me, appearance-wise anyway, of the Artisan Ride SABIAN introduced last year. (If you haven't had the pleasure of trying the Artisan Rides you're missing out!) When I put the 20" Legacy, a medium-thin, next to a 20" Artisan the difference was obvious both sonically and aesthetically. The Legacy is darker, almost smoky sounding. The stick definition is thicker and the tonality is lower with less "ping" than the Artisan. Think of it *not* as the evil twin to the Artisan, but the *meaner* brother for sure.

Continuing to examine the Legacy series I was amazed by the variety of lathing, hammering and interesting treatments proving that each cymbal was given individual attention while maintaining remarkable consistency from the 10" Splash through the 22" Heavy Ride. The splash cymbals come in 10" and 12"

and could arguably be the best sounding (specifically the 10") I've heard in a decade, reminding me of the older Italian-made splash cymbals that are increasingly hard to come by. The hi-hats are 14" and exude lots of trashy mids, but don't get unruly when allowed to open up and breathe. With a light top and heavy bottom they are easily played at softer volumes and respond well to foot,

stick, brush and blastick strokes.

The low profile bell has a nice tone as well. To prove the point that Legacy Series isn't just for jazz

drummers, I decided to take the 17" and 18" crash cymbals along for a weekend disco gig. Yes disco! After seven and a half hours of Earth Wind and

Fire, KC and The Sunshine Band, etc., I was smitten with the smooth swell and pronounced shimmer they managed to exhibit in that high-energy environment. Even when I was laying into them they remained composed, while still dark in tone, and they were clearly audible with no saturation. Playing a delicate roll at the edge of each crash reveals almost no stick definition and makes using these crashes in a subdued manner or sensitive venue such as a church or intimate club a breeze. The 17" Crash has an oriental quality and opens up at a slower rate than the 18", sounds more linear in its explosion of sound until it is hit more intensively. When played back and forth they complement each other well with a very musical interval.

The Legacy lineup consists of nine models (10 if you count the Heavy Ride with rivets) and of those four are ride cymbals. The medium-thin 20" and 21" rides are crash-able and easily provoked into washing, especially the 21", but only to a certain extent as they have an un-lathed ring on the bottom called a "control band" that acts as the equivalent of a zero ring on a drum head. It seems to work well and gives the cymbal a distinctively good look. The 22" Heavy Ride is a thing of beauty, as its ball-peen markings closely resemble the hammering process found on the aforementioned Artisan rides. It doesn't have the "control band" on the bottom because its sheer weight ensures the response remains dry, with good articulate stick definition and an undertone of sound that will sustain for a considerable amount of time after your last stroke. SABIAN sent a Heavy Ride

with three rivets clustered together as an example of a sizzler and I barely tapped the ride with a brush as it shimmered to life with the same abundance of sustain. Oddly enough it reacted with more control when using a stick, which allowed for decent definition even when playing more strokes at faster tempos. The final model was the medium-thin 20" O-Zone Ride. While interesting to look at – with five holes punched out – was somewhat one-dimensional. It has the same dark smoky characteristics, but a dryer sound than the regular 20" ride and is the trashiest of the lot. A niche sound for sure.

Because the surface finish plays a role in the sound of these cymbals, Legacy is available only in Natural Finish. Dave's signature of approval adorns the inside of each bell, while a tasteful "L" and HHX logo topside complete the look. Made from the renowned B20 cast bronze, SABIAN bestows further confidence by providing a two-year warranty for the entire Legacy series.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the HHX Legacy Series is as follows: 10" Splash \$215, 12" Splash \$250, 14" Hats \$658, 17" Crash \$436, 18" Crash \$468, 20" Ride \$545, 21" Ride \$593, 22" Heavy Ride \$641, 20" O-Zone Ride \$545.

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

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

Manufacturer's Comments

It is difficult to communicate in words just how musical Legacy cymbals really are. Designed around our innovative "Tone Texture" concept, Legacy combines rich tonal colour with an ominous, edgy darkness. Dave plays these cymbals in settings ranging from Chick Corea and Mike Stern to sessions for all types of music, often combining them with his brighter HHX Evolution models. Dave likes his rides on the thinner side, less about stick "click", more about palette of tone. And I think the O-Zone Ride warrants more interest than Chris' comments might suggest. Like the Evolution O-Zone Crash, it is very special.

Wayne Blanchard
Sr. Marketing & Communications Manager
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Hagstrom Super Swede Guitar

by **Bernie LaBarge**

In 1967, my dad took me to Waddington's Music store in Hamilton to buy me my first real electric guitar. My Kent-playing days were coming to an end. After seeing Domenic Troiano play his Telecaster with The Mandala, I had my mind made up that I wanted to play a Telecaster too.

The salesman at Waddington's opened the locked showcase (I've never understood why it was locked) and handed me the Tele. It was a magical moment. After observing my playing for a few minutes, he commented on the size of the Tele neck versus the size of my teenaged hands and suggested that I try the guitar that was on display next to the Tele. It was a beautiful semi-hollow sunburst electric, made in Sweden by Hagstrom. What?? It wasn't a Fender or a Gibson?? I reluctantly put it in my hands and began to play. I had never felt anything like it before. The neck was so thin and perfect. The guitar almost played itself. My dad asked me which guitar I liked better. I had to make a decision. My mind raced, due to the fact that I had found a guitar that I liked *better* than the Tele, but my friends and bandmates were expecting me to come home with the Fender. I bit the bullet and chose the Hagstrom Viking. I played that guitar for years, and I attribute it with making my learning process much more enjoyable. I still own that Viking (I found it and re-bought it after 30 years), and I have a Viking 12-string electric as well. Needless to say, I was thrilled when the people at Hagstrom asked me to review their Super Swede guitar. Ironically, Domenic Troiano was endorsed by Hagstrom in the 1970s. Small world, huh? But enough of my yakkin'...

The Super Swede retails for \$850 CDN. Such a deal! This is a very sophisticated piece of craftsmanship assembled in China; hence, the savings. It could easily cost twice that much. I could write paragraphs on the quality of the brown tweed hardshell case alone. (It is awesome!) I felt the anticipation before I undid the first of its brass latches. The sight of the guitar didn't disappoint. The grain, weight and finish job on the Mahogany body's carved Maple top are impeccable. There is a flamed Maple veneer which makes this guitar look much more expensive than it is. In reality, the Super Swede reminded me of a Les Paul. The knobs and the toggle switch are in the same time-tested locations. In addition, there is a mini-switch between the volume knobs to tap the coils in the two Hagstrom Custom 58 humbuckers. You can easily dial up Fender-style or Gibson-style sounds, along with some wonderfully warm and unique Hagstrom sounds. I took the Super Swede

to a recording session, purposely leaving my trusted Tele at home so I wouldn't be tempted to use it if I didn't like the Hagstrom. My fears were unfounded. I plugged into my blackface Fender Princeton amp and started playing as if I had owned the guitar for years. The intonation was perfect, as was the action. The controls were accurate and solid feeling. That day I got the chance to record myself playing clean and dirty rhythm, clean and dirty lead and bottleneck. The entire exercise was effortless. I did, however, find one characteristic which reminded me of my 1967 Viking. The frets on the high E string are bevelled in such a way that you have to watch your finger vibrato, or too much vibrato may cause the string to slip off the neck, inadvertently raising your intended note by a half-step. I must admit that I'm used to a wider neck radius, so this probably wouldn't be an issue for anyone who plays anything narrower than a baseball bat.

For anyone looking for a beautifully well-made, top-drawer guitar, do yourself a favour and play a Super Swede before making any decisions. Remember, Hagstrom changed my mind in 1967. These guitars have to be played to be believed.

Here are some specs for the Super Swede:

- 45 mm Mahogany body with 10 mm carved Maple top
- Hagstrom 18:1 die-cast tuners
- 25.5" scale
- Two Hagstrom Custom 58 Humbuckers
- Tune-O-Matic bridge with Hagstrom stop tail piece
- Six individual brass string blocks

Enjoy it! I sure did...

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

Bernie LaBarge started playing guitar at age 11. He was the frontman and/or guitarist for many popular bands in Ontario, including Bond, Rain, Sweet Blindness, Zwol, Stem and Stingaree. He has also worked with Kim Mitchell, Long John Baldry, Cassandra Vasik, The Irish Rovers, Doug Riley, Frank Byner of Tower of Power, John Sebastian, Joel Feeney and Sass Jordan. He has also composed and performed on many North American and worldwide jingles including Coke, Pepsi, GM, Ford and Nissan. Bernie is currently lead guitarist for David Clayton-Thomas, The Dexters and The Stickmen.



Distributor's Comments

There are only a couple of features that we'd like to mention in addition to what Bernie has written above. The guitar features an H-Expander truss rod, which provides tension at either end, running the entire length of the guitar. Built out of a lightweight alloy, the rod allows for very low action on the neck. The guitar also features a "Resinator" fretboard – an extraordinary, homogeneous wood composite that maintains a strong fundamental harmonic and eliminates wolf tones. Lastly, the guitar features the Hagstrom "Block Stop Tail-piece" which provides maximum tone and endless sustain by transferring uninhibited string energy directly to the guitar body.

Andrew Bujold
Promotions Coordinator
Erikson Music

Blue Microphones Snowball

by Alec Watson



Snowballs All Year Round!

"Here's a little-known secret: vocalists love singing into unique and impressive mics like the snowball. Put it in front of any singer and you're sure to get an inspired performance."

Hey, look I didn't make that up, it was written right in the Snowball manual. Someone took the time to write it – it must be true!

I am not going to pull any punches on this: I don't imagine that any (most) of the vocalists I record are going to sing inspired performances due to the softball shaped mic sitting in front of them ... though I have to admit that there are other microphones in the Blue lineup that might create an inspired performance based on the mic's impressive looks ... I also have to admit that by the time I had placed the Snowball on its (included) sturdy (and cool) little tripod, and placed it on my glass top computer desk in front of my 24-inch widescreen computer monitor, I found a new affinity for the Snowball's aesthetic.

"Hey Cream Puff – Nice Snowball – How Does It Sound?"

Well, I am not going to go searching for a 25-foot USB cable so I can run this mic into my sound room and replace a trusty Neumann plugged into a Neve preamp ... but for a plastic Snowball that seems solid enough to drop ... and perhaps use as a weapon or diversionary tactic should I ever be attacked by a rabid dog – it sounds surprisingly good.

Blue calls the frequency response neutral – I can't say that I would concur, but I would place it as sounding similar in EQ to perhaps a condenser version of a Beta 58. Now that might not sound all that good to you, but one of the reasons that mics like the 58 still get used is because they have a frequency response that helps a vocal cut through a live mix – while not sounding EQed. And when I say a "condenser version" of a 58, I mean that the Snowball has quite a nice top end – it really does sound like a reasonably good condenser mic. For a home studio or for "Podcasting" (which they promote right on the box) this is a pretty darned good vocal mic – especially when considering value for money.

Softball Anyone?

When it comes to computer stuff, there are geeks that can live with tweaking stuff to install it (and enjoy the challenge) and then there are the sound majority that just want the damn thing to work – "Because I just paid good money for it!" The Snowball is at a unique disadvantage when it comes to installation – if it fails to install quickly and easily, its shape and weight make it ideal for a friendly game of "I-hate-my-new-gear softball." I am VERY happy to report, however, that you

are HIGHLY unlikely to feel the need to chuck it. Installation was a breeze – it doesn't even need drivers. You plug it in – computer says: "Snowball" – you start singing or playing – it doesn't get much easier.

I even gave it the: plug-too-much-gear-into-the-USB-port-and-mess-up-your-computer challenge. My computer (I can't guarantee this on yours) had no problems recording at all. I plugged in a Focusrite Saffire (stereo USB mic pre), a Tascam US-122 (stereo USB mic pre) and the Snowball and recorded on five tracks simultaneously without disaster. No, I probably wouldn't want to try multi-tracking like this as a plan, but in a pinch you at least can.

Which Switch Is Which?

The Snowball has a single switch on the back with three settings – the Blue microphone company has opted for fashionably appropriate settings named: 1, 2 and 3. Setting 1 operates the front cardioid capsule, setting 2 is a 10 dB pad (it seems this is for the mic section and not the preamp section – meaning you would use this for loud sources), and finally the 3rd position activates a second internal omni directional capsule. I have to admit I wasn't a huge fan of this setting as it added some fairly thin top end (it was a little harsh in the 10-12 kHz region).

Conclusion

This is a pretty good little mic for vocals; aesthetically it seems like it has been placed in the market to sit in front of a nice Mac monitor and fit right in. Overall sound quality is quite good, especially when you consider value for money. In the Snowball manual it mentions mic techniques for acoustic guitar – I have to admit I didn't try miking an acoustic guitar, but I believe that the gain is probably a little low on the mic preamp for quiet instruments; strumming would be fine, but for picking it probably wouldn't be on the top of my list. For vocals however, I like the natural sound of the mic on the voice, and for high SPL sources this mic works well. For Podcasting, voiceover and home demo-ing, based on sound and ease of use, this is a really good little tool. I can say with complete honesty that this is, in fact, *the* best sounding Snowball you have ever heard!

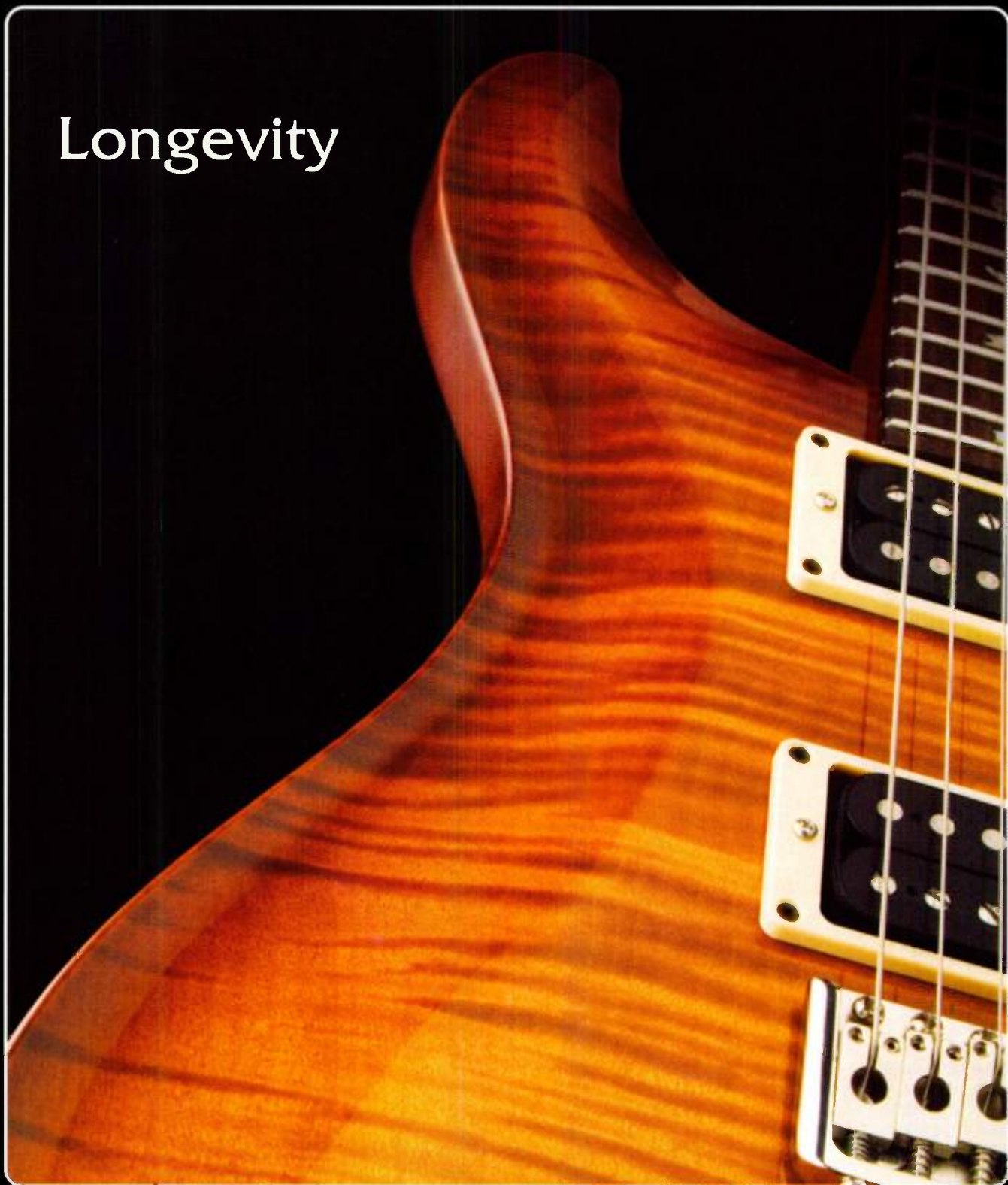
Ah, c'mon they made it look like a snowball – they were asking for it!

The manufacturer's suggested retail price for the Snowball is \$189 US.

For more product information, contact: Blue Microphones, 5706 Corsa Ave., #102, Westlake Village, CA 91362-4057 (818) 879-5200, FAX (818) 879-7258, support@bluemic.com, www.bluemic.com.

Alec Watson is a Producer/Engineer that lives on Vancouver Island. He can be contacted at alec@alecwatson.com.

Longevity



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Prelude To a *Kiss*



guitar

by John Stowell

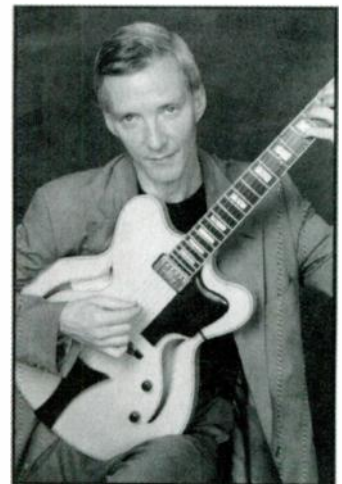
Jazz musicians have been interpreting melodies since Louis Armstrong. Creative liberties have been taken both with popular tunes of the Great American Songbook and with more contemporary repertoire. I have developed my own sensibilities and methodology by using musicians such as Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins and Bill Evans as role models. In addition to being accomplished composers, all three of the aforementioned men were masters at creating their own versions of the melodies of jazz standards. To listen to Miles play "Bye-Bye Blackbird" or "Someday My Prince Will Come" is a revelation. Portions of the melodies are missing altogether in some instances. The additional space that is created defines the remaining phrases; Miles also adds new notes of his own that suggest the quality of the chord progression at that moment. To hear Sonny Rollins interpret "God Bless the Child" or Bill Evans finesse his way through "Nardis" is to witness equally creative re-inventions of written melodies. I encourage students to copy or borrow heavily from the masters to begin

to get a feel for creating their own frame of reference in this area of the music.

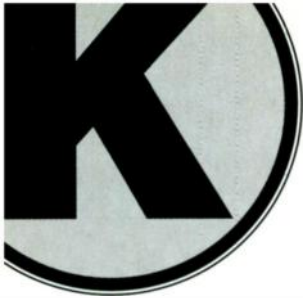
For this article I am using my recording of the melody to Duke Ellington's "Prelude to a Kiss" (The Banff Sessions, Origin Records). In addition to being a great composer, Duke was a formidable jazz pianist and his writing often reflected his jazz sensibilities. In the case of "Prelude" however, the A section of the tune is primarily composed of quarter notes and the bridge is mostly comprised of eighth notes. While I didn't significantly change the original harmony and melody of the tune, beyond adding some embellishments and tensions to the existing chords, I did take substantial liberties with the rhythms. Note the use of triplets, sixteenth notes, rests and tied notes and compare my version to Duke's original.

For this recording of "Prelude" I was joined by the great bassist/pianist/vibraphonist Don Thompson. Much thanks to Kevin Smith for his transcription.

The musical score is presented in a single system with seven staves. The notation includes a melody line with various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, and triplet notes) and rests. Below the melody, chord progressions are indicated by letters such as D7, G7, C7, FΔ7, B7, E7, A7, Dm7, and Dm7. The score also features several triplet markings over groups of notes. A 'let ring' instruction is placed below the first staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.



John Stowell is based in Portland, OR in the Pacific Northwest and has performed and taught internationally for over 30 years. He is a Hofner artist, playing a signature model Verythin JS and has a newly released book/DVD published by Mel Bay entitled *Jazz Guitar Mastery*. Questions or comments can be directed to John at jfstowell@earthlink.net.



So You Want To Work In The Movies...

by Kevin Young

keyboards

Right. You may not be able to start right off with scoring a film, but there are increasing numbers of people looking for content for all sorts of applications, from Web ads to a multitude of reality shows and in-house corporate presentations. The more technology evens the field for musicians, the more it does the same for filmmakers, editors and artists in a variety of disciplines. Whether there's more work or less work because of this is a matter of opinion.

For keyboard players, a good many of us who've spent a good part of our time working collaboratively, it's a fairly natural step to want to go from the guy who can recreate a mess of fiddly bit and orchestral textures live, to doing so for other types of performance – as well as broadcast.

Bear in mind that there's a huge learning curve. A good friend of mine, a live engineer and producer, calls musicians who up and decide to get into production one morning 'Swiss Army Knife guys'. The problems, he points out, is that often the last thing a player intent on opening their own small studio learns, is how to engineer. Beyond engineering chops though, there's a number of other skills that come into play – and are also worth developing...

In addition to being able to make things sound good, you need to make things sound the way someone else wants them to ... sometimes *exactly*. And often the person you're working for isn't necessarily speaking the same language you might speak to other musicians. Basically, it's your job, as translator, to get what they hear in the can fast – just the way they hear it.

When you're working on something that's all yours, you set your own boundaries. If you step outside them, at least it's a short drive for your inner critic to drop by and give you hell. When you're working to someone else's expectations, disregarding the boundaries can make the difference between you being "the person who's got the gig" or the person who almost had it.

A few people have taken the time to offer some advice on this subject over the past few months. Here's a sampling...

First, get ready for a good solid "skin thickening" – you need to be able to take direction and criticism well. Diplomacy is key in any collaborative effort, but all the more so in a client/contractor situation.

Have a good grip of what's hot in advertising – analyzing ads as you would to a pop song. Be able to dissect that 30 seconds in the same way in as much detail as you would

any piece of music and explain it to someone in layman's terms. This will help you develop a vocabulary you can to conceptualize music for your own projects.

Ditto for films – don't just let film music wash over you. Be able to analyze why a score works, or doesn't.

Develop a thorough knowledge of the sounds and uses of as many instruments and instrument groupings as you can – their ranges, and traditional relationships to one another in a number of genres. Know as much about the unique properties of the original acoustic instruments as well as how to approximate them with whatever simulators you're using.

Overall you need a wide knowledge of a multitude of musical forms and styles, as well as the ability and resources to cop those styles, and approximate the instrumentation convincingly and quickly.

