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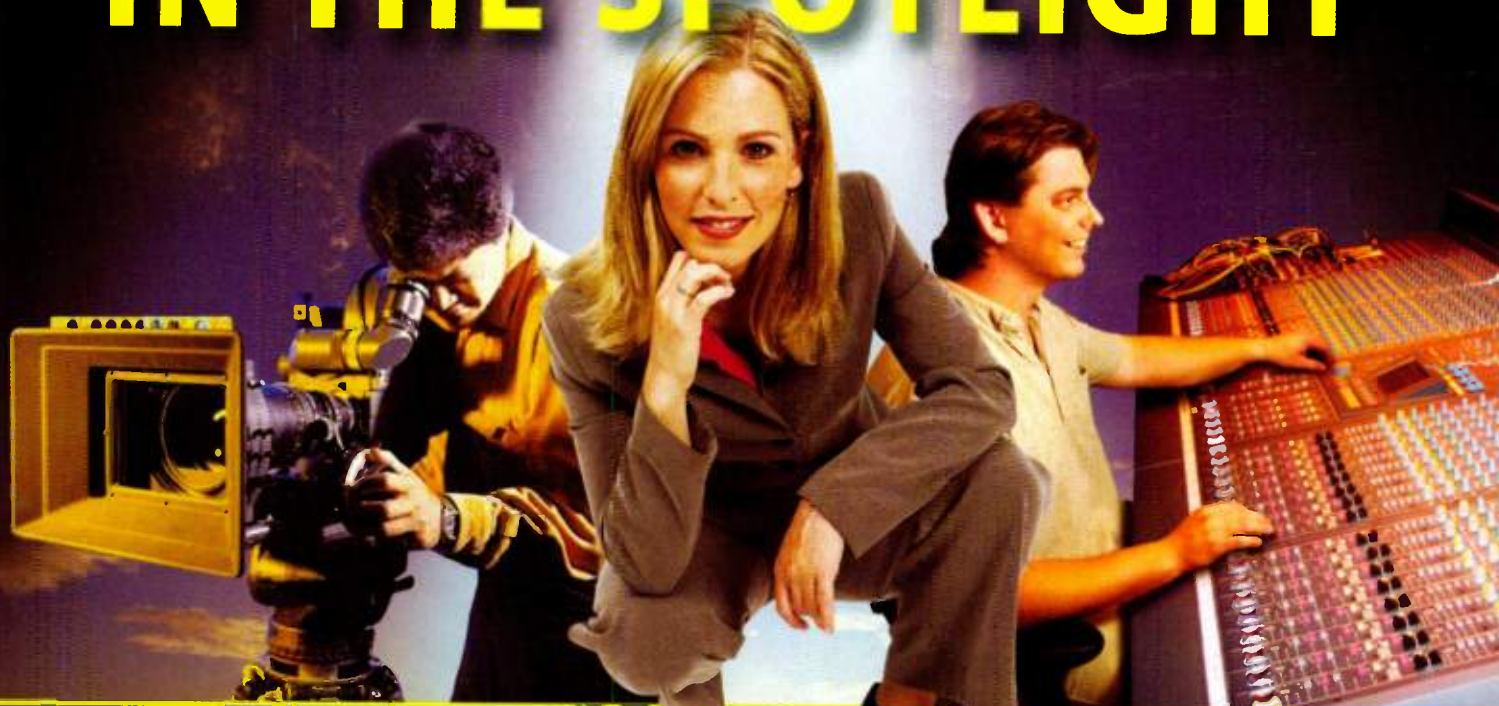


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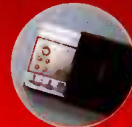


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Canadian Thing

Wow! My thanks go out to you for the gift that showed up in my mailbox on Friday; Volume XXIX No.2 of *Canadian Musician*. You may remember I was trying to find your magazine in my area and nobody was selling it. Especially odd to me was that the two music stores I checked don't sell ANY magazines. I guess they don't want the walk-in traffic this obviously brings.

I've been reading through it and I have to compliment you for the depth of the material presented in the magazine. It is refreshing to see things written from this perspective. I subscribe to *Guitar Player* and they tend to slant things in the direction assuming the reader already knows everything (in many cases), or is completely non-technical (in many other cases). Maybe it's a Canadian thing...

Thanks again,
Chris Czech
Designer/Builder of Swampdonkey Guitar Amplifiers
(www.swampdonkeyamps.com)

Ed. Please let us know if we can help make CM more available to you.

Thanks!

Incredible mag! As a singer/songwriter I find the contents really helpful! Thanks!
Morgan Weeks
Golden Lake, ON

Not There Yet

Paul Lau's article "Modelling 101" (Mar/Apr'07) is very well researched and insightful. The problem with this technology is the planned-obsolescence factor. Digital is a work-in-progress.