A note on working on spec ... you'll be doing a lot of this – another aspect of a more level playing field, one that's affected everybody, from the small home studios to name producers. This is annoying, but unavoidable. Relationships are key. As with anything, plum gigs go to the people who have connections and a solid reputation.

Also be prepared, at times, to pay a percentage of your gross to the person or agency representing you to the client. As my writing partner is fond of reminding me, "You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate." Everything is negotiable. However, most of the time you'll get what you get – you might get paid without ever knowing what the agency got for your track. Often agencies prefer to work with a music house that's established rather than an individual provider. Generally an agent's fee might go higher or lower dependant on the relationships and the stakes, but on average it's roughly 10 per cent.

Be aware, too, that ownership is a grey area when you're creating a work for hire. Generally speaking, when you write something for broadcast you no longer own it, but your rights depend on the type of work created and whether you're working in Canada or the USA. In addition, also generally speaking, you should be a member of the AF of M if you want to receive residuals for TV commercials – SOCAN has nothing to do with administering these.

If you get the sense that whoever you're working with might be a little unclear as to what they want, be extremely clear about what you're going to provide. Make certain that, if you're cutting the music to a piece of video or film that requires hitting a lot of cues, that



you are working with the final edit.

When it comes to film and developing your soundtrack chops, you may as well work with the best. Throw a movie on, your favourite, everybody's favourite, whatever – hit record and play to it. Try your hand at scoring on the fly and expressing a range of emotion that fits the scene and the film. If you know the film and the existing score well, you'll know, when you play the track back against picture, whether you're on the right track.

Most of all, have the ability to listen and submerge your own creative ego in favour of the demands of the gig – in some cases your instincts and past work are the reason you're being hired, but, in many cases, you're probably either the most convenient option, or the cheapest. There's no end of horror stories about clients who return again, and again, to make changes to your work. If you're working for a flat fee, the more time you spend on revisions, the less your fee means.

Regardless of whether you're writing for a corporate client or a recording artist, increasingly, owing to all the tools that are literally at our fingertips now, meeting expectations is potentially much easier than in times past. But what's still most challenging about being a hired gun is providing just what the client wants while striking a balance between your own creative instincts and the demands of the job.

Kevin Young is a Toronto-based keyboardist, best known for his work with David Usher and Moist. He is also a partner in Spydust Music, providing music and sound design for film, television, live theatre and dance, which you can find online at www.spydustmusic.com.

Preparing To Go

Down



passed

by Chuck Dailey

“Have any bags to check sir?”
“No, just me, these guitars and my amp head.”
I suppose if we were Bon Jovi we would just hop into our own jet have our crew take care of the gear, grab a blonde, a cold one and get ready to smile a lot. But alas, we are a Canadian indie band. With the help of Factor (www.factor.ca) and Starmaker/CIRPA (www.starmaker.ca), who do their absolute best to help promote Canadian music worldwide, we recently made the 22-hour flight to tour Australia. The logistics of all of the gig/travel/hotel bookings and finding money for the tour were entirely in our management’s and label’s hands, the rest was entirely up to us.

When The Salads toured Australia with The Presidents of the United States of America a few months back, we did 14 flights in 15 days and played two shows a day. If you are attached to your Mesa Boogie cabinets in large road cases you have no choice but to get over it quickly. When you are only allowed two pieces per person on flights and there are weight limitations you have to borrow a lot of gear from some very gracious opening bands or use whatever backline is provided at the gig. As payment, the best I could do for these bands was offer packs of strings – I made a lot of friends. If you have any idea about musical instrument prices where the toilets flush backwards, you’ll know that this gift was huge! Knowing how to repair your gear is important. Grabbing a few extra parts, tons of picks and [cue shameless endorsement!] multiple boxes of Slinky strings, is integral.

We learned long ago that touring means that you’ll be in a different town every day, have long drives, no sleep and few opportunities to shower. This translates into bringing one shirt for the stage (right now it is an awesomely offensive 3tards shirt),

one “day” shirt, a jacket, one pair of shorts, a swimsuit (for rare ocean baths) and some toiletry stuff. The town you’re in didn’t see you the day before – they have no idea how dirty you truly are. Packing this way leaves room for your iPod, a book and possibly some sandals. The ability to fit everything into a carry-on bag means that I am the only one in the band who didn’t lose luggage on the flight from LA to Sydney, and the only one not wearing Salads merch for the first two days in Australia.

Another element in preparing for long tours is getting yourself ready mentally and if you’re smart, physically. It is grueling liv-

single day for hours on end. Tirelessly obsessing over bar 46 after the bridge. Debating whether throwing “what I like about poo” into the middle of a song will seem like a great idea to the headliner’s audience. We rehearse in Toronto at a top-notch facility. We have been there for about 10 years now, if not longer, and get to hear different bands and cover groups daily. One morning, because that is when we go to “work”, we were taking a short break and heard a really great cover band blazing through AC/DC’s “Back in Black”. Sure the song is simple,

but man, this band really knew how to make it feel right! Next practice, a day or so later, we hear the same band blow us away even harder with “Back in Black” AGAIN ... and then AGAIN!! The song finished, the door to their rehearsal room swings open, and voila! There stands Angus and Malcolm Young in all of their vertically challenged rock glory!! We exchanged nods back and forth in rock approval of each other – the only two pre-noon bands in the joint. We were floored, not only by the fact they were next door, but by the fact that they were rehearsing the same set every day of the week, all day long. A lot of their songs are over 20 years old and they still practice them! No one will forget the big SARS show we

had in Toronto with the Stones and AC/DC at Downsview Park. These rockers from down under laid waste to every other band at the festival. They were awesome. Energy out the rear, blazing solos and an unbelievable tight sound. Not because they are fooling crowds with backup tapes, but because they work really hard at being a great touring live band!

AC/DC affirmed for us what Mrs. Fisher taught us in grade 7, practice makes perfect – perfect ass kicking that is!

Chuck Dailey is bassist for The Salads. Find them online at www.thesalads.com.



Haven't you heard of dental floss Chuck?

ing with the same guys 24/7 throughout every situation. There will be disagreements, drunken fools, bad morning people and drama. You must be prepared to shrug it all off and just get on with it. No matter how upset you may get at someone, the next morning, you’re knocking on their door asking to borrow toothpaste and making plans for breakfast. If you tend to hold grudges you should not be on the road. We are very conscious of this and take care of each other and treat everyone around us with respect.

Most of all, before hitting the road the band is concerned with practicing and getting a great set together for every show. When we have any gig we rehearse every

P

“Taste” ... The True Art of Drumming

by Gregg Bowman

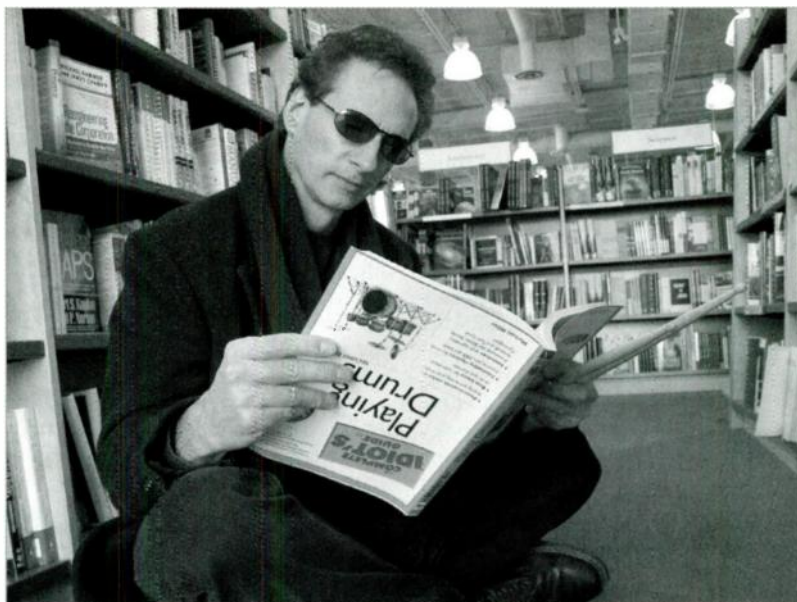
percussion

I just returned from Brussels last week after having attended the International Conference on banning accordions as a legitimate musical instrument! The conference was promising but since then I have heard that we are on the brink of war with Germany and Bavaria! Some people take such trivial matters so seriously! I wonder if I should take the death threats from the Accordionist's Union seriously. Hm... ..

What is it that players such as Vinnie Coliuta, J.R. Robinson, the late Jeff Porcaro, Jim Keltner, Steve Ferrone, Zoro, Mickey Curry, Steve Gadd and the many others in the same league as these professional session players have in common? One local drummer that I admire greatly for his taste, timing and creative abilities is Pat Steward. Also a nice guy! Pat, has that rash cleared up? They all have tremendous chops, high levels of independence, gifted time keeping and of course it goes without saying, “groove!” One very important and crucial topic that I think needs more exposure and discussion and has been neglected in educational articles for quite some time is probably the most important aspect of drumming, period! It is the part of drumming that really does separate the greatest players from all others and that is the highly subjective concept of what constitutes “taste”. My personal understanding

of the definition of taste ... is a highly defined and matured intuition that particular drummers have cultivated through years of experience and listening that has given them the unique and creative ability to come up with that ingenious fill, lick or groove and even the very selection of the way they have tuned their drums ... all for the total benefit of embellishing the songs arrangement, feel and the composers designated individual statement. In other words, everything to support the song and not our ego! Not that our egos are as large as a bass players of course, but that is understandable!

Many tasteful drum grooves or fills are not always vastly technical in nature but instead rely on creative simplicity and are shaped by the immense passion and feel inherent in that drummer's soul and given to compliment the emotional sensitivity and personal statement of the musical piece/song. Many beautifully crafted and tasteful drum fills are mislead-



ing in their apparent simplicity. Executing and placing the “right” fill, with the “right” feel at just the perfect time in a song is a supreme “ART!” This gifted ability is crafted over the years by one's experiences, musical influences, listening to drummers like the aforementioned and examining their feel and instinct for the creative placement and intuition they display. They are able to display this gift in a most unassuming fashion, yet the ability required to demonstrate this skill can be very misleading. To perform and record in this way requires inner confidence in one's art and an inner sense of relaxation and calmness coupled with an innate knowledge of our technical abilities as well as our limitations.

The placement and implementation of melodic and rhythmic fills in a creative/tasteful way, again for the benefit of the song or musical piece needs the drummers complete understanding of the arrangement, flow and requested direction that the particular song is to take as determined by the artist. This knowledge will go a long way in helping and preparing us to see and hopefully create the desired fill. It is much easier to relax, be creative and to think clearly when we know the song inside and out and no longer need to dwell on any section of the arrangement. Then we will have a thoroughly different perspective and be able to supply what is needed to benefit the music and to support the vocals and hopefully acquire more requests for our services! Food is good!

Taste can be somewhat ethereal and hard

to define as an absolute – sometimes because of its own very subjective nature. Most drummers I think have a feeling of awe when they hear that certain fill laid down at just the precise time as to make the entire song a work of art and passionate expression! Any more and I'll need Kleenex! No other drummer could have played the fills in “A Day in The Life” from the Beatle's Sgt. Peppers album better than Ringo!! Drummers often state... “Oh, I could do that!” Yes, maybe! But You Didn't! Ringo did! Another short but beautifully executed fill that comes to mind out of many was the fill Jeff Porcaro played in the timely pause of the song “When a Man Loves a Woman” recorded by Michael Bolton. Simple, but PERFECT! Jeff Porcaro is sorely missed.

There are many more examples I could use but the Editor says I must limit my verbal assaults to no more than 180,000 words. To sum this all up ... TASTE should always be the ultimate goal, objective and end achievement of every drummer.

Gregg Bowman has been very busy over the past months involved in high-end business endeavours and projects with Roger Nichols and Carmine Appice as well as working on the formation of a Contemporary Christian R&B band with plans in place to tour the former Soviet Union. As well Gregg has been working on two book projects for publishing and is soon to be genuinely labelled as “Carmine Appice's protégé”. He is happy! (Yes I am!) Gregg can be reached at greggbowman@hotmail.com and looks forward to any questions or comments you might have. Web site coming very soon...

Let The Good Time Roll



by Alex Dean



In November 2005 I gave a clinic at the Ontario Music Educator's Association at the Deerhurst Inn. I decided because I was presenting to Educators and Teachers that I would discuss my approach to beginning improvisation. Often I am approached by teachers in high school and middle school who have all the latest books and information, but need a strategy for beginner improvisation. The following is a summary of that session as I have had many requests to make this available in publication.

In music as we remember there are about three elements melody, harmony and rhythm. There are hundreds of books already published that explain all the secret scales than can be used to play over every chord. In my experience what a lot of beginner improvisers need is a place to start. Often they are quite overwhelmed with information and are at a loss to know where or how to begin. I explain to them that most of the people they listen to have been soloing for a long time, probably 10 to 15 years and it takes that long to sound that good. With my beginner students I also play them some fairly accessible improvised music and talk a little about what's happening in the music. If it's a jazz quartet, it's important to explain what each of the instruments are doing while the soloist plays. I try to explain how the other instruments support the soloist.

I like to start my students by trying to get them to improvise rhythms usually by

tapping on their legs, or a table – whatever is handy. It's also important that they say out loud what they tap with their hands using any syllable or sound they like. I try to develop the rhythms from simple rhythmic ideas with half notes and whole notes to as complicated as the student can handle but always stressing that they have to say the rhythms that they improvise because that helps the student internalize the rhythms.

I often put the metronome on while we do this exercise usually on beats one and three or two and four. As we get a little more advanced I move the metronome beat to one or two or three or four to try to develop a rhythmic sense of where we are in the music. I start the exercise in 4/4 time and usually I do something we call trading fours. That means that we improvise rhythms over four bars of 4/4 and trade back and forth. As the student gets a little more confident with the time I start to move the metronome around to make it more fun. Eventually we improvise rhythms in as many time feels as we can 4/4, 3/4, 7/8 what ever I can think of.

I think at this point it's good to mention that what I'm trying to show the student above all else is that this is fun. Many of them are self-conscious so when I do this exercise I try to challenge myself so that the student and I are having fun and trying to learn together and I'm trying to demonstrate that I'm coming from the same place they are.

Once my student gets comfortable with improvising rhythms, I start to add some harmony and give him/her one note and ask them to improvise rhythmically using just one note. We usually trade fours like we did when we were tapping and I try to bring in the concept of accents in the music and the concept of tension and release or building a rhythmic cadence and resolving it over 4 bars of 4/4 time. I found it useful to analyze various melodies from standards or bebop tunes taking out the pitches and looking at the rhythmic melodies or motives and how often they repeat.

At this point I add two notes either from a single chord or from the blues scale and we trade fours using our rhythmic improvisations as a base. As we add notes from the scale or chord I like to move to the piano and accompany the student, but a play-along record is a good idea as well. Usually blues to start with and then branch out into other tunes mostly tunes from the Great American Song Book or tin-pan alley type tunes. This

lets me talk a little bit about theory from a playing standpoint or what is called practical theory.

Once we get to the point that we can find our way into 8 or 16 bars of a standard, I take a little different approach. When we start working on a tune I make sure my student can play the melody. We take the melody from sheet music or a reliable fake book and memorize it. We start playing the melody with a metronome or with me on piano or with a CD of the tune. I introduce various concepts at this time like delaying the melody or anticipating the melody all within the 16 or 32 bars of the tune. This can usually be a lot of fun because I delay the melody as far back as I can but still get it in the tune or really anticipate it. I also like to add approach-notes to the melody notes, usually 1/2 a step above or below. In other words I'm trying to make the melody the complete solo. After the student really starts to understand all this I start to introduce soloing on the chord-tones using the same concepts as we used soloing on the melody. I usually start with simple rhythms as we did when we were tapping on our knees and then get a little more advanced as we go. As the rhythms and the chord-tones start to create melodies we start to connect them and add different tag notes to the melodies. At this point the secret scales start to make sense.

As always this requires time and patience and hopefully a good sense of humor. Remember some days are better than others.

Reedman, Alex Dean, has been described as "one of Canada's foremost Jazz Saxophonists," and has been a mainstay of the Canadian music scene for many years. He has played with Gil Evans, Kenny Wheeler, Dave Liebman, Ernie Watts, Mel Torme, Ray Charles, Pat Labarbera, Nick Brignola and the Toronto Symphony. Alex is a member of Rob McConnell's "Tenet". He also holds the tenor saxophone chair with Rob McConnell's "Grammy award winning" BOSS Brass. His numerous recordings include Grammy and Juno award winners and he is the bandleader of the explosive Tenor Madness, Alex Dean Quintet, and "power trio", DEW East. Alex is the Canadian Artist Representative and clinician for Boosey & Hawkes, promoting Keikworth Saxophones and Rico Reeds. He is also the Artistic Director of the highly regarded Kincardine Summer Jazz Program on Lake Huron, ON. Alex is a member of the Jazz Faculty at the University of Toronto and Humber College. He is a widely respected clinician/adjudicator in Canada and the US.

Sound Ideas Part II



by Chase Sanborn

This is a continuation of my last column, talking about sound. This time, we focus on the role of the lips in creating vibration, and transferring that vibration to the instrument.

Lips

When the lips are formed into an embouchure and compressed on the airstream, they vibrate (buzz). The purity of the buzz and the efficiency with which air is converted to vibration is a function of the shape of the lips and the amount of tension or compression.

The amount of lip area that vibrates is very small, particularly on the higher brass (smaller) mouthpieces. The adjustments that take place within the cup of the mouthpiece are subtle but critical – small changes in the embouchure can have a dramatic effect on the sound. Watch in a mirror while you buzz on a rim visualizer (a mouthpiece rim mounted on a handle or a shank), and focus your attention on the point of vibration. Become aware of how slightly changing the setting of the lips, or the position of the mouthpiece on the lips, affects the buzz. Each note requires tiny adjustments to produce the purest vibration.

Now watch in the mirror while buzzing the mouthpiece or playing the horn. Focus on the muscles of your face outside the mouthpiece. Try to reduce external facial movement as much as possible; the less movement outside the mouthpiece, the finer your muscle control inside the mouthpiece, where it really counts. Your accuracy will improve as you eliminate a “moving target” at the source of vibration.

Many players rob themselves of tone by using too much embouchure tension, effectively strangling the lip vibrations. You can hear this in beginning brass students – with their lips tightly squeezed together the sound is usually pinched and lacking in resonance. By searching for the minimum embouchure compression for a given pitch and volume, you allow the lips to vibrate to their fullest – more sound for less effort.

Transfer The Vibrations To The Horn

Your horn is a simple length of pipe; the length is changeable by valves or slides. A given length of pipe vibrates at specific frequencies, which have a mathematic relationship to each other (the overtone series). When your lips vibrate precisely at one of the resonant frequencies of the pipe, the tone becomes robust, and the vibrations of the pipe actually feed and sustain the vibrations of the lips. This might be described as playing in the center of the pitch, or finding the “sweet spot”. When you hit the sweet spot on a tennis racket or baseball bat or golf club, you efficiently transfer energy to the ball. When you find it while playing a note, you efficiently transfer energy to the horn.

Just as the ball player must “follow through” the stroke, keeping his eyes on where he wants the ball to go, you should focus on where you want your sound to go. If it leaves your bell and immediately hits the music stand – WRONG! Your sound picks up resonance and energy as it bounces off every surface in the room – use this to your advantage, treating the room as an amplifier and a resonating chamber. Point your horn in different directions and listen to the change in your tone. Watch out for a common student error: as you play higher your eyes drift towards the ceiling – WRONG! In driving school, they teach you that during a skid you should look where you want the car to go (on the road). Picture where you want the sound to go, and your body will do what it must to get it there.

Chase Sanborn is a jazz trumpet player based in Toronto, Canada. Chase is a veteran studio musician and a member of the jazz faculty at the University of Toronto. His teaching methods, Brass Tactics and Jazz Tactics, have earned worldwide praise for their insightful yet light-hearted and humorous look at the world of brass playing and jazz improvisation. For more information on Chase's books, DVDs, CDs and other products, visit www.chasesanborn.com.

Archiving Audio 2006



by Alec Watson

Let's get this out of the way now. Some columns are a fun read; this column is going to be about as fun as getting your teeth pulled; a real snooze fest. But get beyond the boredom of the topic, and dry delivery, I promise to have some CD and DVD info for you that you probably never knew ... but needed to!

We are all faced with having to archive our data. That hard drive seems to fill up much faster than it did a couple of years ago ... well, actually it does. At one time, 44.1 kHz 16-bit recordings were "state-of-the-art." Today, even an inexpensive USB mic-pre has a spec sheet listing a sample rate of 192 kHz. Unfortunately, the likelihood of the audio actually sounding better after 48 kHz on a \$200 USB mic-pre is somewhat unlikely, but let's leave that for another column.

So here is the frickin' emergency: all that doomsayer stuff about CDs and DVDs not lasting is apparently all true according to tests by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology. Go ahead, google them, the tests are all online. Now they are not naming any names, but they have gone as far as talking about specific construction methods and the news is all bad. The bad news? Two to five years for some name brand discs regardless of price ... I say NAME the FRICKIN' NAMES!

Here is some of the tech stuff that you probably already know, but we'll go over again so you can explain it to your friends and sound really smart. Store purchased music discs and movie DVDs differ from home burned discs in that discs that you burn at home don't actually have a real "pit" (Brad or otherwise) burned into them. What home burned discs have is a layer of dye (that colour that you see that makes them differ from replicated discs); this organic dye layer is photosensitive and reacts to the laser in your DVD burner; this dye is the make and break of longevity. Some dyes are much cheaper than others; leading to bigger profit margins for disc companies. Even if you pay for premium discs, how many discs can you buy that actually say "archival" on them? Not a lot, making it very difficult to distinguish which are good and which are bad. Regardless of whether the dye is a good quality one, or bad, it is going to decay, much quicker than we would like.

It is this "decaying" property that allowed you to burn the disc and make it readable in the first place. The decay is currently inevitable, but there are ways to slow down the decaying process:

"Carol-Ann, Run Away From The Light ... Especially If You Have All Your Back Up Discs!"

Keep Discs Out Of The Light – especially sunlight. The sun transmits the very same light waves that our feeble little burners used to burn the disc when you made it. Even a caveman can distinguish: "Sun HOT! DVD burner warm."

Heat And Humidity Are Killers – heat is an interesting one. Cool is obviously best, but constant temperature is more important.



Think of the dye as a gel trapped between two laminations. On the surface you have a clear plastic, then the dye layer and then a reflective layer – all with different expansion and contraction properties ... yes, you see the problem too. Humidity has an effect on the laminations, I always thought of a disc de-lamination as the disc splitting apart. No, it's more like on a microscopic level there is a micro separation, which induces errors into the gaps between the decaying pits. (Sounds nasty!)

No Sticky Labels! – this one is not so obvious on first thought, but becomes obvious after you know about it. The problem isn't with the glue of the label "eating" into the top layer of the CD. The problem is really the non-archival properties of the glue in the label itself. The sticky label glue is not made to last for years. The label's glue will

start to deteriorate in about the same span as the CD. This will leave the CD in several bad conditions: unbalanced – definitely not an advantage to reading the decaying dye spots on an old CD. You may have to peel the label off; leaving glue and old label (really throwing it out of balance) this also can cause you to slightly bend an old CD – which brings us to the next biggie:

Don't Bend The CD! – jewel cases and archived CD/DVDs are not a good match. Bending a replicated CD not so bad, bending a CD with a volatile layer of dye in the middle not good; bending an OLD CD with decaying dye in the middle very, very, bad!

So, you're saying to yourself: this all sucks! What fixes do we have? Well, it turns out that tape still WAY out lasts dye layers. The estimated lifespan in optimal conditions is 100 years for magnetic materials. Consider both a tape backup AND DVD. Also interesting is the lifespan of a little used hard drive. Now we don't know how long that little motor is going to last and how those bearing are going to do, but the magnetic surface is definitely – well – magnetic. Perhaps hard drives are cheap enough, for good projects, that it is worth archiving to hard drive and then putting the hard drive away. In the meantime you can, of course, re-copy your discs every three to five years until someone starts guaranteeing the archival properties of the CD/DVD. Last but not least, the best archiving method for songs is – good old-fashioned paper. Score that puppy out on some good quality acid-free paper with a pigment printer and the piece of paper could well be here 500 years from now!

Alec Watson is a Producer/Engineer on Vancouver Island; he is currently plotting an invasion of the Institute of National Standards and Technology so he can get the names of companies selling discs that decay in as little as two years. Find him online at www.alecwatson.com.



Vocal Congestion – In Need of a Cure?

by Diana Yampolsky

In this column, I would like to talk about a common problem among many aspiring singers: singing with the nasal voice. Often at both the amateur and even professional level you will hear singers that sound like they are literally whining instead of singing. The sound they are producing is very thin and nasal because they are incorrectly singing through their nose. The mistake they are making is that they are placing the voice vertically starting at the throat and out through the nasal cavity instead of the vocal chambers. This prevents any resonance and the sound coming out of their mouth is very unpleasant to say the least. One way of describing this type of singing is to think of the difference between broadcasting with a small antenna instead of a satellite dish – it sounds quieter, fuzzier and frustrates the listener a great deal.

Actually, for some people a nasal sounding voice is not the result of incorrect vocal technique but can truly be attributed to the environment in which they live. It's no secret that modern cities are very polluted and today's singers have to deal with polluted air and allergies that singers before the 20th century did not. A large percentage of the population has plugged up sinuses due to pollution and these sinus cavities need to be clear for singing.

Quite a few people have to deal with both of the above. They have both incorrect technique and plugged up sinuses. This combination is pretty common and has resulted in a lot of unpleasant sounding singers. An example of this was an aspiring singer who asked me to become her vocal coach. She told me one thing that had always bothered her was that whenever she performed and people heard her sing, they always asked her if she had a cold. The story did have a happy ending as I was able to help her though a methodology very similar to the one that I use for clients who have damaged their voices. For most people that have wrecked their vocal anatomy due to incorrect vocal technique I am usually able to help them regain their voice through a combination of

natural herbal remedies and instruction in correct vocal technique. I apply similar methods to cure vocal congestion.

To modify the incorrect vocal technique that often produces vocal congestion and a sick, nasal sounding voice, I use a number of specific vocal exercises designed to condition them to bring the sound through the facial cavities and vocal chambers instead of through the nasal passage. The main vowels of the singing alphabet are: Ah, Ooo, Eh, Oh, Eee. If you visualize each

vowel going in a circular direction around your face and above your head, you will be able to avoid a nasal cavity. If the sound becomes narrower than 360 degrees radius, the sound will most likely end up in your nose. Unless you need a little bit of a nasal sound for your style of music, I would not recommend using it.

To counter stuffed up sinuses due to allergies, I use a number of natural herbal remedies. SNX is very effective for clearing the sinuses and even alleviates chronic sinusitis. Fenugreek and Thyme is very good for treating sinus headaches. Two drops of Labilia in each ear two to three times a day will clear your mucus membranes and relieve congestion.

To conclude, I'd like to say that "Vocal Congestion" is a common but completely treatable problem. As discussed above, it can stem from either incorrect technique or allergic reactions or even both. A combination of vocal exercises and herbal remedies

will cure even the most stuffed up singer. However, some time I read an article by a singer who said that singing off a phlegmy, congested vocal anatomy helps him to achieve a rock 'n' roll "raspy" style. I can assure you that you can learn how to sing in this style (or any others) naturally and without the "aid" of any phlegm and congestion.



*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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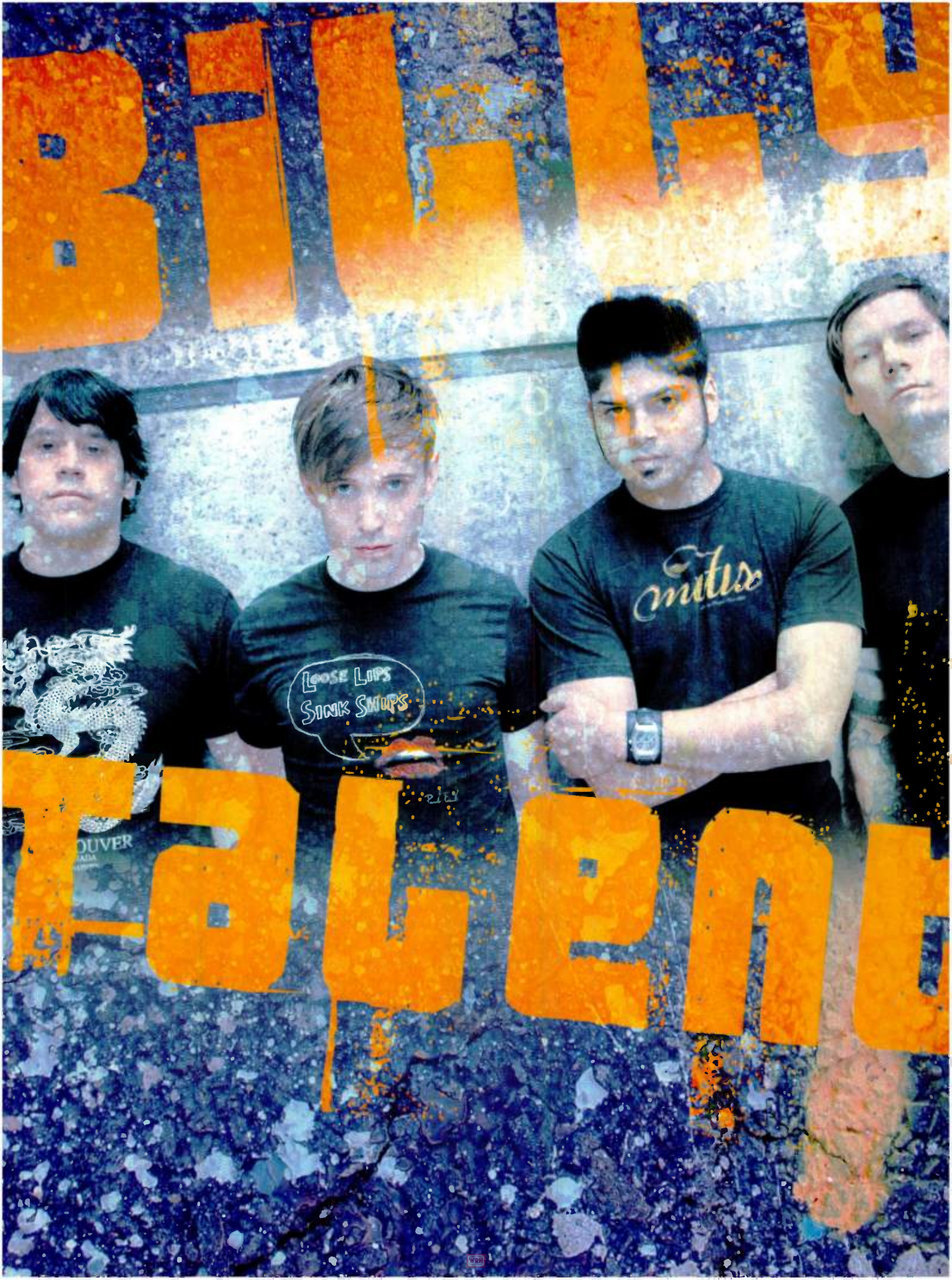
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BRI



TALLENT

Give me a closet and a microphone," declares Ben Kowalewicz, sitting on a black couch in the top floor lounge of Vancouver's The Warehouse Studio, a three-storey recording facility owned by Bryan Adams and housed in a beautifully restored 120-year-old brick building in the area known as Gastown.

There are microphones and closets here, but the frontman for rock band Billy Talent won't be using the two to capture his trademark melodic yelp or *sing* more than he ever did on 2003's full-length debut, *Billy Talent*, now nearing triple-platinum (300,000) in Canada.

Kowalewicz will wait until he's home in Toronto to record the vocals for the album, later to be titled *Billy Talent II* and released in late June on Atlantic/Warner. He prefers EMI Music Publishing Canada's tiny in-house studio, which he fondly calls "the closet." That's where he ended up going after the band spent five weeks recording the first album at Vancouver's The Factory Studios.

"I didn't even really sing. I kind of got ahead of myself and freaked myself out, so I did most of my vocals in Toronto at EMI at their little closet — and that's what we're doing again for this record. I don't need big fancy things," Kowalewicz explains, while Miska Cspreghy sits in a neighbouring chair capturing the interview on video camera in case Billy Talent decides to release a follow-up to 2004's *Scandalous Travelers* DVD.

"It has purple, matted walls with shag, disgusting carpet, and it smells, and there's food in there," describes Kowalewicz of the EMI studio. "It's just awful, but, for some reason, it's where I feel most comfortable to sing. I don't know why. We recorded our demos there, and then we recorded our album there, and then I did the new demos there; there's just something about it.

"I also think there's a comfort zone being at home for me. I'd rather get on the streetcar and go and sing for a couple of hours, and then go home because I know that centres me a lot."

Kowalewicz will be home and centred soon. The band has been at The Warehouse for four weeks. It's now mid-November and this is his last day there. Drummer Aaron Solowoniuk and bassist Jon Gallant left a few days earlier. Guitarist Ian D'Sa will remain another week with producer Gavin Brown, the man behind Billy Talent's first album and the recipient of a 2004 Juno Award for producer of the year for his work on that and Three Days Grace's millions-selling debut.

"When we're here, we focus on *music*," says Kowalewicz. "It's all about getting the best drum sounds, or getting the best bass tone, and getting all the different gear and renting all these different guitars, and having all these different people drop off all this stuff and we just play with it. It's the best studio in Canada, hands down, and it is arguably one of the best in North America, but it's one of those things where you use what it can offer you. With vocals, it doesn't necessarily have to be in a big fancy room.

"It's weird. It *is* weird. It's hard to capture my little voice," he reflects. "It's just very raw and very dry and not too fancy-pants."

Although he never planned on it, Kowalewicz did end up recording vocals at The Warehouse for two songs, "Where Is The Line?" which he says is

a "fun little stab back" at the Toronto scenesters who have dissed Billy Talent, and "This Suffering" about a girl who's not all she's cracked up to be.

"I finished those two songs just because Ian wasn't vibe-ing the guitar at that moment and I was like, 'Well, I'll sing.' So I sang for a couple of hours and got a couple of songs done," Kowalewicz says.

In all, 15 songs were tracked at The Warehouse, including two covers: a sped-up version of John Lennon's "Cold Turkey", now out on a UK compilation in support of Amnesty International and a song Billy Talent often plays in its live set, Buzzcocks' "Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)", which will likely appear as a UK 7-inch or CD single B-side. The other 13 originals are on the new album.

When Kowalewicz gets home, five still need lyrics.

"I do have a lot of work to do," Kowalewicz acknowledges. "It's not like, 'Oh my god, what am I going to write about?' I have so many ideas that I need to focus on. I wrote half the first record like that. I wrote 'Standing In The Rain' and 'Nothing To Lose' on napkins flying from Toronto to Vancouver. I wrote 'River Below' and 'Voices Of Violence' in the studio.

"When you're in the studio, let's say we're doing a part for eight bars and now we're doing it for four, well that changes the vocal melody and that changes the vibe of the song. So what I do is I wait for the song to be finished (because I've been in the studio listening, writing, and now my idea doesn't match anymore."

There is a comfort level in the studio with his bandmates of 13 years.

Originally called Pezz, the four started the band in high school in Streetsville, ON, and made a few indie recordings, including the full-length *Watoosh!* which they have decided to reissue on www.billytalent.com "to give people the timeline of our career," Kowalewicz says.

He refers to Pezz as a "cock-athon," and goes on to explain that "there were 10 different parts in one song, and weird time changes, and one song would be reggae and the next song would be like a Thrush Hermit song, and the next would be like an Iggy Pop punk song. So it would just be trying to prove to everybody we could do every genre."

When, in 1999, a band with the same name forced the adoption of a new moniker, the guys selected Billy Talent (a character in a movie they saw called *Hard Core Logo*, based on the book by Vancouver's Michael Turner) and took on a more focused aggressive rock direction. They still didn't have much road or studio experience, but the new sound netted songs like "Try Honesty" and

Kowalewicz unleashed his inner rabid animal-like presence on stage.

After seeing Billy Talent live, an enthusiastic Jen Hirst, then newly hired in A&R at Warner Music Canada, approached Toronto entertainment lawyer Chris Taylor for producer ideas to make a demo to deliver to her bosses. He suggested Brown, who, in turn, got Billy Talent a publishing deal with EMI Music Publishing (Canada) and the demo deal with Warner followed.

Showcasing for some major labels in the States as well, Billy Talent signed to Atlantic Records in America, which entered into a co-venture agreement with Warner Music Canada. Billy Talent remained loyal to Brown, who was an unknown, unproven producer at the time, and hired him to produce its major label debut because of what he was able to achieve on the demos.

"I think the studio experience, in general, is always something that is awkward and scary in a lot of ways. On the first record, we were very naïve and very green. We didn't know much about the industry and how it worked," recalls Kowalewicz.



"Even though we had been in a band for 10 years, you still get those inklings that you *think* you know how everything works, but now we've learned a lot about the industry and shifts and how it changes — we don't get devoured by it. We understand it and how to incorporate it into decisions that we make.

"I think this time in the studio, we'd been touring for three years so we just got better as musicians. So when you get into the studio, it's not as scary anymore because we've understood it; we've done it; we've tracked; we've demoed; we've done all that, so now when we come in here, we're really prepared in a lot of ways.

"We've been together for so long that it's not as if we ever doubt. We just *trust* and *know*. Like, do I know that Aaron's going to go in there and fuckin' nail all his drum parts and be amazing? Yeah, I do. With Jon, he's the unsung hero of the band. He's an amazing bass player, and Ian I never doubt, *ever*, and I believe they bestow the same trust and confidence in me."

At one point last year, Billy Talent was scheduled to make the new album at Compass Point Studios in the Bahamas, and the guys often joked that they would've returned with reggae tunes. Instead, the band refused to be rushed into

recording and cancelled the studio time. They also were slated to go into The Armory in Vancouver, but nixed that too.

Taking its time at home, Billy Talent demoed versions of "Devil In A Midnight Mass", "Red Flag", "Perfect World", "Pins And Needles" and "The Navy Song" at Toronto's Vespa Music with Eric Ratz and Kenny Luong engineering, and a few months later did some low budget demos of "Surrender" and "This Suffering" at its practice space in The Rehearsal Factory with engineer Pete Prilesnik. Brown produced both sets of demos.

"It was one of those things where everything was changing so much and we weren't sure when we were going to be in the studio and availability, but this became the best choice for us," says Kowalewicz of The Warehouse. "We

Mixing has been scheduled for early January in Los Angeles with Chris Lord-Alge.

D'Sa is downstairs in Studio 2, the main tracking room, with engineer Ratz; and Luong, the Pro Tools editor. Kowalewicz pops in to say "goodbye" and distribute some hugs.

Spread out on the Neve A6630 are tons of signs written on The Warehouse notepaper with all kinds of silly suggestions for the new album title: *Samosa Rosa, The Golden Commode, Vindaloo Stu, Attackily...* there are dozens and each one elicits laughter whenever it's read or the origin asked.

There is also a portrait of Brown pinned on the wall. Brown hasn't touched a razor in months, and D'Sa has deftly sketched his beloved producer with a penis disguised in his bushy beard.

Oh what fun it is to be sequestered in a studio for a month.

producer credit on the new album, but the man who can sketch too is a humble sort, steering any praise to the entire band and not just him.

"The first record we were a bit worried about our playing and we had to do multiple takes to get the take right and now we can get the take. That's not the issue. I think everyone's bar has been raised," D'Sa says.

"Gavin, when it comes to tuning, there's more an emphasis on tuning than there is actual playing. The playing is already there. It's easy now. It's just getting everything in tune. We had three different tuning mechanisms and we're always looking to make sure they are exactly right."

D'Sa says one of the reasons he personally wanted to record in Vancouver again is that Dahle has "a really nice" collection of vintage guitars, which he brought into The Factory last time for him

Credits for "II"

AARON SOLOWONIUK – Drums, Writer

BEN KOWALEWICZ – Voiceover, Writer

BRIAN GALLANT – Assistant Engineer

BRIAN GARDNER – Mastering Engineer

CHRIS LORD-ALGE – Mixing Engineer

COMPANY X AUDIO – Editor

ERIC RATZ – Engineer

GAVIN BROWN – Producer, Tambourine

IAN D'SA – Guitar, Producer, Vocals, Writer

JON GALLANT – Bass, Vocals, Writer

KEITH ARMSTRONG – Assistant Mix Engineer

KENNY LUONG – Digital Editor Pro Tools

ROB STEFANSON – Assistant Engineer

know Vancouver, we recorded here before and it worked. There's something about this city that you can feel, I believe, on record. There's a vibe to this place, and there's a vibe to *this* place.

"This is the oldest building in Vancouver and during the great fire of Vancouver this was the only building to not burn down and it was charred and it became the old firehouse and the old City Hall and things like that," he recounts, as if reading from the brochure.

Actually, he reveals, he was talking with Bryan Adams.

"He came and hung out with us in the studio and listened to some stuff. He was really impressed. He was an absolute gentleman. And he was telling me about the history of this place. There's some definite spirits in this place. I have had some weird things happen to me. I'm pretty in tune with that kind of stuff," Kowalewicz says.

"I mean, I was laying here and Gavin called me down and I stood up and turned the television off and I was walking out and the TV turned back on." It's hardly the stuff of *The Shining*.

Soon the interview winds down and Kowalewicz must leave to catch his flight, perhaps even to scribble some new lyrics on napkins. He'll have the whole of December to finish up everything, including recording his vocals in "the closet."

The guys – D'Sa, Brown, Ratz, Luong and Limblifter's Ryan Dahle (the vintage instrument connection) – arrive at The Warehouse the following day at about 1:30 in the afternoon. Brown orders Indian food for everyone and slots the start time in Studio 2 for 3-ish.

D'Sa sits down for his interview in the lounge area on the second floor. Yesterday, he says he spent the majority of the time in the studio working on tuning.

"When you're recording a record, everything has to be perfectly in tune so that means sometimes punching single chords just so we can get them in tune," D'Sa says. "It's really important to have every single part of a song in tune 'cause it's the last time you're going to record it and document it. So that's what's been taking up most of my time."

"We finished 'Burn The Evidence' last night and we made it onto another song tentatively called 'The Navy Song'. We called it 'The Navy Song' because it sounds like a rolling ship at sea because it's kind of like a shuffle beat," he explains. Later, the song title is temporarily changed to "In The Fall" and circulates on some advance CDs under that name.

Brown and Kowalewicz both, at separate times, matter-of-factly call D'Sa "a genius." He is an integral part of the songwriting and gets a

to use, and did the same for this recording.

"I use my '52 reissue Fender Telecaster and I used that a lot on the last record and I'm using it on this record. It's probably going to make up 60 per cent of the record," says D'Sa. "The other 40 per cent is a lot of Ryan's guitars. For instance, he has a buddy who's got a '56 Gibson Junior that I use for the heavy stuff, and he's got a '62 Jazzmaster which I use for some of the lighter songs, and two weeks ago, while I was here, I bought a '71 Gibson Les Paul gold top, so I'm gonna use that."

"This record and the last record, we're using guitars from 1956 to 1970, nothing beyond," D'Sa says, as if only now just realizing that.

"They just sound better. They age nicely. The wood hardens. The sounds that come out of older guitars are just way better than newer guitars to me – and even the amps too. All the amps we're using are really old. My favourite amp we're using is Ryan's 1961 Fender Tremelux. It sounds amazing. There's a guy here in Vancouver called Mark Stephenson who builds amps. I used Stephenson amps."

Just as lunch arrives, and Brown yells "tandoori," D'Sa quickly jokes about calling the album "Tandoori" with an upside down exclamation mark for the *i*, demonstrating how the wacky list continues to grow.

The conversation turns to Brown. What has D'Sa noticed about his abilities as a producer, since he has gone on to work with The Tea Party, Thornley, Melissa Auf der Maur, and others, since making 2003's *Billy Talent*?

D'Sa laughs at the word "notice" and can't resist. "I notice Gavin is looking like a Yogi, a spiritual advisor. We pull on his beard and he gets insulted."

Then he answers seriously: "Gavin has an amazing energy when it comes to music and keeping everyone unified. He makes the process fun. He's done a lot in the last three years and it really reflects in the way he works. Things run a lot more smoothly now than they ever have."

"That's part of the reason why we go with people that we know and trust," D'Sa explains. "It's an open process. There's no weirdness and no

and over so much, I'd be able to look around, look at Aaron, and Aaron would be looking at me while playing."

During the lunch break, more joke album titles are bandied about:

Sack of Marbles; *Brown Eyes Are Free*; *We've Been To Toyka*; and one that would make all radio jocks cringe to announce, *Hotsy Totsy*.

After the silliness, we assemble in Studio 2, a producer's dream room. The first time Brown was ever at The Warehouse was to play drums on an album by Arizona's Fivespeed that Canadian Gggarth Richardson was producing, but his first time as a producer was on tracks for Three Days Grace's sophomore album that were never used.

"It's one of the best places in the world," Brown enthuses. "It is so fantastic. It is so great, I

ties as a singer have grown. His muscles have improved.

"It's still intense and aggressive," he adds.