Today it's hot – in a few weeks, it is old news. Many early adopters of cutting edge tools (including yours truly) can regale you with tales of wasted cash, failure of the gear to deliver the promised goodies, and its ultimate sudden orphanage by the manufacturers.

No modelled gear can emulate the famous Marshall roar, nor the Boogie crunch, nor the delicacy and the

sheer power of a Bosendorfer piano. We've already tried all that with sampling and it fell short. This is just a higher-tech continuation of that. Sometimes people trying to re-invent the wheel may end up with a square one.

Personally, I don't think models can replace the real thing, and they shouldn't. It is simply another tonal tool, among many others, for the musically creative types.

Simon King
Leo Project/Techwerks
Edmonton, AB

Ed. Time will tell. Modelling technology certainly has the convenience factor going for it.

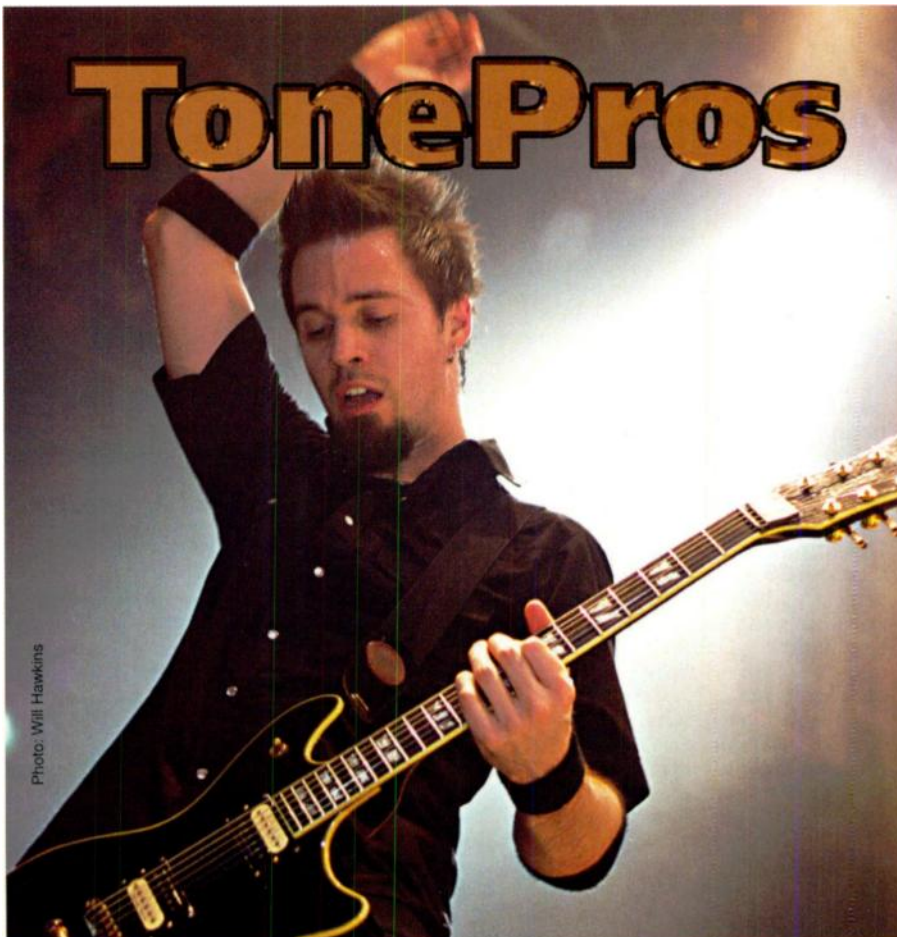


Photo: Will Hawkins

Jerry Horton of Papa Roach.

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Music Associations Part I

Why Should You Be A Part Of One?

by Katie VanSlack

There are many different associations that have been developed to educate, assist, and protect the working musician. Without a doubt there are more being developed today. Here is the tip of the iceberg with a look at two associations: American Federation of Musicians (AFM) and Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS).

The AFM is a member-driven organization that represents all genres of music and offers many services. It negotiates national and international agreements with major record labels, movie producers, jingle houses, broadcasters, theatres, symphonies, etc. It also ensures that the proper fees and conditions are met and provides benefits such as a pension.

The AFM acts as a collective society to coordinate royalty payments to musicians and creators under the Neighbouring Rights Collective Canada (NRCC). "We are also involved in the Private Copying Levy, and were largely responsible for Provincial Status of the Artist Legislation in Quebec," says Alan Willaert, International Representative for AFM. The organization also provides protection in its contract, which includes free legal fees in the event of a default, and emergency travel assistance in the form of on-site assistance and cash advances. Working musicians also benefit from the P-2 visa, allowing them to work legally in the US for up to a year.



Alan Willaert, International Representative for AFM.