Of D'Sa — his unique guitar style and his musicality and ear — Brown says flat-out, "He's a genius. Last record, he's trying to figure out who he is. We tried a lot of different things, different guitars, different amps, whatever, and now he *knows*."

"They all know that I know how to help them be themselves. Aaron is the most improved player on the team. He's worked really hard at drumming in his off time. He's been working on his own stuff. He sounds better. He's way more confident. He is accomplishing things he never thought he could. Same with Jon."

In another week, Brown will make rough mixes of the 15 tracks and also return to Toronto. They will work throughout December, doing any



spending time getting to know somebody. We did some demos earlier this year with Eric and Kenny to get to know them and feel them out.

"As far as the last record, it was a really fun, quick process in the studio and the songs were there, but there were things we wanted to expand on as far as experimenting with different kinds of beats and stuff like that. So for this record, we spent eight months writing and rehearsing these songs to fill in those gaps. We wanted to spend a little more time to perfect things."

"Jon and Aaron are back in Toronto and I think this record is going to be amazing for them to listen back to when we finish guitar and vocals because Aaron's going to be like, 'Holy shit, that's me playing,' because he's gotten so much better, and Jon is an amazing bass player. They both stepped up on this record. It just shows our musicianship has increased in the last three years just by playing and touring."

"I think I realized it after playing so many shows. I think the personal realization came when I was playing a show one day and I realized that I hadn't looked at my hands in a minute and I was just looking at the crowd. Then as soon as I started thinking about it, of course I had to start looking down again," he laughs. "But when we did become such good musicians, playing the same song over

want to move in. I love it here. Bryan Adams came by the other day and I told him that and he said, 'Yeah, everybody likes it here.'

"This is a very special custom Neve console," he says, showing it off as if it was his own. "George Martin requested this for his Air Studios and it's signed by Rupert Neve. Bryan was telling a story. He used it at a place in New York (Atlantic Studios) and it came up for sale and the guy said, 'I will ask you once. Do you want to buy the console and you have to say yes now.' And he said, 'Yes.'"

Brown offers to play back some of the magic Billy Talent has made in this room, starting with "Devil In A Midnight Mass", the fierce single that Kowalewicz wrote about child molestation within The Church, but is just instrumental at this point. He follows with "Red Flag", a rerecording of the demo version that was on various video game soundtracks last year; then "Burn The Evidence", also just the music.

Then, Brown previews the ones with vocals, "Where Is The Line?" and "Burn The Evidence". Just from these, Kowalewicz' improvement as a singer is marked, fervent but more melodic and open and full — less screaming and yelping, less strained.

"The songs that he and Ian are writing are more suited to singing," says Brown. "It's not that he doesn't want to scream; it's just that his abili-

ties at Vespa and vocals at EMI, then the album will be mixed.

"This has been a beautiful experience for all of us," Brown concludes. "Whenever you're trying to get people to see the big picture, they don't always believe you. 'Well, this is possible. This is going to happen to you — A, B, C, D and E.' I think that happened to them in the way I laid it out for them, the fact that you can believe in yourself, and have things be possible that you didn't think were possible."

"So a bunch of stuff happened. They became more mature as people; they've seen the world; they learned how to play their instruments better; they gel as individuals. So when I got back together with them a year ago to start pre-production on the record, it was a great thing. There was this wonderful sense of trust and love. It was the way it should be." ●



Toronto music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian correspondent for *RollingStone.com*, and operates her own Canadian music news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/Music/Lowdown/>. In addition, she writes for *Gasoline*, *Teen Tribute*, *Words & Music*, *Access*, and others. She has also published an anti-racism children's picture book, *The Girl With Pinhead Parents*, available at chapters.indigo.ca and amazon.com.



Tom
by **Kevin Young**
Wilson

I'm going to try do this interview without saying 'fuck' too much. But doing whatever the fuck you want to do, when you want to do it, is the most important thing. The reason I play music is that I personally didn't want to go work in the steel factories here in Hamilton. And I decided not to go to school to study Journalism and English. Factory work is really fucking hard work and I respect it, and university is really hard work and I respect that. But I chose another way to make my life hard on myself. You want to be a musician who's not being told what to do. And that's what I've managed to do."

The first time I saw Tom Wilson on stage he was fronting the Florida Razors at a tiny club called the Toucan in Kingston, ON. I remember being struck immediately by his presence on stage. Most musicians come off larger than life when they're performing, but Tom comes off huge. When you meet Tom Wilson it's not terribly hard to see what both fans and fellow musicians see in him. He's so casually gracious you can't help but be charmed. On- and off-stage he makes an impression. And whether he's playing with the Razors, Junkhouse, Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, or on his own, at every show I've seen he seems like he's having the time of his life.

And if that doesn't come off loud, proud and clear on record or on stage, he'll tell you himself. "I'm just thankful that I get to play music every day. I'm thankful that other people drag their ass down the highway, to get on stage." Basically, he says, whether it's in for 5 people, 30 people, or a couple of thousand people, it's just an honour to go and do his job. As a 30-year veteran of the Canadian music scene you might expect him to be a bit jaded, but he just doesn't come off that way. He's pragmatic and has no illusions about the general grind for workaday musicians in Canada. He's also not afraid to share opinions bluntly, and forcefully, but don't let his trademark growl through you off for a second. Nothing dims his love for the gig. "I love being a musician. It's so important to be a musician in this world. It's a profession that's either over-glorified or under-appreciated. There's really no middle ground."

His latest release, *Dog Years*, finds Tom more comfortable being himself than ever. While there's no over arching theme to *Dog Years* – just a collection of songs he's written over the past couple of years, he says – There's a good, positive tone that runs straight from the man's soul and onto the disk. For Tom, making music is always a celebration, now more than ever. And Tom celebrates quite a bit, *Dog Years*, being only a part of his output as a songwriter. In addition to this record there's his work with Bob Lanois on 2005's *The Shack Recordings*, two upcoming releases from Blackie and The Rodeo Kings, and that's just for starters...

TW: We made the *Shack Recordings* to be real folk music; almost field recordings. It never got on the barometer of Canadian roots music, but we sustained a joy for doing that every night and ended up selling a bunch of records, and people in Europe really loved the record. When you know what you're doing is good and you love doing it. You really don't need any one to give you a bowling trophy to tell you you're a good bowler.

CM: Hamilton stars in a lot of the songs on the record.

TW: It's not like I'm trying to put Hamilton on the map – although we aren't on the map in a lot of ways – it's just a constant inspiration to me. I lived in LA when I was 18 and I thought I was going to take on the world. I lived in Toronto for a while. And I came back to Hamilton. I've kind of grown up, and continue to grow up, in Hamilton. Some of the people I run into, I've been running into for 40 years, you know? To see the journey they've made, whether for the good or the bad, it's amazing for me to be able to write about.

CM: Is a lot of your songwriting autobiographical?

TW: A lot of it is. When you were seeing me at the Toucan I was just trying to write snappy songs. Now that I'm at the age that I'm at, I'm kind of happy to expose a bit of the impermanence of my life. Nothing lasts forever. It's a lot easier at this point in my life to be able to look back to last week, or last year, or the last 10 years and pick something out of that timeframe that I want to face. Instead of being embarrassed I'm more comfortable looking at the lessons I've learned in the past and the mistakes that I've made and confronting them and celebrating them.

Celebrating your mistakes might seem odd when you first think about it. For someone who's spent as much time as a working musician as Tom has though, it's not that much of a stretch. As musicians, mistakes are something you're going to make, have to face them and learn from to get better. At the best of times some musicians are their own worst critics. Giving them something to dwell on is a perfect excuse for them blow off a little steam. To some extent that's expected, and forgiven, if you're popular or well known enough. Still, it comes with a price. "I just chose to be productive rather than destructive and it took me a long time to become happy with myself."

CM: You feel like you're not giving yourself such a hard time anymore?

TW: Everything's free, man. I think that no matter how strong, or how smart an individual you are, there's a part of you that, unfortunately, buys into the fact that you're special because you play a guitar. Or, because you got a bright light shining on the top of your head for an hour every night, you think maybe that that bright light shines 24 hours a day. It just doesn't. There's nothing like being a rock star, man, but the fact of the matter is that the impermanence of it is the best part of it. I think. I think the fact that if you're a dedicated musician you're going to be able to ride the wave of impermanence. They call it reinvention, or a career comeback, in the entertainment industry. What it really is, it's that

you're dedicated to being a musician, to doing your craft. I'm not reinventing myself; I'm just still making records after 30 years. I'm going to continue to make records until I can't make music and I can't write music anymore – till I'm shittin' in a pan and, you know, walking around looking for my teeth in a home. I'm still going to be making music.

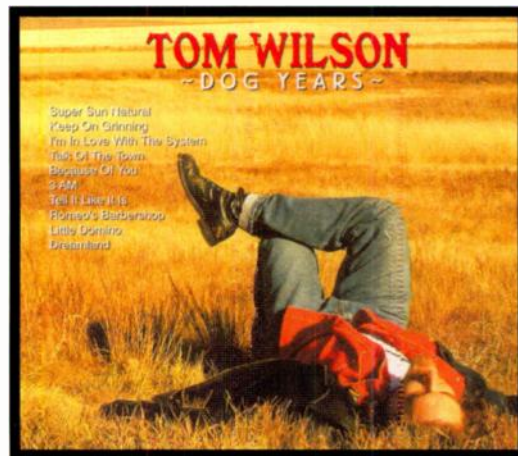
CM: And you seem really content, really happy, but you always do when I run into you.

TW: Good. I try to make people comfortable. I think that I respect people, and like I say, I respect musicians. The choice that you make to become a musician is I think a choice in the right direction for any human being. It's the choice to try and do

some good in a gentle way in this world. Sometimes things get a little mucky for a little while, but if people stick with it, then they start to find themselves.

There are a lot of opportunities to lose yourself along the way. Part of the joy of his most recent album is his touring band, which includes Junkhouse's rhythm section (Russ Wilson on bass, Ray Farrugia on drums), as well as keyboardist Jesse O'Brien, guitarist Brian Griffith, from Willie Nelson's band and *Dog Years'* producer, fellow Rodeo King, Colin Linden. "Colin is somebody who's really taught me, even in the toughest moments, to put your love of music before anything and to serve the song, you know?"

There's not a single doubt that that's all he really wants to do. He doesn't ever seem to wonder if he wouldn't be happier doing something else, instead there's only the occasional acknowledgement that choosing to be a musician isn't always the easiest gig. Making a living in Canada has its own special set of difficulties.



TOM WILSON

"My favourite joke is, 'What would a Canadian musician do if he won a million dollars in the lottery?' The answer is, 'keep playing till he ran out of money.'"

All joking aside, he's never doubted choosing music. "I grew up like in what they call a working class neighbourhood where people drank a lot and listened to a lot of Johnny Cash. What sealed the deal was seeing The Beatles on TV at age 4. "You know what? I actually thought I was the only guy that got inspired to play music by the Beatles," he laughs. "I never wanted to be anything else; I never wanted to be a fucking fireman. I never wanted to be a guy in a spaceship. I never wanted to do anything, but be a musician my entire life. I'm 46 now, and I'm still a musician. So I've been able to see this dream through so far."

One of the things that comes through about Tom Wilson on stage, on record and in person is that he's doing exactly what he should be and loving every minute of it. *Dog Years* is no exception. It comes through from the opening piano riff of the album's opener, "Super Sun Natural" – Wilson's obvious enthusiasm and joy is constantly evident without ever getting in the way of the album's more pensive moments. "I think that it came from a really sober mind. I don't preach about my sobriety, but I do mention it," he says. The track "Talk of the Town" feature a guest appearance from Roseanne Cash. Richard Bell's keys haunt the depths of the track as Cash haunts Wilson's every move vocally – it's a fairly somber sounding track. It's got the feel of an old story, thoroughly lived through. He's covered a lot of ground – but Tom's lyrics aren't intended to tell you what to think about what he's seeing, just what it's like to see them through his eyes.

Making *Dog Years* was a health mix of both "keeping it in the family" and growing the family to include legendary A-list players that challenged Tom – Funk Brother Bob Babbitt, Gary Tallent of The E Street Band and bassist David Roe (Johnny Cash) among them. Recorded in Nashville at the The Rendering Plant and mixed and produced by Colin Linden, the record features a number of co-writes with people Tom chose, "Because I really love them, or enjoy their company, or know that there's going to be some kind of celebration going on." *Dog Years'* co-writers are drawn from a variety of musical experiences, including; Stephan Starbuck (The Verve), David Ricketts (Sheryl Crow, David & David), Craig Northey (Northey Venezuela, Odds), Josh Finlayson (Skydiggers), Tawgs (Edwin, Kazzer) and Tom's real-life partner, comedienne Cathy Jones (*This Hour Has 22 Minutes*), who co-wrote "Keep on Grinning".

"My gal," Tom growls. "Yeah, speaking of cool scenes... Not that I haven't made a bunch of friends over the years, but she was hosting the Juno awards in 1993 and I thought, fuck, this is the coolest person at this entire thing. Ten or 11 years later we hooked up."

CM: So this is a relatively recent thing?

TW: Yeah, we've been together now three years. I write a lot and it's a celebration, being able to write with your gal.

CM: The track with Roseanne Cash – how did that come about?

TW: She became a fan of mine and Blackie and the Rodeo Kings. She came to see us in New York and was just an obvious choice for that song. That song, by the way, I wrote with Josh Finlayson from the Skydiggers. He's one of the sweetest guys on the planet and we've been saying we should get together for 15 years. We never got together until last year and we've written five songs; one for a Stephen Fearing record, one for Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, two for my record and there's another on the go. That was a real celebration, a real festival – him and I getting together.

CM: I want to talk a bit about the recording of the record. It really sounds like a record made by people playing together.

TW: That was what Colin wanted me to do. I made a record called *Planet Love* for Sony, in 1999. I'd been in bands all my life and they were all fantastic experiences, but when it came to making *Planet Love* I just didn't want to be with anybody. I wanted machines and one guy who could run them. And that's the kind of record that I made. There was still quite a bit of soul on that record, but after doing that I really wanted to interact with

musicians recording. I write for TV and for movies. No longer do you and I get together and write a song and say 'Let's get some of our friends together and play it.' It's just like, 'Let's just sit together and do it right now, at the computer.' I do that a lot, so when it came to making this record I didn't really want that. Colin's one of the most organic producers on the planet. The people he works with are people that are really interested in what the character and the personality, and maybe, the mood of somebody playing an instrument is going to bring to the session at that time, you know? He wanted to find musicians that challenged me. And playing music with some of those guys was like they picked me up in their hands. It's so easy to sing, playing with people like that, and so easy to communicate and have confidence that you're part of a great team.

CM: How did you record?

TW: Well, we did the record in three days and then we did three days of Colin and I going over the record and recording extra guitar and backup vocals. Colin and I, we're working together quite a bit and I've been on this trend since the last Blackie and the Rodeo Kings record that bed track vocals are the best vocals. I'd be writing into a little tape recorder and I'd record my idea very quickly – maybe a verse and a chorus of an idea. I'd listen to them and it would be like, 'Man, that's really good.' Then I'd go make a record and never achieve that very first vocal. I really think something about putting yourself on the line is really important and a very exciting element to recording.

CM: A lot of live off the floor recording?

TW: It was a little house, Shelby Lynn's house, down in Nashville. It's actually a



For more information check out

www.tomwilson.net

little post-war American bungalow. So I was in the dining room. Colin would be in the control room, which was the living room. Bob Babbit would be sitting in the kitchen with the drummer and Richard Bell, on keyboards, was sitting in the bedroom. So the isolation was pretty good, but I think that isolation or no isolation; getting that vocal, if you're going to keep it, that's the thing. Making that vocal as much a part of the keeper track as that guy hitting the snare.

CM: Do you prefer to record vocals when the song is freshly written, or after living with it for a while?

TW: I hate to walk on the fence, but splitting the difference, you know? I think getting yourself comfortable enough that you know what your singing about is important and that you have a little bit of your heart inside it is important. But getting comfortable with a song, and then knocking it out of the park with a bunch of guys who are also putting their heart into it, there's something to be said about that, too.

CM: Is there another Blackie and the Rodeo Kings record on the way?

TW: There are two. I'll tell you what's happening: A year ago the *Shack Recordings Vol. 1* was about to come out and we start playing, Bob Lanois, Russell Wilson and myself. The whole time I was writing: in June I recorded *Dog Years*, then I went on the road with the *Shack Recordings*. We did 70 shows across the country and then I was still writing for Blackie and the Rodeo Kings. In January we went to Woodstock and we recorded 28 songs for two records we'll be putting out. The first is out in September and then we're going to release another one within the year. I've just started recording a second *Shack* recording with Bob Lanois and we'll be going back at that this week. I've also written a bunch of stuff with Jimmy Rankin. He's a star, you know? It's just like, holy fuck; I know why people love you. It's immediate.

CM: You're taking *Dog Years* out on tour?

TW: As much as I can. We're working on trying to get stuff happening outside of the country. You know I want to play as much as I can. I just love playing with this band. I forgot how great it is to play with that old Junkhouse rhythm section. They're just so good together.

CM: When there is down time – if there is down time – what do you get up to?

TW: There's not a lot of down time. You kind of apprentice at this job; I apprenticed at this job for 13 years before anybody was interested in giving me money to make records and take a stab at being successful in the industry part of it. Mind you, I'd still be writing music and playing in bars whether Junkhouse ever got signed to anything or not. Anyway, I apprenticed for 13 years, waiting for the opportunity, and I fucked some things up, you know? Maybe I got a little mouthy for a while. You know what? More than that – I just didn't take any bullshit. As nice a guy as I am, that's all there is to it. I think when you're as big a fella as I am – and sometimes as drunk as I was – I didn't back down. I didn't go out of my way to cause trouble, but I didn't feel like putting up with bullshit.

CM: You think that hurt your career at times?

TW: Fuck yeah. For sure I think it hurt my career. I think people maybe thought I was a bit of a wild card. I don't like people prejudging me or anybody else, you know? And I don't like people not giving other people a fair shake and a chance to be heard. So I guess maybe I acted up a little bit. In the industry it'd be called acting up. In Hamilton it would be called just getting along.



Blackie and the Rodeo Kings

Named for a song by Canadian songwriter, Willie P. Bennett, Blackie and The Rodeo Kings (BARK) was formed in 1996 by Tom Wilson, Colin Linden and Stephen Fearing. In addition to numerous individual efforts – including Fearing's recent and eighth solo release, *Yellowjacket* – BARK has released three records; *High Or Hurtin'*, *Kings Of Love* and *BARK*. For more information check out www.rodeokings.com.

sudden, people are recognizing that we've been together for 10 years. We've cultivated a lot of fans in music communities in the States, which I think is important. The communities that we put together as musicians and writers and media have got to focus on music and not so much on pizzazz and hoopla. Pizzazz and hoopla are great, but to really build communities around the love of music is really our goal now."

And that's the other thing that comes across loud, proud and clear about Tom Wilson – he knows exactly why he does what he's doing. It comes up a bit in one of the standouts from *Dog Years*, "I'm In Love With The System". "We're all co-dependents; attached to the thing that we might preach that we don't want to be a part of. Without the system what would we have to get up every morning and fight against? I hate a lot of things about the established world. I've never fit in with it and I've always managed to keep outside of it. Instead of just being a wicked big mouth that people don't want to hear, you know, beak off all the time, I'd rather write something that was an inspiration to get up and try to change things a little, or do better for yourself!" ●

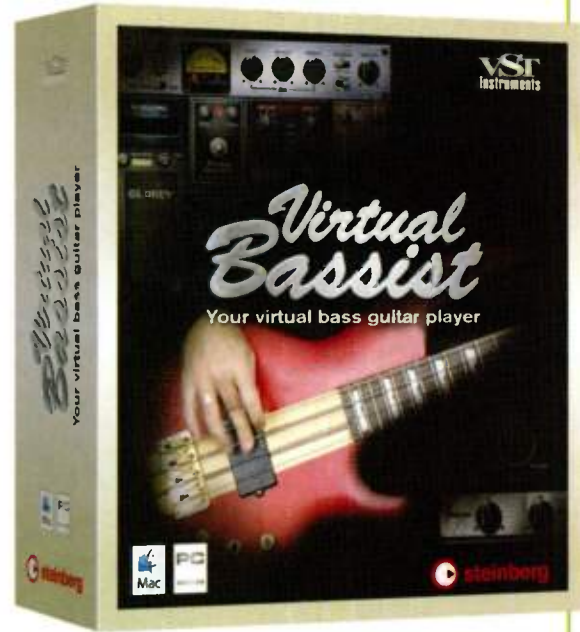


Kevin Young is a Toronto-based freelance writer and musician.

“World-Class Virtual Sound Engineer” in Store Soon!

Yes, it's that time of year – again. Time to pass along the software gems that are going to: inspire your creativity; give you the cutting edge sounds that will spawn the hit of a new generation. We'll also look at the tools that will make your musical production faster, more efficient and more powerful and, of course, we'll talk about innovations that will impress your friends and continue to fool your parents into thinking you really *are* some kind of genius.

I have been writing the software feature for *Canadian Musician* since 2000. Every year I try to think up some creative way of saying that computers have become less expensive, faster and more efficient; every year I mention that the competing platforms of Mac and PC become a little more similar; and finally, every year, some software maker manages to market a plug-in or software suite that is such an innovation it changes the sound of the (pop) music we listen to. This year I am going to forego some creative way of saying all that – it's all happened again ... again. So, I'll lose the witty (some of it at least) repartee and just give you the meat and potatoes of this year's software highlights.



BY ALEC WATSON

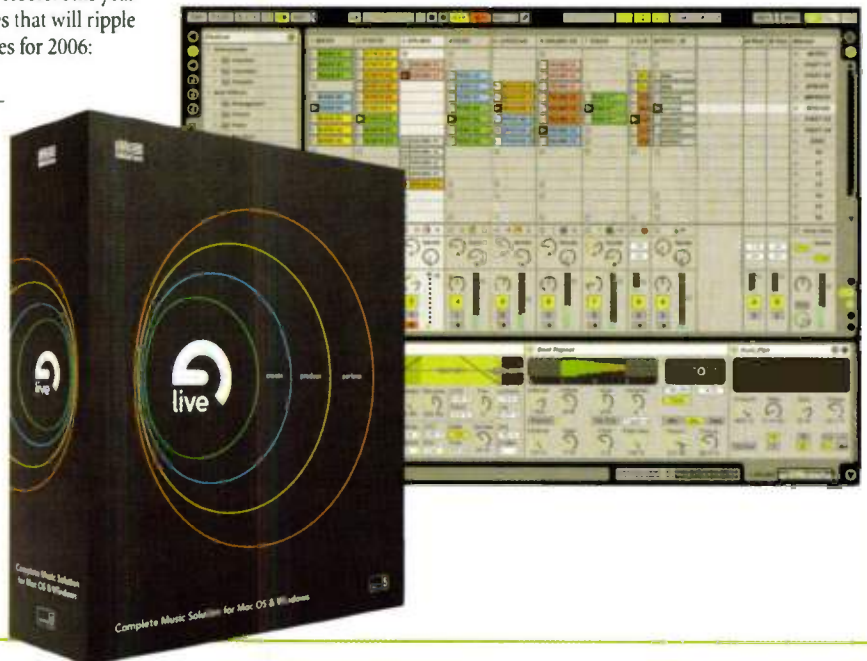
Software

Cheaper, Faster, More Efficient

(I got married last year, so this time I AM referring to computers – and not dating) It's pretty much impossible to talk about software without commenting on the hardware that runs it. Any and all advances that come about in the computer world have a HUGE impact on the software that we run. The previous couple of years have basically been about faster processors and upgrades to the amount of data that can go to and from your hard drives. Every four or five years we see hardware improvements that are “bigger” than simply faster processors. This year is one of those years; it's a big year for waves of hardware changes that will ripple to all facets of the software that we run. The big hardware changes for 2006:

- **Affordable dual processors on a single chip.** Dual processors have been around for a long time, but mostly relegated to the world of the techno-geek (you know who they are – it's okay, we can make fun of them, they are probably not reading this anyway). In the past, there has been very little software that can take advantage of dual processors. Current music software, however, is written to take advantage of dual cores and the power benefits are significant.
- **64-bit computer processing.** With a 64-bit version of Windows on the horizon, the code guys are tooling up with drivers and software ready to take advantage of the increased throughput and access to RAM. Sonar 5 can already run as a 64-bit DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) and apparently has 20-30 per cent more power than when running on a 32-bit system.
- **The “dull little Intel chip has been set free inside of a Mac”** – I am not sure this makes the chip more exciting; but once again the division between the two platforms is narrowing. This means greater compatibility between the two Mac and PC.

- **BIG STORAGE.** Yes, the HD formats will be battling it out come Christmas time, but once again we will have some kind of higher density medium on which to store our projects. Whether it's HD-DVD or Blu-ray that wins the new format war, either way, we'll have a storage device that will hold 25+ gigabytes of data. With all these moves to bigger storage, perhaps we will see the end of crappy MP3s. “Yes, your new drive can hold 1 billion crappy MP3s or 1 million high-resolution recordings!”



...I can hear Don Cheadle as "Cowboy" from Boogie Nights promo-ing the next generation of MP3 players ... of course, you won't be able to call the future mini playback thing-y an MP3 player. Thankfully, MP3s will be a short lived relic of the early 2000s and the kids that grew up with ear buds in their ears, now in their twenties, will still call them MP3s cause old habits die hard.

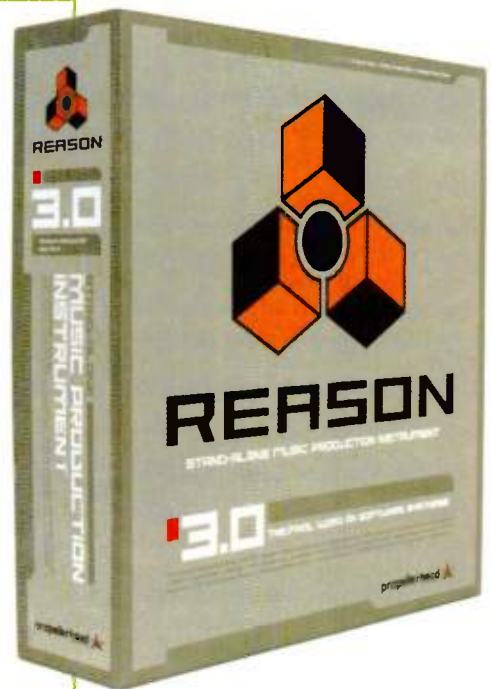
A future promotion of the extinction of the MP3 by Don Cheadle as Cowboy: "...It's Hi-Fi – that stands for High Fidelity!"

"Yeah, I had my Fuel Injected, Bi-Turbo Hemi, with a Blower pulling 678 Terraflops and then I Blew a Fan Cable"

I think I wrote, around 2002, that we had all the computer power necessary to make very good recordings with lots of tracks, compression and EQ (on every track), lots of delay, and a couple of good reverbs. I wasn't, however, so short sighted as to say that we would have no need of faster computers. See, it turns out that every time we get an increase in computing power, someone comes up with some new way to manipulate sound that requires the new increased horsepower.

The biggest investment in audio software is going to be which DAW you are going to go with. The "big" digital audio workstations continue to be – Digidesign Pro Tools 7, Apple Logic 7, Steingberg's Cubase SX, MOTU Digital Performer 5 and Cakewalk's Sonar 5. All of these programs are outstanding at recording digital audio, but they all have their pros and cons. I have known most of these systems and the platforms they run on from before they were even version 1; I have seen them grow and add features over the years. Growing with the software makes it much easier for me to learn a new innovation. The "big" DAW's can be really quite daunting, however, for a first time user looking at a blank screen wondering what to do next.

Not surprisingly, as one of these companies has come up with an innovation that gives them a competitive advantage, the other companies have followed suit and added a similar feature to their system in the following upgrade. Now that all these DAWs are numbered between versions 5 and 7, and they have been reworking and copying each other's innovations for around a decade, not surpris-



ware



ingly they have become somewhat similar in layout. In fact, for the most part, these DAWs are so similar that one can, fairly smoothly, go from one machine to another with little more than a day puzzlement while learning the ins and outs of the different interface. What I have realized, however, in teaching and lecturing is that not every musician is the "right" kind of person to work on these systems. Yes, they are big, powerful and the industry standards, but they can also stifle the creativity of pure musicianship when one has to put on their technical/engineering hat. Quite honestly, these programs are geared toward the serious pro engineer. No, you don't have to be a serious engineer to get use out of the tool, but you do have to be a good engineer to get the most out of it. For some, this idea is exciting – for a relatively small investment, you can work and learn on the tools that the pros use. For others, that just want to make solid demos of their songs, these systems are quite honestly overkill. I would suggest that there are a lot of musicians that would make better music on more user-friendly, cheaper, interfaces.

I am always asked which DAW I would choose, unfortunately, there is no easy answer to that. If you want to (need to) be compatible with the big boys' toys, I would still tend to go towards a Mac system – probably Pro Tools. On the other hand, I personally like the fact that PCs have historically been backward compatible. Obsolescence is far more rare in the PC world, and PC still offers you more bang for your buck. Comparing the power of Sonar 5 on a 64-bit PC ... actually, value for money there isn't really a comparison. This \$700

2006

Software 2006

program on a \$1,200 computer is the most bang for your buck this year when it comes to processing power. Of course if you go that route, it is all fun and games when (for some reason) you have to transfer your mixed and edited hit on to a Mac system for re-working. No, this is not by any means impossible, but it sure is a lot more difficult than putting a Mac file from DVD into a different Mac system.

"Brucey – Make It Easier Brucey"

If you fall into the category of not needing the serious *pro tool*, the oh-so-wise purveyors of music software have got you covered too. If you just want to make good sounding demos, almost all of the "big" DAWs have "lite" versions available. These lighter versions are easier to run, have very good audio fidelity and are much *lighter* on the pocket book. Even the less expensive big DAWs, like Sonar 5 and Cubase SX, will cost you over \$700. Cubase LX and Cakewalk Sonar Home Studio cost around a third. These lite versions will make files that are compatible with the bigger DAWs too. This means you can work on a small project on your couple-o-years-old computer and at home, track it in (cue Don Cheadle again) "Hi-Fi – that's High Fidelity" and then take it over to "Gear Guy" down the street for mixing. This



can also be a great way for the guitarist or drummer in your band to work in the software world. We all know that any good guitarist or drummer has a lot of money invested in their rig; there is little need to invest in all the software and computers if the nerdy keyboard player in your band already skips mortgage payments in order to keep up to the Jesus Jones. Band members can opt for the lite version software for home and then get together and mix on the full versions over at the nerd's, I mean keyboard player's, house.

All the DAWs I have mentioned so far have a certain similarity about them. That's because, for

the most part, they were originally designed around "linear audio" recording. Now don't go getting your knickers in a knot because you're already thinking: "computers don't record in linear fashion like a tape recorder – none of the DAWs record linear!" See, it's not that Pro Tools and Logic and Sonar, *actually* record in a linear fashion, but rather, the interface has evolved from large studio recording, which was recorded in a linear fashion. When these pieces of software first came out, everyone was working in a tape-based world. In recent years, there has been a trend away from the "linear" looking recording interfaces, to DAWs that work more *creatively*. I'm talking about programs like Ableton Live 5 (which won't have nearly as fun a name when it changes to version 6) or Reason 3. Yes, these programs still record digital audio, run plug-ins and do most of the same things that the others do; the big difference is the way the user interacts with the interface. When using Logic or Sonar, for instance, there is a tendency towards playing one track at a time and building a song. You don't *have* to work that way, as you can add loops and virtual instruments, but on a certain level you have to have an idea of where you are going while you "build" your production. With Ableton and Reason, the interface is made in a way that helps the musician "jam" with their computer. The computer is more an instrument that becomes part of the creative process.

There are pros and cons to both styles of music creation. I tend to wear a few different hats when I sit in front of the computer. Most of the time I am the Producer/Engineer and I would prefer to have an interface that was built directly from the studio environment. There is a big learning curve in mastering such recording programs; when I work in these software suites, I am also not using the "playing" part of my brain. I want all the controls possible and I can enjoy being creative in that environment. Every once in a while I like to sit down and just play music; after all, that is how I got started in this business. When I sit down to play and create, I too can find the big DAW "limiting." Yes, the big DAW can be very organized and record very well, but in comparison to a tool that makes me want to play and jam and create, there is room for improvement.

"We Be Binary Jammin' Man"

Fun stuff! While we are on the topic of creativity, we might as well look at programs that just want to make you play! For raising the bar on your playing chops and costing very little to boot, nothing beats PG Music's Band In A Box. I used to find Band In A Box quite uninspiring to play with, but for me, it turns out, that was because, at the time, the sounds my computer could play were really quite bad. Actually, they really, *really*, sucked @#%\$! Not so anymore. I re-visited Band In A Box on a recent visit to Malaspina University where they actually use Band In A Box as a playing and teaching aide in their Bachelor of Jazz program. It turns out this "cute" little program, made in Canada, can be quite a tool when you get rid of those crappy computer sounds and send the MIDI information to a good



quality software synth/sampler. I learned that my playing, these days, sucks about as much as the old computer sounds; at least I am having fun playing again. Best program under \$100 has to go to Band In A Box.

More fun still! – a bit of a gagitarian myself, I always seem to find a need to have a new fast computer. After all, how would my parents or friends ever get anything good if I wasn't pawning off last year's model. As a "good" computer currently only costs around \$1,500 (and that should be a *pretty* good one), I decided to recently stretch the limits of my PC to see what it could do.

My favorite pieces of software continue to be the virtual instruments. To date, there are now so many virtual instruments, they have their own magazine – of course it seems like there is a magazine for almost everything these days; even Canadian musicians. I recently ventured outside of the music section at Chapters and found magazines that seem to have little more content than scantily clad women and beer! Who knew?!? But I digress – back on topic. I decided to run a bunch of virtual instruments simultaneously to create my own virtual band (no one wants to play with me anymore and I have no friends). I was able to run Steinberg's Virtual Guitarist 2 (cool electric rhythm playing), Broom Bass (a virtual bass player), Groove Agent 2 (virtual drummer), Virtual Guitarist 1 (there is some pretty good rhythm acoustic on this version) and while all these were playing in sync without stressing my computer, I played Native Instrument's B4. What a hoot! Yes, it *was* a bit like some Frankensteinway version of my Mom's old Bontempi organ from the '80s. But what was really cool was that I



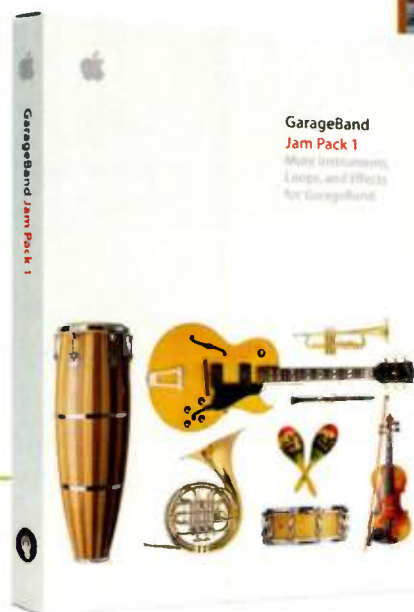
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Software 2006

could put the virtual tracks into record and then go back individually and change their rhythmic parts and sounds. The built-in patterns are generally a bit simpleton, but when you mix up styles and feels, things become a lot more interesting. For sheer fun, or as a device for commercials or film score, these are amazing tools. On the downside, the price tag on this "virtual band" isn't cheap. You could buy a lot of beer and pizza and have your buddies come over and play before you spent this much. Of course, there was no attitude, and everyone did exactly what I told them to – when I told them to do it. Hey, I have turned into a "Virtual Producer!" Price of being a control freak – not insignificant; cost of ruling your musical universe? Priceless!



My Favs In 2006

Every year, the sheer scope of this article becomes much too large to fit into a feature; it would be more appropriate to put it into a book that would be outdated before it hit the shelves. So, instead of trying to cover everything, I always like to throw in the personal highlights from my software world. Am I impartial? No. Are these favourites biased? Yes. So now that we've got that out of the way, here they are in no specific order:

Mac Garage Band – I recently had to mix a project that was tracked in Garage Band (who knew you could do such a thing?). It was about as much of a headache moving the project into Logic 7 as it would have been to move it onto a PC. These clients didn't have a big budget and it was really more of a favour for a friend. In order to make life as simple as possible, I ended up keeping the songs in the Garage Band interface. The interface was so simple, it was a pain in the ass – at first. But then I realized the beauty of the simplicity from a non-engineer point of view and found myself wishing there was a Mac Garage Band for PC. Yep, "Garage Band" – the *only* reason to buy a Mac!

Synthogy Ivory – I first came across this virtual instrument at the NAMM show early this year. Holy Crap is this ever a great sounding piano sample. I still think that we need some kind of "MIDI 2" (or 3) that can split the dynamic range of a MIDI keyboard into 256 levels instead of 128. We also need some more dynamic range in our playback systems to make the piano *really* sound like a piano. But if this is as close as we can get right now, it is good enough for me. Ivory 1.5 comes with three kick-ass pianos that sound fantastic on recordings. Not dirt cheap, value for money – this one is a bargain.



Bornemark's Broomstick Bass – named after the homemade bass you can create out of a broomstick, some string and a washtub, I can assure you that there is a lot more to it than this. Broomstick Bass is a virtual bass, made by Steinberg's programmer of the Virtual Guitar, that has a lot going for it. Reasonably good tone, pretty good parts and a handy built-in virtual keyboard (EVERY virtual instrument should have one). This is a great little virtual bass player instrument to have in your arsenal. Unlike Virtual Guitarist, however, you can put this plug-in in manual mode and play it as a bass sample player – nice!

Sonar 5 – this year's most powerful DAW, it is also the least expensive of all the high-end audio programs. Unfortunately, this is only available for PC. It's the only reason to buy a PC (...trying to dodge Mac hate mail for my Garage Band comment). Value for money, this is a 10. It comes packaged with very good reverbs, and an outstanding pitch correction program – Roland V-Vocal. There are also some outstanding analog synths. The only plug-in that I find missing is a De-esser. Not every plug-in that comes bundled with Sonar is a favourite, but the bundle it comes with is probably worth as much, or more, than the program itself (when you purchase Producer Edition).

Sibelius – not just a piece of scoring software for com-POSERS (com-POSERS are those musicians that went to school for 100 years learning to play scales while being whipped by internment camp music teachers – no wonder they poke their noses down at us). I went to back to school a couple of years ago so I could hang an expensive piece of paper on the wall. While I was there, picking up credits, I challenged some music courses. The fiend-

ish professor took great joy in making students laboriously transcribe score into Sibelius; it was then that I found a point to the whole endeavour. Sibelius is not just a printing program anymore. It can actually playback all the parts you transcribe. This makes for a fascinating glimpse into the way our brain works. See, professor Fiendish could have poured over his student's scores for hours and hours visually, and still missed student transcription errors, but by letting Sibelius play the score, the ear can instantly, and very easily, pick mistakes. Never trust your eyes ... but your ears; let's just say they never blink. Check out Sibelius.com for all sorts of educational programs – they are excellent. From theory to ear training, they make some outstanding resources. A well written (as in scored and printed) piece of music also lasts the test of time. While everyone else worries about the archival qualities of their DVD or Blu-ray disc, you may want to ponder, for a second, that Mozart's notes and handwritten score still exist; so much for progress.

Sums and Figures

This year, 2006/2007, is going to be another one of those milestones in computer-generated music. Just like the ADAT made digital recording a reality for the masses in the early '90s. USB mic-pres and microphones are making the medium more accessible again. With new compatibility between Mac and PC on the horizon and more and more hardware similarities, the benefit will be for the consumer. Perhaps we'll find an end to the PC's suck and Mac's rule attitude, and just get on and write, record, archive, share and reproduce great music. We have access to software suites that give the technical musician/engineer the tools to perform the equivalent of small audio miracles that were only possible in a recording environment that cost half a million dollars a decade ago. At the same time there are super user-friendly environments like Garage Band, that not only give "creative" users a chance to explore the digital medium, but also give indie bands and labels new ways of marketing and sharing their music.

In the next year we will see more and more software coming with "built-in engineering." Things like "smart levels," and EQ – will not be *just* presets. We will also be seeing "smart mixing." Coming soon to a venue near you – Steinberg's "Virtual Sound Guy" – he'll have virtually pasty skin, a bunch of preset mixing styles, and there is a high likelihood that he too (at least in the early versions) will have a Gary Larson style "SUCK" fader.

The business of home recording will become more and more about playing, either with virtual musicians, or your friends, and less and less about setting gain and monitoring levels. Of course, for the foreseeable future, there will be little that we can do about keyboard player's hair, drummer's bad attitudes and guitar player's girlfriends. ●



Alec Watson is a Producer/ Engineer that lives on Vancouver Island. He should probably pass along that there is no "Steinberg Virtual Engineer" plug-in – yet. But he assures us there will be.

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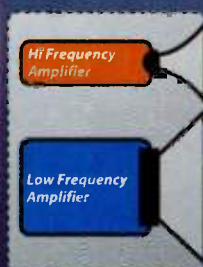


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It has been six years since *Canadian Musician* last did a bass guitar feature. To the casual observer, the past six years may well have been a single day. The bass world moves at a glacial pace. Technologically, we love playing instruments that were around 40 years ago. Technically, it's been decades since anyone taught us any new tricks. For inspiration we still look to James Jamerson. In the world of keyboard players, the lust for new technology is all consuming. In our world, it is barely an itch. What we love now is what the bass players of the last four decades have loved. Some might say this is the nature of bassists themselves. Steady, steadfast, solid and unchanging.

And yet, that is far from the truth.

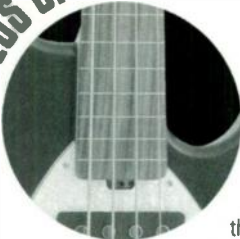
When I began putting this article together I thought perhaps, just maybe, my survey would reveal the modern bassist's newfound fascination with some of the technology that is out there. For example: bass amp modelling. Instruments made from the stuff they build rockets with. Bass speaker enclosures with lightweight magnets culled from meteors. Something. Anything. But no. It exists, but we aren't that interested. We are, after all, the musical core, the heart pumping blood through the body of the band. That's our interest.

So, as I polled this wise and diverse panel I discovered that although some of us have discovered new luthiers and new amp manufacturers, for the most part we all still love our ancient gear. On this point, we all mostly agree. But as musicians, as creative beings, every bass player is as distinct as can be. We love old stuff, but there is very little else that we agree on. And this is a much better spot for us to be in. After all, it is uplifting to discover that a dozen people, faced with a Fender Precision and an Ampeg amplifier, will find 12 different ways to approach it. That it will mean a dozen different things to them. That it will produce 12 different styles of music.

So the gear remains the same, but the song certainly does not. And every bassist has a unique take on what they do. Some are philosophical about their craft. Others more practical. Some are pedantic. Some are adaptable. For some gear is irrelevant. For others a bass guitar is a divining rod connecting them to the cosmos. Some bassists are loud and proud, while others just speak softly and carry a big stick (most with a Fender headstock). Many also play trumpet (like me). Most were not forced to give it up (like me). All were thoughtful, articulate and kind enough to participate. They are...

FOCUS ON BASS

The More Technology Changes, The More They Look Back



**The More Technology Changes,
The More They Look Back**

Flea: Bassist for the Red Hot Chili Peppers, who recently released their ninth studio album, *Stadium Arcadium*.

Jeff Berlin: A major innovator, considered by many to be the finest electric bass player in the world.

Melissa Auf der Maur: Best known as a member of Hole and Smashing Pumpkins. Currently recording her second solo album for Capitol Records.

Brian Minato: Bassist and producer, best known for his work with Sarah McLachlan.

Marc Rogers: Acoustic and electric bass master. Currently plays bass for the Philosopher Kings.

Bruce Gordon: Best known as bassist for I Mother Earth. Now performs nightly in the theatre band for the Toronto production of Blue Man Group.

Jon Gallant: Bass player for Billy Talent. Their new album, *Billy Talent II*, came out on June 27 – check out our cover story on the band's new record in this very issue.

Joshua Winstead: Bass player for Metric. They

cabinets. They rock and the people who make them are nice. It is an honest sound that they have.

Jeff Berlin: I play through Markbass combo bass amps because, hands down, they are the best sounding bass amps I have ever played through. The truth is, every amp manufacturer makes a great amplifier. I don't think that there is a badly made bass amp anywhere. Therefore, the single difference has to be tone, which the Markbass combo amps have in abundance. I simply sound better through these amps and I use them on stage and in the studio. They are the best for me.

Chris Steele: My main performing bass guitar would be my 1975 re-issue Fender Jazz. I saw this bass in a storefront window in London, England, and I told myself that I had to own that exact bass guitar. It was just that beautiful. I'm also endorsed by Schecter guitars. On our recent recording I mainly used the Schecter basses. They had a very crisp and clean sound, yet still heavy with the right amount of low end that I like. As far as my amp setup, I have two Ampeg fridge cabs and an

Lull M5V Modern Jazz 5-string and a 1974 Fender Telecaster bass, but I found that my Fender Reggie Hamilton and my Lakland 55-02 worked better for getting the sounds across live in concert.