Other benefits include liability and medical insurance, an affinity MasterCard, and the AFM's and Employers' Welfare Fund (Canada), which is a defined-benefit plan that is entirely employer funded, providing a safety net when the music stops.

What is the responsibility of a member? Willaert says, "AFM membership is an axiom, whereby every service or benefit has a corresponding duty or obligation. That may sound onerous, but what it really means is that in order to receive the benefits of membership, you must also act as a member." He gives the example that if a musician is performing in the US then they must provide the contract and application in a timely manner. And there are also by-laws that outline the expected attitude and professionalism of a musician.

Members are also encouraged to attend meetings to better understand all of the services and benefits available, and also why the system is set up like it is. Willaert says that musicians will also learn, "why they should use our contracts and agreements, what revenue streams are available to them when they broadcast or record, what their rights are under copyright, and how to access the many services, which are unique to a union/association that has been in existence for 112 years." To sign up for the AFM, contact the local office in your area, which can be found on www.afm.org. An application is filled out, along with the appointment and authorization forms to allow AFM to collect royalties on your behalf. The average membership fee per year is \$150.

CARAS members determine the winners of the 17 Juno Awards categories by nominating, voting, and participating in the annual process. "We rely on every one of our members to participate in the voting process for the Juno Awards," says Brenna Krought, Senior Project Coordinator & Membership Services for CARAS. "And by joining an organization whose mandate is to promote and showcase Canadian musicians, you are ensuring Canada's premier award show remains a truly industry-driven organization."

In addition to the helpful newsletters, CARAS members also receive discounts on Juno Award submissions and Juno weekend industry events. Krought says that any artist can submit his/herself for a Juno Award as long as the album falls within the proper release dates and the artist is Canadian. Krought adds that one of the best ways to benefit from the organization is by submitting for a



Brenna Krought, Senior Project Coordinator & Membership Services for CARAS.

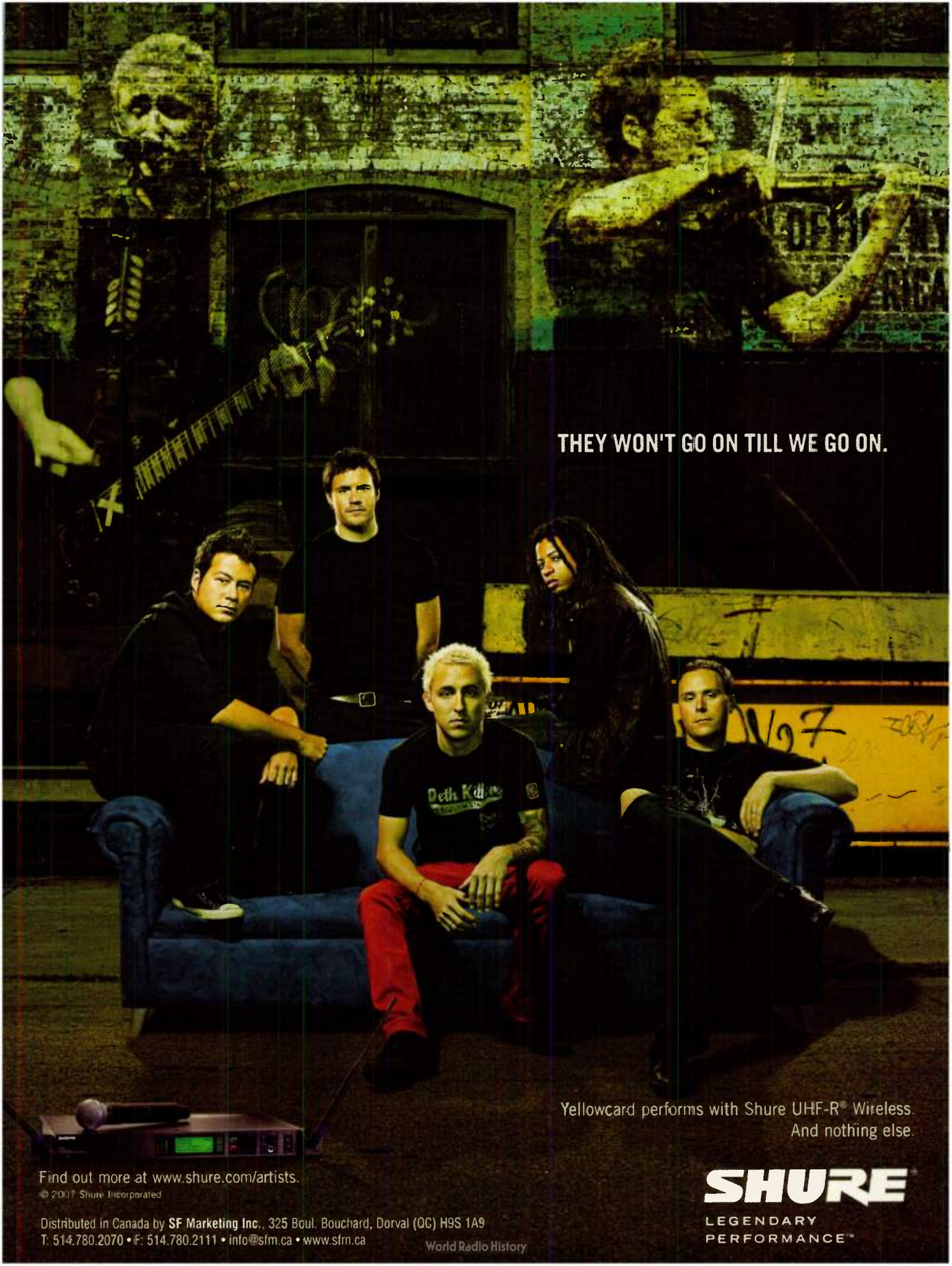
Juno Award. "Each genre of music gets reviewed by our Music Advisory Committee, which is compiled of industry professionals. Once the product is reviewed by the committee it is then sent to a panel of 10 industry professionals representing each region of Canada. Just by submitting your album you are ensuring your music is being heard."