Bruce Gordon: One constant in my sound has always been Leo Fender. Almost all of my basses are his designs, either Fender or MusicMan. My main live bass with I Mother Earth was a MusicMan Sterling. I still use it quite often. I seem to be gravitating more towards my two Fender Precision basses lately. I've been playing my '51 P-bass reissue a lot which is unfortunate since even though it sounds awesome in an old, crunchy P-bass sort of way, it's the most difficult to play of all the basses I own. Kind of like a baseball bat bolted to a picnic table. Playing each note is like squeezing blood from a stone! But I love it.

Jon Gallant: I use an Ernie Ball Stingray with the Piezo bridge pick up. It is the only bass that feels natural to me. (My amp is) an SVT Classic with an 8 x 10 Ampeg cabinet. It's got a huge sound and real solid low end. It's the only bass amp for rock music as far as I'm concerned.

Brian Minato: I usually fluctuate between my old 1970 (Fender) Jazz and an Epiphone Les Paul bass for live gigs as well as in the studio. I use Eden



BRIAN MINATO



BRUCE GORDON



CHRIS STEELE

are currently touring in support of their recent record *Live It Out*.

Chris Steele: Bassist for Alexisonfire. Their third album *Crisis* is expected sometime in August.

Eon Sinclair: Bassist for Bedouin Soundclash, who will spend the summer touring and recording.

James Lomenzo: Bass player for Megadeth, who are currently recording a new album.

Ryan Gavel: Bass player for Surplus Sons, a new band signed to BMG/MachineShop.

What is your main performing bass and amp? How long have you used this set up and why is this your gear of choice?

Flea: I use a 1961 Fender Jazz bass as my main recording and performing bass. I love it! There is nothing else like it. It would be impossible for any bass manufacturer to make anything like it. They just can't make something 45 years old. It has not been a tree in a long time. It feels like part of my body. I love it with my heart, like it is my heart. It is my heart actually! I use Gallien-Krueger amps and

Ampeg SVT classic head with a SansAmp effects pedal just for that extra punch and drive. I've used this setup for a long time now because I love the crushing raw drive and power that you get from the SVT classic, and I haven't found anything better.

Eon Sinclair: I have only ever played one bass on stage, and that's an Italia Mondial. It's a semi-hollow body bass made out of fibreglass, and is modelled after the old National basses that were made in the 1960s. It's really dubby and has a pretty fast neck, which I love. On our new record *Street Gospels*, I recorded on a vintage MusicMan bass that the studio owner brought in for me. It was cool, but I still like the Italia.

Marc Rogers: For acoustic bass, I use my 130-year old German bass with an AMT microphone and Acoustic Image amplifiers. If I need to use a pickup I have a David Gage Realist. For louder situations where I want the acoustic bass vibe, I use my Yamaha SilentBass through the Acoustic Image amps. For electric bass, I have a few more choices. On the new Philosopher Kings record I used a Mike

amps. They have lots of punch at lower volumes. It's also a good rig for club gigs and for power pop or heavier music. I also use a Variax bass and an old Gibson Grabber I acquired in a pawnshop somewhere in Ohio.

Joshua Winstead: I use a Fender Precision bass, and an Ampeg SVT Rig. I have used this rig for about two years now. The bass I play for most of the show is the bass I used for the record *Live It Out*, but for *Old World Underground* I used a Fender Mustang.

Melissa Auf der Maur: I have only ever played a Fender Precision, through an Ampeg SVT. I have been sponsored by both companies since 1995. Both have been extremely artist friendly and loyal. I wouldn't ever have it any other way. For rock bass playing (with a pick of course) there are no other options.

James Lomenzo: For basses I've been mostly using my Warwick's. I've got some killer Buzzards (John Entwistle's model), a Thumb and a Stryker. I'm a particular fan of the Buzzards for all my heavy

rock outings. They just scream through a "jacked up" amp. Amps? For the past four years, I've been using the fabulous Ashdown ABM series stuff. For what I do, it's really been the only amp for me, really consistent tone, volume for days, I just love them.

Ryan Gavel: My main performing bass is a 1978 Fender Precision bass with a maple fret board and dimarzio pickups. I purchased this bass about two months ago, on my Visa, about five minutes after I picked it up and played it. My bass rig consists of an 8 x 10 Ampeg cabinet and an Ampeg SVT classic head.

How has newer bass technology affected your gear choices?

Flea: The most interesting bass technology that I have discovered lately is a Moog bass EQ that I used on our last record, but I don't think it is that new. I just liked it and it was helpful. I am pretty simple - it's all in the fingers anyways. I find the new technology that people use, the music sounds worse and it is more complicated to get anything done. Especially with recording equipment that is supposed to save time, people take longer to make records now and they don't sound as good.

amp. I get gain from using the EQ on my bass and through the attack of my right hand. The harder I play the more fuzz I get; it's all very organic.

Marc Rogers: The one great advance in my opinion is the looping pedal, both as a practice tool and in performance. It gives you the ability to accompany yourself in a very spontaneous and fun way. Also, it gives you the opportunity to experience what it's like to have to play along with your own bass playing, which can be very revealing.

James Lomenzo: Well, I'm always intrigued by newer technology and I'm really not afraid of employing anything that makes things sound better. I think that we're on the cusp of some really great digitally integrated equipment. I know there's a new line of Ashdown gear that incorporates a wide swing of digital and analog technology in one package, USB outs, programmable EQ and compression. I have no fear of this stuff so long as it's a means to an end.

Brian Minato: As far as newer bass technology is concerned, I would have to nominate the (Line 6) Variax Bass. I tried one out while in rehearsals for a tour with Sarah and it has proven to be a very handy instrument onstage and in the studio. Amongst other instruments, you have a (Fender)



EON SINCLAIR

Chris Steele: I really don't explore newer bass technology. I want to be playing with and through equipment that looks and feels sexy, not equipment that looks like it came from the moon. (Not to say that moons aren't sexy!) However with newer gear technology, the SansAmp effects pedal is fantastic. It gives you the extra driving punch that can sometimes be hard to find in a bass amp. It can make a cheap \$200 bass sound like booms of thunder.

Jeff Berlin: Bass technology is a humbug to me because it has already outdistanced music as the prime source for sound or musical output. Equipment companies promise that you will sound better and even play better using their gear. I disagree! There isn't a piece of equipment or a guitar on earth that will supercede the musical capability that must come before the choice of world-class equipment. In other words, if I don't know how to drive, what's the difference if I can't do it in a Pinto or a Porsche?

Jon Gallant: I don't even know what that means. Up until now I've plugged into a tuner and into my

Jazz bass or a MusicMan, an upright and even a Moog type of bass synth all in one instrument.

Eon Sinclair: I take my lead from the Studio One sound and the Motown sound, and to my knowledge, those guys just played and the producers just recorded it raw. I might look at using a distresser or some kind of fuzz pedal in the future, but right now, I keep pretty simple.

Do you prefer a bass with active electronics or passive electronics? Do you prefer round wound or flat round strings?

Eon Sinclair: I like basses that give you the option of passive or active, but I do prefer the passive sound. I always play on flat wound strings ... it's more like a string bass, and it sounds more jazzy and old school than round wounds. Playing reggae heavy style, the flat wounds give you a really deep tone that I like and compliments the sound of the music.

Marc Rogers: In general, I find that I prefer passive basses for recording and active basses

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for live, but it depends on the situation. I use round wound strings on all my basses except the Telecaster and the Hagstrom, those both have flat wounds on them. I also really enjoy going back and forth between my 4-strings and my 5s (both with a low B and high C) just because it gives me an opportunity to explore different mindsets (busy vs. simple, groove vs. soloistic, and so on).

Jeff Berlin: I play passive basses because I don't like the sound of active. Active sometimes sounds too "unwarm", too artificial. Besides, you can get loads of bottom or highs from your amp or in the studio with no problem. It is another case where the reality of sonics has disappeared into the myths surrounding it. I play a 4-string bass although in this musical era, the 5-string is a valuable necessity. My strings are simple; .040 .060 .080 .100 nickel strings made by the absolute best string manufacturer I ever used,

How do effects factor into the role of bass playing for you?

Joshua Winstead: The only effects I use are some chorus during certain parts, delay and some distortion. The bass is a hard instrument to use effects on. I have found most effects really detract from the ability to have a full range of sound, especially bass distortion. You almost always lose low end.

Brian Minato: I do like using pedals in conjunction with my bass playing. I think you can come up with parts you may not have even considered playing because of the fuzz sound, or the delay setting, or the flanging you are adding to your signal chain. There have always been really cool effected bass parts from many different bass players. I'm talking about songs like "Walking on the Moon" by The Police, "For the Love of Money" by The O'Jays, "Sabotage" by Beastie Boys or "Exit Music (For a Film)" by Radiohead.

Jeff Berlin: I use a chorus pedal.

Marc Rogers: I've always dabbled with effects but I always seem to end up going back to just

James Lomenzo: Two of my not-so secret weapons are the Aphex Punch Factory Compressor and their Bass Exciter. These two elements absolutely enhance my amplifiers output capability and I've found them to be the most useful effects for tuning the feel and output of my basses. Of course the MXR pedals are great for getting very obvious and cool effects that have character. The EBS Black Label pedals are cleaner and provide tighter control with less colour, which is just as valuable.

Eon Sinclair: I don't use any effects yet, but I'm not against them at all. I always think an instrument should sound like what it is, know what I mean? If I'm going to use a pedal that will make my bass sound like a synthesizer, then I should just play a synthesizer; if the effect makes it sound like a dog barking, then we should get a dog on the mic. It'd be an interesting stage show, anyway!

Ryan Gavel: I have used a Big Muff (Electro-Harmonix) and more recently I have played around with a BOSS Bass Chorus pedal. As long as I don't stray too far from the natural sound of my bass, some effects are okay with me.

What is the role of bass guitar in your band? How do you approach writing bass lines for a song?



FLEA



JAMES LOMENZO



JEFF BERLIN

Carl Thompson Bass Strings. I've been using his strings since the 1970s and I've been happy with his product for 30 years. When I feel Carl Thompson strings under my hand, I'm home.

Joshua Winstead: The bass I play has passive electronics, four round wound strings and this is what I stick to.

Jon Gallant: I like active pickups. I use round wound – the flat round sounds good for reggae. I only have the mental capacity for four strings. I won't use a 5- or 6-string bass in a studio because I won't record anything that I couldn't do live and as of now I refuse to tour with any bass that has more than four strings. I guess I'm old school?

Melissa Auf der Maur: Passive, wound, classic four strings. The only additional bass I use in the studio, is my prize possession 8-string Greco Bass. It has an octave string on all four strings and sounds like thunder. I occasionally double my guitars with a baritone guitar.

plugging straight into my amp! When you consider how many tones can be gotten just by altering the way you play the instrument, effects can almost seem like overkill. I might use a compressor and a distortion pedal, but mostly I just like plain old bass straight into a good amp.

Jon Gallant: I don't see effects being too important for a bass player. We don't want to stand out; we want to hold it down. Adding an effect to your bass tone can sometimes take away from the role the bass plays in the music. We have to remember that the bass is usually establishing the tonal centre of a song for everything else to build on and nothing can accomplish that better than a plain ol' bass, plugged directly into a big ol' amp.

Melissa Auf der Maur: Chorus, Flanger and Distortion. I love effects, but I don't use them that often because they usually interfere with the guitars. But when I do use them it makes me VERY happy. There is nothing cooler sounding than a chorus bass.

Chris Steele: My role of playing the bass guitar in the band is to bring the low end to town. It's very important to get real comfortable with your drummer and really lock up tight together and feel it out. I also have a role of dancing like a cobra snake with my bass guitar. When it comes to writing songs with the rest of the band I let the rhythm of the guitars hit my bones so I have a sense of feel and direction. Then I try a few different techniques and see what fits.

Eon Sinclair: We're a three-piece rooted in reggae, so the bass is a pretty big part of our sound. We're all a rhythm section; there's no leads. The ideas usually come from the roots of (Jay's) chords, and I try to tweak them into melodies, or countermelodies to his voice. With only two melodic instruments in the band, making sure we have two melodies fills out the sound more than if I just stuck to the roots of chords. I also look to change harmonies between our instruments throughout songs to keep things interesting and create different moods.

Marc Rogers: I always try to think like a composer when I'm writing bass lines, and I especially try to hear the part in my head first, before I let my fingers have a go. Usually the first two things I listen to for guidance are the drums and lead vocals. I find that when I find a part that fits well with those two elements everything else tends to fall into place nicely.

Joshua Winstead: The role of the bass in Metric changes from song to song. When working on bass lines all I try to do is make the music the best I can.

Flea: The role of the bass in the Red Hot Chili Peppers varies greatly from song to song. Sometimes it is very supportive to the guitar and vocal melody. Sometimes it makes a counter melody to what is going on, and sometimes it does a harmony to what is going on, sometimes it leads the way. I just try to make each song as great as it can be. The moment of creating a bass line is almost always very quick and spontaneous. If I hear something that needs a bass line I play the first thing that comes into my head. It almost always is what the bass line will be forever. It is different when a song starts with a bass line, which happens a lot, then everything else fills in around the bass line.

Jon Gallant: I establish the tonal centre of the song while our guitar player builds his guitar voicing on top of me. I'll usually start by finding the roots and recognizing the rhythm. When I've figured that out I'll start building on that by adding the passing tones or some of the other notes in the chord.

Brian Minato: With my own band, The Blue Alarm, I write what comes naturally to me. A lot of my writing occurs as we jam out songs and as a result my parts are forming in reaction to what is happening with the drums or the vocals or the chord shape or the tempo.

Melissa Auf der Maur: In all the bands I have been in, including my own, the bass is simply a support for the song. But it is essential in building the mood and dynamic.

James Lomenzo: In Megadeth, I have a pretty firm grasp on what's expected from the listener and the band's perspective, so I respect that very deeply. Right now we're working on a new album so I'll see if my style will help or hinder the music. If it starts sounding too divergent from Megadeth's signature sound then I'll certainly pull it back into the bands classic style.

Bruce Gordon: I just do my best to try and rip off John Paul Jones, Paul McCartney, Geezer Butler and James Jamerson! I've always been guilty of wanting to overplay, but luckily I've been in a band where some of the songs were written with that in mind! In the end I focus on playing what's right rhythmically and melodically.

Do you experiment with other styles of music and playing outside your band's style? Is it important for you to be fluent in other styles of music?

Chris Steele: I think it's a bonus if you happen to be FLUENT in other styles of music. However, I think it's very important to be INTERESTED in other styles of music. Being a musician you should have a wide variety of styles and music that interests you. I think it's just healthy. It's fun to expand your mind with different styles.

Eon Sinclair: The great thing about playing the

style of music we do is that it has a lot to do with each of us as individuals and what we are listening to at present. None of us feel confined to a certain style, and none of us only listen to a few kinds of music ... we listen to almost everything, and are DEFINITELY always looking for something that we haven't heard before. Am I fluent in other styles of music? I don't think I'm fluent in any styles of music!

Joshua Winstead: I started on guitar, and only played bass because my friends needed a bass player for Metric. Once I dedicated myself to the bass, I truly started to love the instrument itself, and I found myself enjoying the part of bass player in a band. In my life outside Metric, I play acoustic guitar, electric guitar, trumpet, drums, and experimental type sample-based music. Each time I step

away from Metric and work on other things, I feel I return with a much larger idea of music and of Metric.

Flea: When I play on someone else's record, for instance like Tracy Chapman's last record, I just listen to what is there and go for it. It is fun to step out of my usual situation and to feel some else's expression and to honour it.

Jeff Berlin: The more you know, the more you can do. Music should be learned in small doses over a long time. If there is something that I don't know, I already have the knowledge of myself that I will know it, sooner or later. Therefore, I don't sweat it when I learn something new and make mistakes trying to play it. Today or tomorrow I will have it in my hands and I will use it to my full advantage.

Jon Gallant: Absolutely! I don't normally play

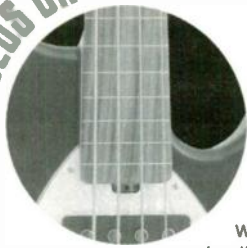
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with anybody else unless it's playing some old east coast music with my aunts and uncles; but I'll sit down in front of my computer and learn bass lines to whatever tickles my fancy. From Celtic to reggae to disco – every type of music should be appreciated at some level. When I hear a cool bass line I'll usually want to learn it. Unless it's Primus because that's just a whole different landscape. I'm quite comfortable leaving that music to Les Claypool.

Melissa Auf der Maur: I never set out to be a professional bass player. I am a creative person, and music happens to be my main tool of expression. So for years, I did not want to learn other people's styles or techniques. I did not want it to influence me. Alternative rock music is all about sounding like yourself, as opposed to jazz or classical which are far more technique based. I feel confident that in the last decade I gave myself enough freedom to find my voice and personal bass playing style. Now

if you need to be a master at all of them. I play with my fingers and am best at that style and will always revert to it when I perform or record; but I want to be good at them all.

Marc Rogers: I personally get the most enjoyment out of being able to play in a wide variety of styles. I want to be able to go from playing straight-ahead jazz to playing hip-hop to playing aggressive rock with a pick to playing Brazilian music and so forth without ever sounding watered-down.

Do you read music, and is that important?

Eon Sinclair: I can read music, but haven't done that since I stopped taking music courses in high school. It's not crucial, but it is a good skill to have. I'd rather have a good ear and be able to play along.

Jeff Berlin: I do, and it is. Tablature is a joke. It is a falsehood of music and anyone dealing in it is dealing in a musical con. Reading music is one of the most valuable directions a player can take because it opens about a billion new doors of

neck, slow and easy till my hands start to loosen up and things even out. One of my favourite practice routines is to put on James Brown's *Greatest Hits* and try to settle into the groove.

Melissa Auf der Maur: Stretches of the arms and back, and breathing deeply.

Jon Gallant: I pick up my bass and rock.

Marc Rogers: I tend to start off by doing a few minutes of easy technical stuff just to get the blood flowing, but usually when I'm practicing I tend to try to keep it creative, whether that means writing something hard then learning how to play it, trying to learn a particularly difficult bit of someone else's playing, or just playing along with a brand new record I've never heard before. Basically I'm always trying to keep my practice routine as fun and musical as possible, because otherwise I probably wouldn't do it.

Do you play other instruments, and does that influence the way you approach the bass?

Bruce Gordon: I've always been interested in learning new instruments. My experience with Blue Man Group has taken this up to an even higher level. The custom made instruments in the show are the most challenging that I've ever attempted



JOSHUA WINSTEAD



MARC ROGERS



JON GALLANT

I may be ready to do a little research and expansion. Recently I challenged myself to play a one-off show with K-OS, to expand my playing.

Fretless bass, acoustic bass, picked bass, slapped bass? How important is it for you personally to be a versatile player with versatile sounds?

Flea: I am always working on different styles and ways of playing the bass. I should work harder but I have a serious lazy streak.

Jeff Berlin: I never play a fretless and I never will. Jaco cliché. I don't slap because I don't like the style. It's another cliché to me. I don't play acoustic bass because I love the immediacy of the electric. It speaks instantly and I love this.

Jon Gallant: I have a fretless bass and an acoustic bass at home and like to play them. I love jazz so naturally I'd want to have basses used in those styles. I think it's important to be versatile in all the different ways to play the bass; but I don't know

musical possibility. There are a lot of guys out there who came up with some great musical ideas that I want to know about. Thank God I can read music so that I can find out what these ideas are. Plus, from the practical side, what's wrong with earning a couple of hundred dollars per night because I can read someone's show?

Joshua Winstead: Yes, I read music, but slowly and probably like a six-year-old child reading poetry. I don't think it is that important for rock music, but for other types and other professions I would recommend it.

Melissa Auf der Maur: No, although I went to a music school as a kid and did a lot of reading and theory then. And in my type of music and circle it is not needed. Do I respect it, and would I feel cool if I said I could? Yes!

Describe your practice and/or warm-up routines...

James Lomenzo: Basic scales up and down the

to play. That learning experience has taught me so much more about myself as a player.

Flea: I was a trumpet player first and I still love to play it, so my bass playing was definitely influenced by my horn playing. I also just play rhythms that make my heart warm. My playing is very natural to who I am. I feel the grooves like my own heart beat. They are who I am. Music is infinite. You can never figure it all out. The more you give to it the more it will give to you. It is magic. It is magic. It will transform air into vibrations that will heal you and make you happy and full of love. Nothing is better than that. The way that I move my body when I play determines how I play and where I sit with the beat. Behind it or in front or right in the centre. My body dancing and the bass notes all go together. That physicality is a huge part of the way I play. One doesn't go without the other.

Melissa Auf der Maur: My first really focused instrument was trumpet from age 10 to 15. I can only

play scales and arpeggios now, but it played a big part of my musical understanding and development. I have also noticed that a lot of bass players play trumpet (Flea!!). There is a connection in that it is single notes and not chords. So I think the melodic and rhythmic role is similar. The other major instrument and training I had was choir, so my voice and ear are crucial to my creativity. Sometimes my backup vocal ideas become my bass lines.

Marc Rogers: I'm absolutely grateful for my piano skills because they make it far easier to learn harmony and get your ears around some of the more complex chords.

What do you feel is the most important musical concept for a bassist to learn, and why?

Bruce Gordon: Listening! Being able to listen and being truly aware of other musicians while you are playing is one of the most difficult things to learn and even more so to teach to students.

Eon Sinclair: The most important musical concept for any instrumentalist to learn is how to listen. Listen to yourself, but most importantly, listen to everything going on around you and that way, you'll never over play. Keeping it simple is sometimes not the most technically fun way to play, but it's usually the best sounding.

Jeff Berlin: Generic musical information, no doubt about it. But, most bass players don't want to learn music this way and really don't know where to go to get this information. Too bad, because good generic studies can save you years of struggle down the line.

Marc Rogers: Listening to other bass players that you enjoy is the best way to develop an instinct for

what, and when, and perhaps more importantly when not to play. Also I think that careful listening is the best way to learn about how different bass tones work in the grand scheme of things, which is an extremely important and often underrated aspect of a bassist's role.

Joshua Winstead: To listen to what is happening in the music at that very moment. Don't try and impose old ideas of what you might have wanted to hear before. And lose the ego, don't try and put parts in the music to show off your hot bass chops when that crap isn't needed. The bass is a powerful instrument in music and a very hidden one. Allow it to be both.

Brian Minato: One is developing your ability to listen to what other musicians are playing and the other is understanding the concept of not playing. These ideas or philosophies apply to all musicians, not to bass players alone. I know it seems really obvious to mention these things but there are times, even now, when I work with certain musicians and it feels like they are in a different room than me when we are supposedly playing together.

Melissa Auf der Maur: To listen to the others. We are the glue that has to unite all the elements. The drums to guitars, the vocal melody to song arrangement, the emotional intent to the dynamic of the song. We are the only member that must take everything into consideration. That is why I call it the mother of all instruments: The Listener.

James Lomenzo: It's two things really; rhythm and harmonic support. You need to be aware of both if you really want to contribute in a creative way. You can manage to a degree with stronger rhythm chops than melodic awareness, but I think you'll find your-

self limited in the styles of music you can contribute to, which oddly enough, can define your style. So I guess, maybe it's all relative to the specific situation you find yourself in.

What do you recommend to people starting out playing bass?

Joshua Winstead: Listen, play, listen, play, listen, play, listen, play – all at the same time, all the time.

Jeff Berlin: Find a teacher who will teach you academically. As I said earlier, there's little that will light your musical fire more than 100 per cent meaningful musical information. Listening to music is essential. Fill your CD player with lots of stuff including music you may not like. Give new music a chance to get under your skin. Hang out with guys who know about more music than you do. These guys can be a good source of musical information for you.

Marc Rogers: I usually advise young players to pursue whatever music excites them, whether or not it happens to be the current fad, and to always keep an open mind. There's a lot of music that I love now that I hated 10 years ago. And a lot of music that I loved 10 years ago that I can't stand now.

Eon Sinclair: Listening and playing, listening and playing. Just pick it up and go note for note. It seems hard and tedious the first few times, but it teaches you how to listen, and really develop your own way of playing and creating your own fingering style.

Jon Gallant: Learn proper technique; but try to jam with friends as much as possible and use your ear to learn songs as much as possible. Start with reggae, the bass lines are usually not too busy; but the rhythms will blow you away.

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Melissa Auf der Maur: Listening and finding a drummer! It depends on what style of music you aspire to play. If it is

rock I say, no need for lessons, other than a basic explanation about the lay out of the fretboard. Just listen to your favourite music and find your way around it.

Flea: The most important thing for any bass player to do is to study all the music that they can, to listen to the great players who have come before and to honour them: James Jamerson, Jah Wobble, Charles Mingus, Paul Chambers, Richard Davis, Charlie Haden, John Entwistle, Bootsy Collins, Louis Johnson, Larry Graham, Familyman Barret, Jack Bruce, Paul McCartney, John Wetton, Lorna Doome, Greg Lake, Chuck Dukowski. There are so many great ones. The other most important thing is to be yourself and love and trust yourself. There is only one you and everyone's heart has its own beat. Play your own way, but respect history. Practice, practice, practice.

had more to do with my style than I will ever know because the lines I tried to replicate when I first started were lines that they wrote and performed. I still try to play them, but can never quite get them right, but now I know that's because everyone plays differently.

Chris Steele: One of my all time favourites would be Mike Dirnt from Green Day. I remember blasting some of Green Day's earlier records in my living room when I was younger. Dirnt definitely got my juices going to start playing bass guitar.

Marc Rogers: There have been so many heavily influential bassists for me that I couldn't possibly pick one. On electric some of my favourites are Pino Palladino, Paul McCartney, John Entwistle, John Paul Jones, the great James Jamerson, Dominique di Piazza, Marcus Miller, Jaco, Anthony Jackson, Paul Jackson Jr., Matthew Garrison, Linley Marthe, Oteil Burbridge, Habib Faye and Squarepusher. On acoustic some of my favourites are Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, Edgar Meyer, John Patitucci, Avishai Cohen, Larry Grenadier and Christian McBride.

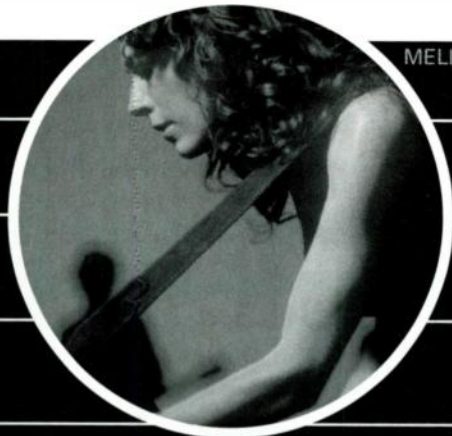
what has happened? How does this relate to your own choices as a bass player?

Jeff Berlin: Music hasn't evolved. Recording has. Music is still one or two chords, a guy singing out of tune, and an audience of a million kids who can't tell the difference. Contemporary music today is as meaningful as miniature golf is a meaningful sport. Rap doesn't use live players so who cares if some thug gets a record deal. Exceptions aside, what's out there that moves you? That's why real players are going the way of the dodo bird. Music isn't important as much anymore. Music entertainment is everything. Girls with more silicone than a life preserver have record deals and no one, not one reader, can tell me the name of their drummer or their bass player.

Melissa Auf der Maur: Music is timeless and endless. I am aware of my time and like the music of certain times more than others, I am always listening for honesty, and that can happen in any style or time.

Jon Gallant: I'm a fan of music in every stage of its evolution. I don't know how it relates to me as a bass player. I just get together with my band and play.

Joshua Winstead: I love the evolution in music



MELISSA AUF DER MAUR



RYAN GAVEL

Who is your favourite bass player of all time?

Flea: I don't know if I have a favourite bass player of all time. I love so many and they are all so different. I love simple punk rock as much as I love the most sophisticated jazz or the deepest African music so it is hard to pick one person. I could just add to the ones I mentioned earlier; Mike Watt, Jimmy Blanton, Pino Palladino, Sid Vicious, Joe Lally, Jaco Pastorius of course, Robbie Shakespeare, Rockette Morton, Jeff Berlin, the list goes on.

Jeff Berlin: My favourite bass player is Jack Bruce because he is the reason that I am a bass player. He was the very first bass virtuoso and the first guy in music history to play this instrument in a totally new way. He influenced me, Jaco Pastorius, Billy Sheehan, Geddy Lee, a whole bunch of guys. Tim Bogert loves him. Plus, he's a great composer. I'd like to do an album with him some day.

Eon Sinclair: My favourite bassists of all-time are Aston "Familyman" Barret of The Wailers, and James Jamerson of The Funk Brothers. Those guys

These names are just the tip of the iceberg though!

Jon Gallant: If I could put Paul McCartney in a blender with Flea – that combo would be my favourite. We could call him Paul McFLEAney.

Have you recently discovered any new bands that you would recommend (from a bassist's perspective)?

Marc Rogers: I think that Guy Berryman, Coldplay's bassist, is really great in terms of finding great parts and always having the right tone for the song. He gets an amazing range of sounds out of his two P-basses!

Chris Steele: I'll keep this short and sweet. Bedouin Soundclash. Just listen and watch Eon two-step his way to victory. You'll know what I'm talking about once you see that man in action, if you already haven't.

Do you like how music continues to evolve? Are you interested more in what is coming or

and look both forward and backward, it is exciting to me. But this doesn't make me choose anything different about the way I play. I only look toward the music at the moment for the answer to what should be played at that time.

Flea: Music is sacred. It is God talking to us. Whether you play a little as a hobby or yearn to scale the peaks of the likes of John Coltrane or Jimmy Page, keep it close to your heart. Be gentle with it and lift it high up to the heavens with all that you are. And rock the fuck out like an animal. ●



Jeff Pearce is a Toronto based bassist. When not adding low end to the music of Moist and David Usher, he dabbles in producing, song-writing and other lesser pursuits.



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Wendy Lands And The Zen Of Bend Part II

James Linderman Interviews Wendy Lands...

This is part two of a two-part interview with songwriter Wendy Lands.

Wendy has been living for the last five years in L.A. with her husband, and often collaborator, Jim Gillard and their daughter Chloe, but has recently returned to live in Toronto.

While in L.A. she met and was asked to write with many of music's most legendary songsmiths but the co-write that was most memorable was her session with Grammy award winning singer/songwriter Melissa Manchester.

In a recent interview, Wendy Lands talked about this co-write that ended up with a cut on Melissa Manchester's new CD "When I Look Down that Road" in the form of a song called "Bend".

Q: Did either of you come into the room with some of the initial lyrics or music to bring to your co-write with Melissa Manchester?

A: She had zero interest in the titles I'd cooked up in staff writing sessions with Warner/Chappell. So I dug into the stuff I considered more for my own songs. When I said, "How 'bout 'Bend'?" She said, "How do you mean 'Bend'?" I explained, "Like, if you could just bend a little then I could just bend a little, let go of all the rigid stuff and meet me half way..." She said, "I like that," so I sat at the piano, and she at the keyboard and we got started. I began to loosely play some chords and sing a melody, trying to fit in some of the phrases I had just recited. She immediately ran with the chorus and within 20 minutes we had the whole chorus finished, and then came the verses and lastly, the bridge.

Q: Did you write mostly lyrics or mostly music for this song and which of these is usually your role in a co-write?

A: Both of us contributed to both the music and the lyric and usually when I get to be part of the process musically and lyrically, those are the songs I'm most proud of. It was nice, how we each sat at a keyboard; it allowed each of us to feel free to come up with musical ideas as we worked our way

through the lyric. Sometimes when I write with someone who sits at a keyboard and I'm without one, I feel less creative musically, more like I have to be "the lyricist" which in L.A. is the typical deal. In the songwriting world in L.A. for the most part, the girls are the lyric writers and the guys create the music or tracks. Anyway, the lyric writing was also very much a shared experience. We each had lyric books open and we each scribbled and threw things out, she'd nix my ideas, I'd nix hers and then we'd hit on something and get giggly and giddy. Her line about "strangers who won't leave" still kills me every time I hear it.

and sing into a little tape player. She'd start from the very beginning each time and if one thing felt even a little bit off to her ... like the time may have been two clicks faster or slower than where she felt it should have been, she'd stop the tape and start again, and again, and again until it was on tape exactly as she heard the finished product in her head. I'd been a much more slap & dash kind of artist up to that point. Since then I have certainly become a more methodical writer.

Q: In retrospect, did you write the song you wish you had written with MM?

A: Yes! It was one of the tracks that got a lot of attention. And it kills in concert! It's the "you can hear a pin drop" moment of her show.

Although Wendy is working on collecting material for her next release she is not planning to include "Bend" on that CD as she now considers it to be a Melissa Manchester song from a recording standpoint.

Wendy adds in closing, "My next CD is going to be recorded like a traditional jazz album, live off the floor and then we'll add stuff like orchestration later. It's going to be torch-y and elegant and I hope it makes people cry ... but in

a good way!"

To find out more about Wendy Lands and Melissa Manchester you should visit their respective Web sites at www.wendylands.com and www.melissamanchester.com.



Q: Did you find MM's celebrity and past achievements as an artist, intimidating?

A: Yes at first I was nervous; our initial phone conversation was not the most reassuring, but as soon as we clicked I felt like I'd found a kindred spirit.

Q: What was the most valuable skill or gift that you brought to this co-write?

A: I think my title was somewhat thought provoking, as well as my style, I might have been a little more intimate and confessional than some of her other co-writers. Also, I really wanted to take her somewhere new, and I think I did, but in a way that was really comfortable for her.

Q: What do you think MM's most valuable gift to bring to this song was?

A: MM is a true crafts person and a great musician. Watching her get in her groove as we wrote, taught me so much. Every time we'd get another chunk written, she'd play

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.musemuse.com (3 million readers monthly),

Canadian Musician magazine, Songwriters magazine, Professional Musician magazine, Songwriters of Wisconsin International and The Dallas Songwriters Association. Contact James at theharmonyhouse@rogers.com.

And Wendy Lands is a singer/songwriter who has performed with Les Miserables, in addition to releasing two of her own CDs: Angels & Ordinary Men, and Wendy Lands Sings The Music Of The Pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman. Find her online at www.wendylands.com.

The Role Of 5.1 Mixing In Today's Environment



An Interview With Rich Chycki

What has mixing in 5.1 done for you as a mixer ... did it change how you viewed mixing in stereo?

Surround mixing expands the mixing palette over traditional stereo mixing. The mix is in fact three-dimensional with almost endless versatility for placement and imaging. But this power comes not without a caveat – grasping the increased complexity of the many facets of surround mixing is critical not only to creating a stable, enjoyable sonic environment in surround but to the integrity of the mix as it's folded from 5.1 to stereo.

What are your biggest challenges in mixing in surround?

Surround mixing is technically more challenging than mixing in stereo. Placement of mix elements and their frequency spectrum become more critical as do phase relationships. Phase is of particular interest as it's an intrinsic aspect of what we use to perceive direction, in tandem with delay. And after all the surround work is done, the mix has to fold down into stereo sans anomalies.

What benchmark do you go by in terms of what you mix? Do you think about the average person's all-in-one-box \$300 home theatre system? Do you aim for the best mix possible and let others worry about finished product?

Generally, my benchmark approach leans toward the emphasis on creating an atmosphere or environment that enhances the music's intended message.

My gig is to worry about the finished product and to aim for the best possible mix. A quality mix is a mix that translates consistently on most listening systems. Just as with stereo mixes, I check surround mixes on a number of listening systems of varying quality. I also switch between the stereo and surround versions. As well, the mastering and the final encode is checked against the discrete PCM mix and checked against the original reference audio for sync (if mixed to video).

Are artists wasting their time in producing 5.1 mixes? Is there a market for 5.1 music? What does the music industry need to do to help push this format along?

Not at all! Go into any music retailer and it's clear that DVD and surround are front rack all the way. Making surround a convenient, daily experience through dual-mode media and Dolby E surround broadcasts

would go a long way toward perpetuating the format.

Aside from the myriad of new releases possible, remixing a project in 5.1 enables an artist or label to repackage existing product with a new approach. Of course, there's the obvious live-show DVD-V format which is enjoying current popularity but there is no reason to not mix studio releases in both 5.1 and stereo and release a dual format DVD-A + CD. Dual format media (DVD on one side and CD on the other) certainly helps to proliferate surround mixes with compatibility in the stereo world.

The music industry needs to instill confidence in the end consumer that they are getting value for their dollar. While jump-on-the-bandwagon faux-surround or reverb-in-the-rear only mixes might seem



like a fast, cheap way to jump into the surround arena, the benefits are short-term as poor product can be eventually viewed by the consumer as a disparagement and discourages future purchasing.

Surround systems have come a long way. Surround equipment manufacturers must strive to make listening systems even more foolproof – make speaker alignment as automatic as possible (with manual mode for the techno-geek, of course) and make that a standard feature integral to all surround systems. Speaker alignment and placement is much more critical for surround listening than stereo.

On the tech side, engineers have the responsibility to learn their craft, including video chops as video and audio are inel-

ibly joined at the hip in the DVD-V world. Note the artifacts introduced by encoding and how to adjust the mix so the final encoded project remains true. In the DVD-V world, slick and efficient menu programming punctuates a quality, symbiotic relationship of audio and video. In short, make a product great yet simple, reliable and foolproof.

I'm sure you remember the war between VHS and Beta video tape formats in the '80s... what are your thoughts on what's poised to be the next format war: Blu-ray or HD-DVD? How will these new formats affect what you do as a mixer?

A change in media format alone generally doesn't affect the mix process itself but it can affect the file resolution and sample rate of recording sessions and mix delivery. And of course, these changes would trickle down to the mastering and encoding processes for audio as well as video resolution and encoding. Regardless of what format prevails, the result for consumers will be more storage capacity and therefore greater resolution and quality, plus more product on a single medium.

Where do you think the art of mixing in 5.1 will go next? What's the next step or trend? 5.1 CD players in cars?

Surround mixing is an art that is in a state of continual refinement. Hopefully, the future holds more consistency, better standards and more creative approaches to shaping an interesting sonic environment for the listener to enjoy.

The car is an interesting listening environment as most of constituent elements of surround systems have been in car installs for years i.e. pair front speakers, pair rear speakers and sub. Already, standard DVD and surround installs are trickling down from the higher end vehicles so hopefully we'll see 5.1 car installs as ubiquitous as the common AM/FM/CD player in the near future.

Rich Chycki is fluent in both the CD and DVD 5.1 worlds. He has mixed and/or recorded recent efforts by Mick Jagger, P. Diddy, Aerosmith, Dolores O'Riordan of the Cranberries and Rush, as well as recording artists Pink, Sean Paul, Simple Plan, Our Lady Peace, Johnny Lang, Seal and Shawn Colvin. Find him online at www.mixland.ca.



Tips For A Great Show

by Jim Yakabuski

Don't Shout Before You Speak

The lights go down. The dry ice creeps over the front of the stage. The crowd is frantic as a low rumble builds and builds until the ceiling tiles are falling out of the roof and people are ready to run from the building. Just as you think you can't take it any more, the rumble builds to a deafening, throbbing crescendo and then is abruptly cut off by blinding light and a band on stage that sounds as if it is playing through a transistor radio.

Sound familiar? Hey, it has happened to me. The darned intro tape can kill you every time. And why is it that bands always want to use something that has 4 Hz in it to open the show? Go figure.

The problem that causes this discrepancy in level is usually SPL reference. During the afternoon when you soundchecked the band in an empty room the volume of the intro tape seemed quite substantial. But after an opening act and the roar of the audience as the house lights go off, you find yourself pushing the level of that intro tape higher and higher, leaving the band to come out sounding less than impressive.

You need to establish the maximum level that the intro "rumble" DAT can go before it upstages your band's first song power level, and not be freaked out if it doesn't sound loud enough as it's rolling. It's better to start out with the intro sounding a bit low and the band sounding a little loud than the other way around. I refuse to let all the frequency bands through when this type of tape is handed to me. If the bottom end of the band doesn't usually live in the 30-40 Hz region for most of the show, then I'm going to high-pass my DAT intro tape to at least 40 or 50 Hz. You want the audience to remember the first note the band plays with an overwhelmed feeling, so let it be good and powerful. Don't let a silly tape that was produced and mixed at Skywalker Ranch give your sub-bass speakers too much of a workout before the real deal comes on stage. Save the best for last and lighten up on intro overload.

Stop The Bleeding

This is one of those things that hopefully only happens to you once in your audio lifetime, and if it does happen, you hope that it does so during a soundcheck and not during the show.

To communicate to the stage throughout the day, and to speak to the artist during soundcheck, we set up a 'talkback' mic that is routed through the snake to the monitor board so that the Front of House guy can have his voice magically appear in the monitors on stage. This useful process can considerably extend the life of a Front of House mixer's vocal cords, as he or



she doesn't have to yell 100 feet to the stage all day long. The danger of having this mic is that if you happen to leave it on while you have the PA roaring away, there will be a ton of bleed back to the monitors and the monitor guy will begin pulling his hair out trying to find the root of the problem. This really is more of a warning to the monitor engineers out there, but the fault lies with the Front of House mixer. We all hate having our talkback mics shut off by the monitor guy because we are then forced to scream loud enough for someone to turn it back on. Therefore, we must be responsible enough to turn our talkback mics off out front so that the monitor guy can safely leave it turned on up there on stage.

The simplest solution is to get a mic with an on/off switch and always have it in the off position when you aren't speaking to the stage. One simple rule of thumb that ensures that the show will not have this problem is unplugging the talkback completely from the mic cable before the show starts. The monitor guy should always have the talkback channel muted once the show begins, but this is an extra safety measure to ensure the front-of-house mix does not find its way back on stage.

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

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Publishing Agreements: An Overview

by Paul Sanderson

There are many publishing agreements which songwriters may enter into throughout the course of their career. Five key publishing agreements are briefly discussed below.

I. Co-Publishing Agreement: This is the most common type of publishing agreement currently entered into. Under this agreement, 50 per cent of the musical copyrights are retained by the songwriter/co-publisher and the other 50 per cent is acquired by the administrator co-publisher. Net revenue under this agreement is typically divided as follows: 75 per cent to the songwriter/co-publisher and 25 per cent to the administrative publisher. This type of agreement is typically signed by a recording artist/songwriter who has a recording agreement or by a publisher seeking to develop a songwriter who is also a potential recording artist. Advances paid to acquire the administrative co-publisher's share of musical copyrights under this agreement vary with the songwriter's bargaining power and the status of the record company making the offer.

II. Single Song Publishing Agreement: This is a publishing agreement for one song. Under this agreement the songwriter is typically entitled to 50 per cent of the net income and the publisher is entitled to the other 50 per cent, but the publisher owns 100 per cent of the copyright to the song. This is what is still referred to as a "standard" publishing agreement. However, single song agreements can also be co-publishing agreements. See above.

These types of agreements are entered into, for example, when a songwriter has co-written with a recording artist and the publisher seeks to acquire the rights to publish that song or portion thereof which the songwriter owns or where a publisher acquires copyright to a single song for the purposes of obtaining a cover version. In the latter case, a stipulated time frame, for example, 12 months is often afforded to the publisher in order to obtain a cover version of this song.

Depending on the applicable facts, either a minimal or substantial advance is paid. Often little or no advance is paid to the songwriter when a publisher acquires the copyright for purposes of acquiring a third party cover version, but the advantage

of this arrangement is that a songwriter can begin a career without signing away all future copyrights. In this regard, a single song agreement can be a way to begin to establish a working relationship between a songwriter and a publisher.

III. Administration Agreement: Under this agreement, typically the only right that is transferred to the publisher is the right to administer the copyrights to a song or catalogue of songs, all other copyrights typically remain with the songwriter/publisher. These agreements are often suitable for established writers who have a catalogue of songs that earn significant income. These agreements are typically entered into for a three-year time period for a standard range of fees: from 10-15 per cent of gross income, although such fees can vary depending on the status of the catalogue or the single song that is to be administered.

Typically, there is no advance paid, however, if it is an international hit song, which has generated significant income is to be administered, then an advance may be payable depending on negotiations. If this agreement is not entered into with a major publisher with affiliates in foreign territories, then the administrator publisher should have a network of sub-publishers to effectively collect income in order to collect in foreign territories.

IV. Sub-Publishing Agreement: This agreement acts as an administrative type of agreement typically in a foreign territory, although there are usually a wide range of rights transferred under this agreement, for example, the right of the sub-publisher to enter into synchronization licences and mechanical licences in a defined territory for the musical copyrights being sub-published. Sub-Publishers can often be more effective in a foreign territory than publishers from the domestic territory because they are more familiar with the music industry in their own territory and are better able to promote individual songs, song catalogues, collect mechanical royalties and obtain cover versions and place songs for film and TV uses. Typical sub-publisher fees range between 15 and 25 per cent of the gross income in the territory.

V. Participation Agreement: This agreement is an agreement whereby copyrights are held by the original publisher/songwriter, but a negotiated percentage of income, for



example, up to 50 per cent of the publishing share of income, accrues to a third party. This agreement may be entered into under various "tied" record deals, whereby the record company also owns the songwriter's/recording artist's publishing or in situations where there is an investor who invests money in a songwriter's career and is to participate in specified income sources, such as the songwriter's publishing income. Such agreements are also sometimes used to induce a successful recording artist to record a songwriter's song. The right to participate in income should be contingent, in this case, upon commercial release of a particular song.

There are many negotiable aspects to the agreements outlined above and in any specific situation, skilled legal advice should be sought. At each specific point in one's career, an offer should be examined carefully with respect to the career aspirations and facts of each case and the various business and legal implications which are relevant to each agreement. For more detailed information concerning the agreements outlined above, you can also consult *Musicians and The Law in Canada, Third Edition*, edited by Paul Sanderson, published by Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing.