And when it comes to the big event, members get the opportunity to purchase a Juno Awards ticket package, which includes the Juno Awards Welcome Reception, the Juno Gala Dinner & Awards, and preferred seating for the telecast of the Juno Awards. Discounted hotel rates are also given for the Juno Awards weekend.

Krought adds that independent artists can make their own submissions to be nominated; over 70 percent of Juno Award nominees are independent artists; only seven of the 39 categories require you to submit sales figures; and only 18 per cent of CARAS' membership is represented by Major Record Labels. Visit www.carasonline.ca for more info.

Be sure to pick up the July/August issue of *CM* to learn about two more associations: Songwriters Association of Canada (SAC); and Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN).

Katie VanSlack is Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician.

A photograph of the rock band Yellowcard. Five members are posed in a room with graffiti-covered walls. One member is sitting on a blue couch in the center, wearing a black t-shirt with 'Deth Kellow' and red pants. Two other members are sitting on the couch to his left and right. One member is standing behind the couch in the center. One member is standing to the right of the couch. The background features graffiti, including a large skull and a figure playing a guitar. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

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2007 CMW Winners Announced

Rogers Wireless Canadian Music Week (CMW) combines a trade expo, five awards shows, and Canada's largest new music festival. It was held from March 7-10, in Toronto. The winners for the 7th Annual Independent Music Awards (The Indies), Canadian Music Industry Awards, The Crystals, and the Canadian Radio Music Awards have been announced. Next year's show will take place from March 5-8, 2008.

Winners for The Indies include: XM Satellite Radio Favourite Group or Duo of the Year, Alexisonfire; Favourite Pop Artist/Group of the Year, Billy Klippert; Favourite Rock Artist/Group of the Year, The Trews; Favourite Jazz Artist/Group of the Year, Elizabeth Shepherd Trio; Favourite Blues Artist/Group of the Year, Trouble and Strife; Favourite World Artist/Group of the Year, Eccodek; Favourite Children's Artist/Group of the Year, Splash 'N' Boots; Favourite Urban Artist/Group of the Year, Cadence Weapon; InDiscover.net Favourite Artist/Band Website of the Year, Ember Swift; Favourite Single of the Year, Neverending White Lights, "The Grace"; Favourite Classical Artist/Group of the Year, Measha Brueggergosman; Favourite Folk/Roots Artist/Group of the Year, The Sadies; Favourite Country Artist/Group of the Year, Corb Lund; XM Satellite Radio Favourite Francophone Artist/Group of the Year, Malajube; Galaxie Rising Stars Award of the CBC, Tokyo Police Club "A Lesson in Crime (Paper Bag)"; Favourite International Artist/Group of the Year, Wolfmother; Favourite Video of the Year, City and Colour "Save Your Scissors"; Favourite International Album of the Year, Arctic Monkeys, "Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not"; Favourite Metal/Hardcore Artist/Group of the Year, Cancer Bats; Chart Magazine Favourite Album of the Year, Alexisonfire "Crisis"; Favourite Solo Artist of the Year, Feist; and Favourite Electronica Artist/Group of the Year, MSTRKRFT.