Paul Sanderson has been in private practice since 1983 and is currently with the firm, Sanderson Entertainment Law, which specializes in representing clients in the music industry. He can be reached at info@sandersonlaw.ca or www.sandersonlaw.ca.

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TreeWorks ZenTree

TreeWorks Chimes has recently made a twist on their standard percussion chimes with the introduction of the new ZenTree. Instead of featuring the ordinary tuning with a gradual change in pitch from bar to bar, ZenTree is double-row chime with tiered or stair-stepped groups of chimes. This design creates a "soothing" and "mystic" sound with a tension and released when played from high to low.

The bars are made of aluminum and titanium alloy and are polished and T-6 tempered for tone. Each bar is individually hand-tied with 50-pound braided CordLoc, as opposed to the insufficient plastic ties. The mantle is hand-finished Tennessee Black Walnut.

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

Mountain Rythm Custom Series Drumset

Makers of handmade hand drums, Mountain Rythm, have recently released a new drumset unlike any other, the Mountain Rythm Custom Series Drumset. This drumset comes with three ashiko style tom toms that can be played with hands, sticks, brushes or mallets, giving drummers a unique sound. The 18" bass drum gives a fine jazz bass drum sound while a sensitive, yet powerful sound comes from the snare drum. The snare drum is a combination of a hand drum with a traditional bottom head. Each drum features Mountain Rythm's Simple Twist tuning system for fast tuning changes during performances.

Each drum in this set has Maple shells, a two stage natural finish and natural goatskin heads. The toms are 10" and 12", the floor tom is 14", the bass drum is 18 x 16" and the hand drum snare is 14 x 8". The set includes the bass drum stand but not the cymbals or cymbal stands.

Frankie "Kash" Waddy, drummer for James Brown, George Clinton, P-Funk and Bootsyz's Rubber Band, comments, "I take pride in my connection to my family at Mountain Rythm. Their dedication to building great drums and new percussive sounds means a great deal to me. A young company with a new approach, yet old true values."

For more information, contact: Mountain Rythm, PO Box 1356, Lakefield, ON K0L 2H0 (905) 764-6543, drums@mountainrythm.com, www.mountainrythm.com.

Jimi Hendrix Gig Bags & Straps



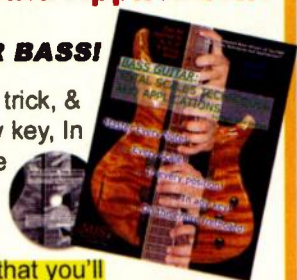
Levy's Leathers has recently released new gig bags and guitar straps featuring legendary guitarist, Jimi Hendrix' signature, image and style. The electric guitar gig bags are made of polyester and come with 3/4" foam padding, headliner lining, a manuscript sleeve, an accessory pocket on the back and dual rubber padded backpack shoulder straps. There are eight different psychedelic designs available. The guitar straps are 2" wide and made of polyester. There are also eight different designs with Hendrix' signature, image and colourful style.

For more information, contact: Levy's Leathers Ltd., 190 Disraeli Freeway, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2Z4 (204) 957-5139, FAX (204) 943-6655, levys@levysleathers.com, www.levysleathers.com.

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Sound And Recording: An Introduction

Focal Press has recently released the 5th Edition of *Sound And Recording: An Introduction*, written by Francis Rumsey and Tim McCormick. This text is a great learning tool for audio students, trainee engineers and anyone interested in audio, sound and recording.

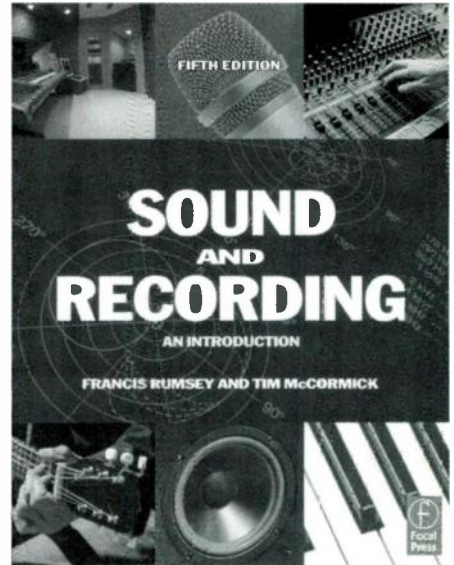
Sound And Recording: An Introduction provides an introduction to sound and recording with clear illustrations that cover the latest digital audio technology, such as MP3s, networking and file formats, as well as surround sound systems and techniques. The Fact Files section gives key points of information on the areas covered.

The sections include a Fact File Directory, Prefaces to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Editions, a Glossary of terms, Appendix 1: "Understanding basic equipment specifications", Appendix 2: "Record players", General further reading and an Index. The chapters include "What is sound?", "Auditory perception", "Microphones", "Loudspeakers", "Mixers", "Analogue recording", "Noise reduction", "Digital audio principles", "Digital recording and editing systems", "Digital audio applications", "Power amplifiers", "Lines and interconnection", "Outboard equipment", "MIDI and synthetic audio control", "Timecode and synchronization", "Two-channel stereo" and "Surround sound".

Professor of Sound Recording at the University of Surrey, UK, Rumsey, has also been a Visiting Professor at the School of Music in Pitea, Sweden. He is a member of the Audio Engineering Society (AES) and writes for the AES Journal. He is also the author of *Desktop Audio Technology* and co-author of *The Digital Interface Handbook*.

Former Deputy Head of South at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, UK, McCormick worked for many years in audio electronics and theatre sound. He currently works in the sound department of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

For more information, contact: Focal Press an imprint of Elsevier, 30 Corporate Dr., #400, Burlington, MA 01803 (781) 221-2212, FAX (781) 221-1615, usbkinfo@elsevier.com, www.elsevier.com.



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Moog Music VX-352 & Voyager Editor Librarian Version 1.2

Designer and manufacturer of electronic musical instruments, Moog Music, has recently released a Rack-mount Edition Voyager CV expander, the VX-352, and version 1.2 of Moog's Voyager Editor Librarian.

The new rackmount CV expander, VX-352, allows the RME Voyager to almost equal the full modular synthesizing of the Minimoog Voyager. It connects to the RME Voyager's accessory port and houses 13 CV inputs including Rate inputs for both the Envelope and LFO. It includes two 4-way mults and two attenuators.

The Moog Voyager Editor Librarian version 1.2 includes updates on the Bank management and Patch Librarian features. It eliminates the current drag and drop of single presets from the User Bank to the library, and allows users to select multiple presets and move multiple programs to and from User Bank to Librarian to Category.

For more information, contact: SF Marketing Inc., 325, Boul. Bouchard, Dorval, PQ H9S 1A9 (514) 780-2070, FAX (514) 780-2111, info@sfm.ca, www.sfm.ca.

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Allen & Heath has recently released a new DJ mixer/controller that features a multi-channel USB soundcard and MIDI control surface, the Xone:3D. The mixer section of the Xone:3D features four stereo channels, 3-band EQ, two stereo returns, VCF filters, assignable LFO, two FX sends and a VCA crossfader. The USB soundcard has eight channels that use 24-bit stereo converters and have an audio sampling rate of 48 kHz. The USB soundcard can be fed from the main mix, FX1 or direct from the channels and features a SPDIF optical and coaxial interface. The USB connection can send and receive audio and MIDI data to and from the PC.

On both sides of the mixer there are MIDI control sections that provide a total of eight control faders, 16 rotary controls with centre detent, 10 encoders, 50 switches and two jog wheels with micro switches that can be used as navigation controls for software such as Ableton Live and Traktor. Ableton created a Live Lite 5 Allen & Heath Edition of its software that will be bundled with the 3D. Custom overlays for the MIDI control sections will also be bundled with the mixer.

The Xone:3D can send a total of 105 MIDI control messages to the 3D's MIDI out socket and the USB interface to the PC. The MIDI clock can be synchronized with the main mix or FX2 mix buss via the automatic beat detector. Or it can be disabled to allow the beat to be manually tapped-in.

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



Gibson Jimi Hendrix Psychedelic Flying V



The Gibson Custom Shop has recently launched a new series of limited-edition custom guitars, "Inspired By", which recreates the guitars that belonged to some of the most innovative guitarists. The Jimi Hendrix Psychedelic Flying V is one of these.

Originally purchased in 1967, Hendrix used it on tour in Europe in 1967 and 1968. It features swirling, psychedelic designs on the top and sides that instantly take you back to the late '60s. Hendrix painted the original in what appears to be nail polish, so the remakes were reproduced with the same sense of depth and texture. More unique guitars inspired by legendary artists are still to come.

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



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

hot gear



Conn-Selmer Holton Collegiate

Manufacturer of band and orchestral instruments and accessories, Conn-Selmer, has recently released the updated version of the Holton *Collegiate* line of wind instruments.

Originally developed in the early 1930s by Frank Holton, the line was aimed at schools at an affordable price. That aim is the same today with a baritone horn, two euphoniums and two tubas.

The B470R is a three-valve B \flat baritone horn with a .563" bore; a euphonium with a .571" bore is available with three valves, B480R or four valves, B490R; the BB450 is a $\frac{3}{4}$ size three-valve tuba with a .669" bore and the BB460 is a full size, four valve BB \flat tuba with a .728" bore. Each model is available in either clear lacquer or bright silver plate and feature nickel silver pistons and top-valve construction. Each model also comes with a Holton mouthpiece and a durable plastic case.

For more information, contact: Musicare Inc., 4534 Anderson Rd., Carlsbad Springs, ON K0A 1K0 (800) 361-3323, FAX (800) 825-7750, sales@musicare.com, www.musicare.com.

Electro-Harmonix Metal Muff



Electro-Harmonix has recently released a new pedal that will have metal heads crawling for the muff, that is the Metal Muff.

The Metal Muff uses three powerful EQ bands that include a midrange control for contouring your unique sound. With this heavy metal pedal you can command bass with user-controlled distortion from pinched-edge to crushing sounds. It features a buffered Bypass and by rolling back the Distortion knob you'll get the warm and organic tones of a slightly torn speaker.

The other control knobs include Bass for a tight bottom end; Midrange for the ability to sculpt your midrange punch; Treble to produce a sizzling top end; Top Boost to dial in ultra high bite frequencies for solos and Output volume, which features a full +18dB of gain. All controls were designed to work together for maximum drive and a powerful, creamy distortion.

For more information, contact: Electro-Harmonix, 32-33 47th Ave., Long Island City, NY 11101 (718) 937-8300, FAX (718) 937-9111, info@ehx.com, www.ehx.com.



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Bass Guitar Instructional Book



MJS Music Publications has recently announced the release of an updated version of the book *Bass Guitar: Total Scales Techniques and Applications*. "The original version of the book gave you every position on the fretboard, in every key, and all the ways to use them, but there were two or three techniques we had left out. This new version thoroughly covers slapping and popping, as well as picking and finger picking," explains Mark Strunal, author of the book. "There are also a lot more ideas offered for writing bass lines and playing bass line harmonies and chords."

For more product information, contact: MJS Publications, 611 NE 5th Terrace, #3, Crystal River, FL 34428 (352) 563-1179, FAX (352) 795-1658, www.mjspublications.com.

Godlyke Deity- 10 Bass

Godlyke has recently released a new bass guitar for the adventurous player, the Deity 10-String Bass. The Deity-10 features a light-gauge 5-string arrangement tuned B to G with matching octave strings. The thunderous bass provides an extended frequency range with a punchy bottom and ringing sustained harmonics. It is handcrafted and no CNC tooling is used in the production process.

The Deity-10's body is two-piece made of Ash body with a 3A Flame Maple Cap. The Maple neck is set into the body with a dovetail joint and it has 24 frets on an Ebony fingerboard with brass nut. It features two custom-wound humbucking soapbar pickups and an 18-volt active electronics system, including volume, blend, bass, mid and treble controls. The internal system features notch filter and pickup input volume controls. The Gotoh machine heads and adjustable bridge are gold-plated.

The bass is available in natural, trans black, trans blue, trans red, honeyburst, tobaccoburst, cherryburst and amber finishes. Wood cap options include Walnut, Macassar Ebony, 5A flame Maple and 5A quilt Maple. It is available as a fretless or left-handed model as well.

For more information, contact: Godlyke Distributing Inc., 46 Marlboro Rd., Clifton, NJ 07012 (973) 777-7477, FAX (973) 777-7078, info@godlyke.com, www.godlyke.com.

Roland CY-5 Dual-Trigger Cymbal Pad

Designer, manufacturer and distributor of electronic musical instruments, professional audio equipment, multimedia products and music accessories, Roland Canada, has recently released a new cymbal pad, the CY-5 Dual-Trigger Cymbal Pad.

The new CY-5 resembles a real cymbal and offers a "swinging" motion, separate bow/edge triggering and choke capabilities. This pad can function as a hi-hat, crash or ride cymbal and makes a great addition to the V-Drums line.

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

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Behringer Eurogrand EG8080

Behringer has recently released a new affordable digital piano of which they received specifications from concert pianists, church musicians and piano teachers, the Eurogrand EG8080.

The Eurogrand EG8080 resembles the sound, touch and feel of an acoustic concert grand piano and features an 88-key, weighted hammer-action keyboard. It also has 14 authentic instrument sounds, 80 W of stereo power and a 2-track sequencer for rehearsing. The wooden cabinet is hand-polished in a black lacquer finish to look and feel like the real thing at an affordable price.

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Luna Guitars Henna Paradise



Luna Guitars has recently released an acoustic guitar that pays tribute to one of the world's oldest known art forms, henna, with the Henna Paradise C and S models.

UK artist, Alex Morgan, created the henna design on these models. He says, "The pattern I chose for Luna's Henna guitar is based on the art of Medieval Spain. This culturally rich and diverse period is the only one in which henna was grown and used as a cosmetic in Europe. Coincidentally, the era also was historically important in the development and growing popularity of the guitar."

The henna design is laser-etched on the front, back and headstock. Each acoustic features a petite neck profile, clear matte finish, matte nickel die cast tuners with mother-of-pearl buttons and a 4-band preamp with built-in tuner and low z output. The

construction is a folk style cutaway body with Maple/Rosewood binding. The Rosewood fingerboard is 25 1/2" in scale length with 1 5/8" nut width on a Maple neck. The Henna Paradise C model features a solid Cedar top and Mahogany back, sides and headstock plate. The Paradise S acoustic features a solid Spruce top and quilted Maple back, sides and headstock plate. Each model features Luna Guitar's signature accents such as the mother-of-pearl crescent moon logo on the headstock, mother-of-pearl moon phase fretboard markers and the Luna Rosewood bridge.

For more information, contact: Luna Guitars, 4924 West Waters Ave., Tampa, FL 33634 (813) 600-3920, Toll-free (800) 793-5273, FAX (813) 600-3933, askus@lunaguitars.com, www.lunaguitars.com.

Pioneer CDJ-1000MK3 & CDJ-800MK2 Turntables

Pioneer Electronics has recently released two new high-end digital turntables that give more control to DJs, the CDJ-1000MK3 and CDJ-800MK2.

Features that both the CDJ-1000MK3 and CDJ-800MK2 include are the jog feel adjustments, hot looping/re-looping, improved track and WAVE data display and MP3 compressed audio playback. Both turntables were designed to provide a better feel, precision and performance and to feel as close to a vinyl turntable as possible with digital benefits.

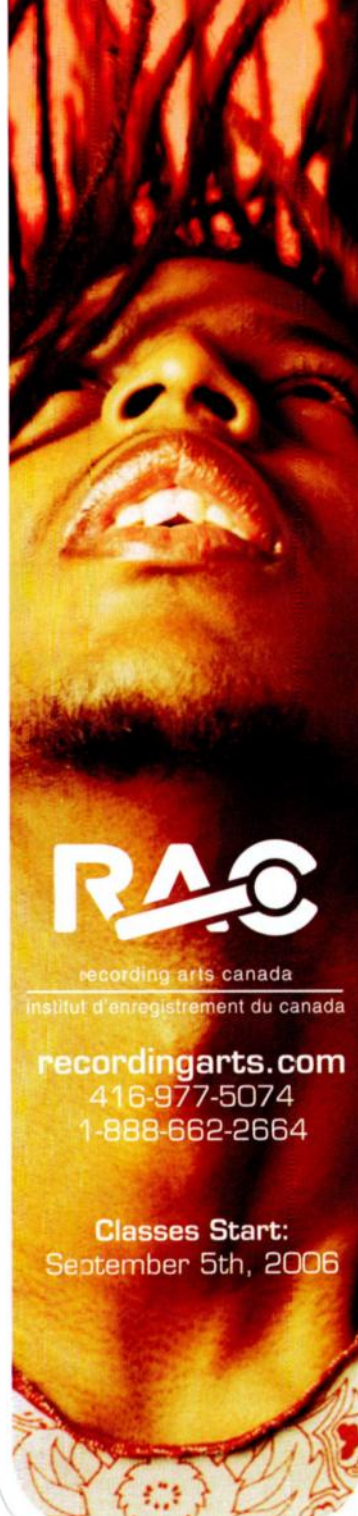
Club owners and DJs will enjoy the polished look and layout of the CDJ-1000MK3. Its new features make it easier to transport, cue, loop, scratch and stretch music tracks. The MP3 capability allows this turntable to play MP3 and VBR files, and use a folder search button. The jog wheel allows the DJ to adjust the resistance of the non-slip metallic jog wheel to meet their style. It also provides a wide tempo range. The multicolour fluorescent display on the wheel provides a bright, fluorescent display and large cue marker and angle marks make it easy for the DJ to

time their effects. The display area was also doubled in resolution to display WAVE data and playing details. The hot loop/hot cue button is one button that performs hot loop and hot cue storage and holds up to three loops per track. The resume play feature starts the disc at the same time that it was ejected and the gold RCA connectors ensure sonic purity as they minimize audio signal resistance.

The same key design features are included on the CDJ-800MK2, except for its silver metallic finish and metallic buttons. This turntable also has MP3 capability with folder search and text mode for quick access. It also features the jog wheel and resume play features. The track data display feature tracks information through a higher resolution and the auto beat loop creates a 1/8th beat loop with a new auto beat loop command.

For more information, contact: SF Marketing Inc., 325, boul. Bouchard, Dorval, PQ H9S 1A9 (514) 780-2070, FAX (514) 780-2111, info@sfm.ca, www.sfm.ca.

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by Karen Bliss

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Nick-e

Who: Nick-e
Where: Toronto, ON
What: sultry stuff
Contact: www.nickeonline.com

In the "thank you" section of her debut EP, *Mosaic*, Toronto soul singer Nick-e declares, "Wow! It's finally here. It's been a four-year labour of love, hate and all that good stuff rolled into one." So what did she roll in this six-song collection recorded mostly at Toronto's Kitchen Sync Digital Audio? Well, the first two songs are simply sultry. The title track, which is reminiscent of a less jazzy Sade, features piano and cello, then "It Feels Good" puts some snap (quite literally) into the smooth vibe. One can tell Nick-e, whose real name is Nicole Pratt, can sing – she's been doing it since the age of three – but one really wants her to bust out and show that she can roar. Instead, the next song, "Numb", is totally leftfield, a menacing, mostly programmed track on which she delivers a trip-of-the-tongue vocal. Then, she gets jazzy on "I Say" and "If You Were Here" – employing real instruments such as horns, congas, and upright bass before – ending with the moody electronic-based "Turn Me Around". Nick-e, who won the Mark Caporal Songwriting Award and Great Big Music Studio's best vocal performance award while studying recorded music production at London, ON's Fanshawe College, produced the EP herself.



Alysha Brooke

Who: Alysha Brooke
Where: Rockwood, ON
What: country bumpkin
Contact: Cedar Trail Music, P.O. Box 1139, TDC Postal Station, 77 King St. W., Toronto, ON M5K 1P2 www.alyshabrooke.com, www.cedartrailmusic.com

I Talk Country is the second release from this 19-year-old singer. Her first, the six-song *Nuthin' But A Chevy*, was self-produced and self-financed, but this is the first for indie label Cedar Trail Music, whose owner, Mike Belobradic, wrote almost all the songs and co-produced them with Sally Bridgman at Escarpment Sound Studios in Acton, ON. The album's lead/title-track kicks off with fiddle, demonstrating off the bat the kind of country Brooke prefers – traditional, fun and hayseed. The lyric tells of a young girl who denounces her prim and proper upbringing for the redneck dialect. "I used to speak correctly when I was still in school... Now I talk country," she sings. "Country Bumpkin Blues" is another playful pride-filled story about her "old-fashioned double dose of country charm." This determined young woman, who plays guitar and co-wrote several songs on the album, also wrote one by herself, "Cheated," which brings a bit of blues and rock 'n' roll into her steadfast country talkin'. Brooke performs everywhere from clubs to rodeos, fairs to racetracks, and has sung the Canadian and American National anthems at the Dodge Rodeo Tour and the Breeders Cup. It will be interesting to see if she chooses to go the Shania/Faith direction as she gets older.



Photo by M. Belobradic

Sonic City

Who: Sonic City
Where: Surrey, BC
What: kid rocks
Contact: Pinnacle Management, Darren Minisofer, (306) 341-0222, FAX (306) 665-7477, Darren@backstageconcerts.com, www.soniccityband.com

Just 13 years old, guitarist Danny Sveinson has been performing steadily since he was nine, even sitting in with the legendary Les Paul at the Iridium Jazz Club in New York. Now, this kid, influenced by everyone from Jimi Hendrix to Alex Lifeson, is the centre of the rock band Sonic City. Fronted by Rod Burn (the main songwriter) and rounded out by bassist James Green and drummer Dean Richards, the band's self-titled full-length debut opens with the straight-up classic rock of "So Far Away" and followed by the raw "If You Were Me" which has more punk attitude. They are two of the best cuts on the album. The power ballad, "Stay With Me", is filled with cringe-worthy clichés. Sveinson wrote or co-wrote four of the 10 songs, including the rock instrumental "Turbo". Ed Stasium (Living Colour, The Ramones, Jeff Healey Band, The Pursuit Of Happiness) produced and engineered three of the songs ("Stomp", "Turbo" and "Soul Cold Rage"); Doug Naugler did the rest, except for "Not A Love Song", which the band co-produced with David Hayes. While there are some songs on here that could work at rock radio, really the album makes you wanna see this kid tear it up live. The band has been touring Canada, most recently opening out west for Jeff Martin.



Toronto music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian correspondent for *RollingStone.com*, and operates her own Canadian music news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/Music/Lowdown/>. In addition, she writes for *Gasoline*, *Teen Tribute*, *Words & Music*, *Access*, and others. She has also published an anti-racism children's picture book, *The Girl With Pinhead Parents*, available at chapters.indigo.ca and amazon.com.

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