Winners of the Canadian Music Industry Awards include: Independent Record Store of the Year, Sam The Record Man, Toronto; Rack Jobber of the Year, CD Plus; Mass Merchant/Specialty Retailer of the Year, Best Buy/Future Shop; Retail Chain of the Year, HMV Canada; Recording Studio of the Year, Metalworks Recording & Mastering Studios, Mississauga; Canadian Independent Label of the Year, Maple Music; Distributor of the Year, KOCH Canada; Music Publisher of the Year, EMI Music Publishing; Major Label of the Year, Universal Music Canada; Music Director of the Year (secondary market), Paul Morris, CHTZ HTZ FM, St. Catharines; Music Director of the Year (major market), Kath Thompson, CKQB FM 106.9 The Bear, Ottawa; Program Director of the Year (secondary market), Gruff Gush-

nowski, CKLM The Goat 91.2, Lloydminster; Program Director of the Year (major market), Rob Farina, 104.5 CHUM FM, Toronto; On-Air Talent of the Year, Roger, Rick & Marilyn, 104.5 CHUM FM, Toronto; Station of the Year (secondary market), CHTZ FM 97.7 HTZ-FM, St. Catharines; Station of the Year (country), CKRY FM Country 105, Calgary; Station of the Year (CHR), CFBT FM The Beat 94.5, Vancouver; Station of the Year (mainstream AC), CHFI FM 98.1, Toronto; Station of the Year (rock), CFNY FM 102.1 The Edge, Toronto; Station of the Year (multicultural), CHIN AM 1540, Toronto; Station of the Year (news/talk/sports), CFTR 680 News, Toronto; "Massey Hall" Performing Arts Centre of the Year, Hummingbird Centre, Toronto; "Air Canada Centre" Major Facility of the Year, The Molson Amphitheatre, Toronto; Management Company of the Year, Netzwerk Management; Booking Agency of the Year, S.L. Feldman & Associates; Promoter of the Year, House Of Blues; Specialty Venue Of The Year, Niagara Fallsview Casino, Niagara Falls; Station of the Year (classic gold), CILQ FM Q107, Toronto; Station of the Year (hot A/C), 104.5 CHUM FM, Toronto; and Promotion of the Year, Derringer's Search for the Funniest Person With a Day Job, CILQ Q107, Toronto.

Winners of The Crystals include: Performance Category, Target Marketing & Communications For Maple Foods Ltd.; Public Service Announcement Category, Marketel For Quebec Coalition Against Aids; Station Promotion Category, The Beat Broadcasting Corporation For The Beat 94.5; Creative Use Of Sound/Music, Maclaren McCann For Science Alberta Foundation; Station Single, The Beat 91.5 For Family Fitness; Agency Single, DDB Canada For Vancouver Aquarium; Station Campaign, AM 740 For Brant Florist; Agency Campaign, Dory Advertising Ltd. For Sobeys; and Platinum Best In Show, Dory Advertising Ltd. For Sobeys.

Winners for the Canadian Radio Music Awards include: Best New Group or Solo Artist (mainstream A/C) of the Year, Tomi Swick "A Night Like This"; Best New Group (rock) of the Year, Neverending White Lights "The Grace"; Best New Solo Artist (rock) of the Year, City And Colour "Save Your Scissors"; Best New Group or Solo Artist (dance/urban/rhythmic) of the Year, George "Talk To Me"; Best New Group (CHR) of the Year, Mobile "Out Of My Head"; Best Solo Artist (hot A/C) of the Year, Tomi Swick "A Night Like This"; Best New Group (hot A/C) of the Year, Mobile "Out Of My Head"; Best New Solo Artist (CHR) of the Year, Rex Goudie "Run"; Fans' Choice Award, Daniel Powter; Chart Topper Award, Nickelback; and FACTOR Breakthrough Award, Sound Bluntz.

For more information, visit www.cmw.net.



Neverending White Lights



Tomi Swick



Rex Goudie



Global Songwriting Competition *Launched*

A new year-long global songwriting competition has recently been launched: the Internet Song of the Year.

The Grand Prize winner of the competition will receive \$100,000, a music publishing deal, and the possibility of a major record contract to the top winning songwriter. The 2nd place prize is \$50,000, \$25,000 for 3rd place, and \$5,000 for each in the 4th through 8th positions. This competition is open to everyone – just submit your song, a photo, your resume, and \$9.95 for the entry fee. Even if you don't win, this competition offers songwriters the opportunity to have their songs heard and promoted throughout the world.

Judges of the competition include Lamont Dozier, a songwriter in the US and a member of songwriting team Holland-Dozier-Holland. Dozier is a Grammy-winning recording artist and solo and collaborative songwriter. Engineer and producer Brooks Arthur is another judge who is known to be a multi-faceted professional. Arthur works independently as a record publisher, music supervisor, recording engineer, playwright, singer, and screenwriter. The next judge is Tony Orlando, recipient of three American Music Awards and a People's Choice Award. He has played for five Presidents and was awarded with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1990 for outstanding achievements in the entertainment industry.

Log on to www.internetsongoftheyear.com and submit your song before the Dec. 1, deadline. The winner will be announced on Jan. 1, 2008.



1st Montreal Guitar Show

Aficionados of acoustic, classical, archtop, and manouche guitars will flock to Montreal this July for the 1st Montreal Guitar Show, an event with 70 exhibitors dedicated to handcrafted guitars.

The show will run from July 6-8, at the Salon Alfred Rouleau of the Hyatt Regency Montreal. It will run as part of the Montreal Musician and Musical Instrument Show (MMMIS) and the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal.

Guitarists will have the opportunity to see, touch, try out, and purchase instruments at the show from luthiers of Canada, the US, South America, and Europe. The Montreal Guitar Show will set up private studios for attendees to try out the instruments. In addition to seeing upcoming stars, attendees will also enjoy a series of meeting sessions and free workshops. The show will run from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. daily.

For more information visit, www.montrealguitarshow.com.

Tundra Music, in association with *Canadian Musician*, presents the 15th Annual Vintage Guitar Show, set to be held on Saturday, June 2-Sunday, June 3.

The show will once again be held at the Thornhill Community Centre, located at 7755 Bayview Ave., Thornhill, ON. Stringed instruments of all types will be featured, including acoustics and electrics, old and new. Manufacturers, dealers, and collectors will be on hand to buy, sell, and trade gear. This is your opportunity to turn your unused instrument into cash. The show will be open from 1-7 p.m. on Saturday and from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are \$10 plus GST.

For more information, visit www.tundramusic.com.

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Bands, ensembles, and a variety of acts such as magicians, comedians, singers, and instrumentalists are welcome to submit a demo DVD of their talent to Oceanbound Entertainment. There is no fee to apply, but Oceanbound Entertainment will charge a percentage of the salary that is earned by acts on ships.

"Auditioning once for us will open the doors to all major cruise lines. We also act as a third party during salary negotiations and we can help the musician prepare a demo that will actually get accepted by the cruise lines," says Marco Kasel, President of Oceanbound Entertainment. "This is important since most of the entertainers either don't have demos prepared, don't know how to prepare them or have a demo that's not suitable for the jobs they're planning to apply for."

Because Oceanbound Entertainment works with all of the major cruise lines, they know immediately when jobs open up. They receive calls from the cruise lines requesting what kind of musicians and entertainers they need and Oceanbound Entertainment will select which talent is best suited for the job. "Musicians can let us know what their preferences are. Although it's not always possible to get them exactly what they want, it's always up to the musician to either take a job or wait for the next one to come along," says Kasel. He adds that musicians cannot play originals on ships as the entertainment needs to appeal to the crowd at large, therefore cruise lines only choose cover acts.

For more information visit, www.oceanbound.ca.



Chantal Montanaro, Talent Coordinator and Marco Kasel, President of Oceanbound Entertainment Inc.

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NXNE Approaches

The 2007 North By Northeast (NXNE) Music and Film Festival and Conference is coming up fast, set to be held from June 7-10, in Toronto.

Over 450 bands are set to play in over 30 music venues, playing everything from alternative, country, and electronic to goth and R&B. Over 2,000 delegates are expected to attend the NXNE Conference, which offers three days of panels, round tables, demo listening sessions, legal clinics, mentoring sessions, and more. It's the opportunity for anyone to learn more about the music business. The festival will also feature the NXNE Film Festival. It also offers a unique program of music related feature films, documentaries, and shorts.

For more information, visit www.nxne.com.

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2ND ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO DOMENIC TROIANO: WE ALL NEED LOVE

The 2nd annual tribute to Domenic Troiano: We All Need Love, has been announced to take place on Tuesday, May 29, at 7:30 p.m.



Domenic Troiano

Due to a quick sell out last year, organizers have arranged to move the event to the larger, restored Palais Royale Ballroom, which is located at 1601 Lakeshore Blvd., W., Toronto. Tickets are \$75, which includes a light barbecue. There will be a cash bar available. Profits will once again be donated to the Toronto East General Hospital's Minimally Invasive Surgery Program (MIS).

The lineup for this year's tribute are all legends of their day and are eager to perform their tribute to Troiano. The lineup includes: Brenda Russell, John Finlay & The Checkmates, Howard Aye, Sam Consiglio, Colina Phillips, Paul DeLong, Doug Riley, Bernie LaBarge, Jay Jackson, Roy Kenner, Shawne Jackson, Bill King, Prakash John, Liberty Silver, Ali Slight, Wayne St. John, Robbie Lane, Julian Troiano, Gregory Vitale, Sharon Lee Williams, Sherry St. Germain, Cal Dodd, and David McMorrow. John Donabie will once again emcee the event. Shawne Jackson-Troiano adds that there are also a few more surprises to come.

Contact Kristin Irish, 416-469-6580 ext.6866, kiris@tegh.on.ca for tickets.

Canadian Musician Transforms Website



Canadian Musician has recently redesigned its Internet home. Appropriately, the new site features a red and white theme throughout.

Improved navigation of the new site will ensure visitors find everything they're looking for much faster and easier. The Showcase section of the magazine that has also been published online in the past now features a search capability, RSS feeds, and archives dating as far back as 1996. Canadian Artist/Bands listings now also feature a search capability and RSS feeds. Submit your band by clicking "Submit Link" in the "Canadian Artists Listings" section.

Additional features include the ability for subscribers to change their mailing address directly online at their convenience. The site is also offering banner ad spots. Online and print advertisers can request a call at their convenience by clicking on the "Advertise" link at the top middle of the site. E-newsletters will also be sent to subscribers on a monthly basis. You can subscribe by clicking on the "Newsletter Subscribe" link on the left hand menu. The feedback form is there to accept reader comments on Canadian Musician articles, general music concerns, or to express your views and ideas for future issues.

For more information, contact: Canadian Musician magazine, 905-641-3471, FAX 905-641-1648, info@nor.com, www.canadianmusician.com.

19th Annual Beaches International Jazz Festival

The 19th Annual Beaches International Jazz Festival will be held from July 20-29, in Toronto.

The festival will once again present PartiGras from July 20-22, at the Historic Distillery District. From July 23-July 25, the TD Canada Trust Jazz Workshop and Lecture Series will take place at the Menonite New Life Centre. It will include

The Art of Jazz Improvisation with artists and classes TBA.

The Ovation of Jazz will be held on July 25, at the Balmy Beach Club. This is an annual gala that benefits the Toronto East General Hospital. Beaches Jazz StreetFest will run from July 26-28, from 7-11 p.m.

For more information, visit www.beachesjazz.com.

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TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival



Photo Credit: Don Vickerly

Anne Lalonde, Rep of The Regent Park School of Music, receives a cheque from Patrick Taylor, Executive Producer of the TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival, and Ross Porter, President and CEO of JAZZ.FM91.

Dates for the annual TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival have been set for June 22-July 1.

Over 350 concerts with 1,500 musicians will perform at various locations in Toronto. The festival offers free daytime concerts, and free daily Workshops and Talkbacks at the JAZZ.FM91 Broadcast Centre. New this year are performances at Live At The Courthouse, Toronto's newest jazz nightclub; theater-style seating inside the Mainstage tent; and a Primus stage at Nathan Phillips Square with free daily afternoon performances.

Also new to the Toronto Jazz Festival is the GRANDMASTERS Series at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. This series will feature performances by Dave Brubeck on Monday, June 25; Oscar Peterson on Tuesday, June 26; and Keith Jarrett on Friday, June 29.

For more information, visit www.torontojazz.com.



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FAX +39 0968-201005
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■ **Montreal International Musical Competition (MIMC) Voice 2007**
Montreal, QC
May 22-June 1, 2007
514-845-4108, 877-377-7951, FAX 514-845-8241
info@concoursmontreal.ca,
www.concoursmontreal.ca

■ **BC Bluegrass Association Annual General Meeting**
Hixon, BC
May 25-27, 2007
250-445-2262
www3.telus.net/SBG

■ **14th Annual Vintage Guitar Show**
Thornhill, ON
June 2-3, 2007
905-837-6666
vintage@tundramusic.com,
www.tundramusic.com/guitarshow

■ **North By Northeast (NXNE) 2007**
Toronto, ON
June 7-9, 2007
416-863-6963, FAX 416-863-0828
info@nxne.com, www.nxne.com

■ **Summerland Bluegrass Festival**
Summerland, BC
June 8-10, 2007
250-445-2262
www3.telus.net/SBG

■ **2007 COCA National Conference**
Niagara Falls, ON
June 11-15, 2007
519-690-0207, FAX 519-681-4328
cocaoffice@coca.org, www.coca.org

■ **Distillery Blues Festival**
Toronto, ON
June 15-17, 2007
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064
info@distilleryblues.com,
www.distilleryblues.com

■ **What Teens Want**
New York, NY
June 18-19, 2007
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **2007 South Park Music Festival & Conference**
South Park, CO
June 21-24, 2007
info@southparkmusic.com,
www.southparkmusic.com

■ **TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival**
Toronto, ON
June 22-July 1, 2007
416-928-2033, FAX 416-928-0533
tdjs@tojazz.com, www.torontojazz.com

■ **Camp Mobile Beat**
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mb@mobilebeat.com, www.mobilebeat.com

■ **Summerfest 2007**
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www.summerfest.com

■ **Guitar Workshop Plus**
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905-897-8397, FAX 905-785-2831
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ **Montreal Musicians & Musical Instrument Show (MMMS)**
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514-871-1881, 888-515-0515, FAX 514-525-8033
info_simm@equipespectra.ca, www.mmmis.ca

■ **1st Montreal Guitar Show**
Montreal, QC
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FAX 514-525-8033
info_sgm@equipespectra.ca,
www.montrealguitarshow.com

■ **30th Vancouver Folk Music Festival**
Vancouver, BC
July 13-15, 2007
604-602-9798, 800-883-3655, FAX 604-602-9790
info@thefestival.bc.ca, www.thefestival.bc.ca

■ **TD Canada Trust Atlantic Jazz Festival Halifax**
Halifax, NS
July 13-21, 2007
902-492-2225, 800-567-5277, FAX 902-425-7946
info@jazzeast.com, www.jazzeast.com

■ **Guitar Workshop Plus**
Toronto, ON
July 15-20, 2007
905-897-8397, FAX 905-785-2831
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ **2007 College Music Society (CMS) International Conference**
Bangkok, Thailand
July 16-22, 2007
406-721-9616, FAX 406-721-9419
cms@music.org, www.music.org

■ **21st South County Fair**
Fort MacLeod, AB
July 20-22, 2007
403-553-3070
asparagus@scfair.ab.ca, www.scfair.ab.ca

■ **Home County Folk Festival**
London, ON
July 20-22, 2007
519-432-4310, FAX 519-432-6299
www.homecounty.ca

■ **19th Annual Beaches International Jazz Festival**
Toronto, ON
July 20-29, 2007
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064
infobeachesjazz@rogers.com,
www.beachesjazz.com

■ **Guitar Workshop Plus**
Toronto, ON
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www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ **The Music & Home Entertainment Show (MHES)**
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Synthogy Ivory Grand Pianos & Italian Grand Expansion Pack

by Eric Price

Imagine my surprise when my editor handed me two boxes containing Synthogy's Ivory Piano virtual instrument to review (the original Ivory Piano and the new Italian Grand Piano Expansion) and upon opening the boxes I discovered there were 15 DVDs of data to install!

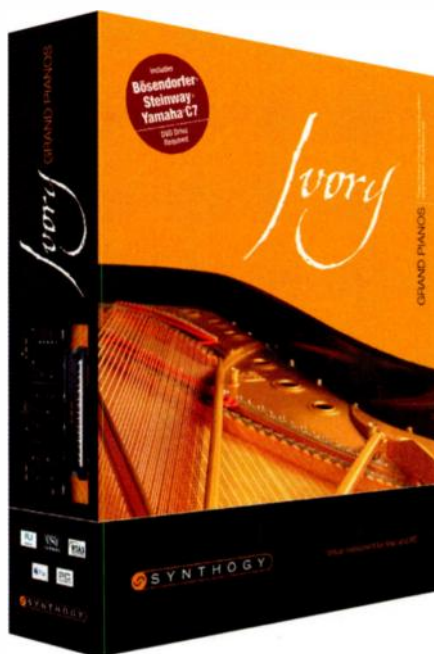
Then try to imagine that after an hour of installation I play the pianos, finding them very good, yet not hearing anything that made them stand apart from the competition, but wait! It is at this point I discover I had been absorbed in playing the pianos for almost two hours. What was going on here? Where did the time go and how did I get so carried away? These pianos were moving me to play and were evidently much better than my initial assessment. Clearly I had overlooked something. It was time to put on my detective's cap and get to the bottom of this little mystery.

I knew that the brains behind Ivory were George Taylor and Joe Ierardi, former engineers of Kurzweil Music Systems. With a formidable pedigree and their vast experience I knew these geniuses were capable of masterminding an outstanding virtual instrument. But what was the diabolical secret behind these alluring pianos?

I turned next to what I considered an important clue – the manual! Perhaps their formula could be decoded? I couldn't believe my luck. For before me, in plain English, were the clues I was seeking. It was elementary, my dear reader!

For the original Ivory package, Synthogy had sampled a Bosendorfer 290 Imperial Grand, a 9' Steinway D, and a Yamaha C7 grand piano. The expansion pack adds a 10' Italian Grand piano to the selection. They had sampled the pianos in 32-bit stereo (thus helping to explain the over 40 G worth of data). The pianos are also sampled at up to 10 dynamic levels with no loops, and each piano being chromatically sampled for

all 88 notes (97 notes for the Bosendorfer with its extra octave). Add key release samples at multiple volumes and durations plus soft pedal samples and you have some incredible detail. The new Italian Grand piano expansion has 12 discrete sample layers with over 2,000 samples, that is over 19 G of data in itself. To help give you some perspective on the amount of detail involved,



the FAQ says that if Ivory 1.5 came on floppies it would run about 29,535 of them and take over eight days to install! That is a lot of data.

Yet more clues. Synthogy uses its own 32-bit playback and DSP engine. Its built-in DSP has editable reverb, EQ, and chorus. You can control release time, key noise, timbre, dynamic range, and stereo width. Choose equal-tempered or stretch tuning, decide your listening perspective, and customize velocity maps tailored to your controller. All these options can be saved to custom

presets. I found the interface straightforward and easy to work with.

Obviously with such an elaborate instrument the demands on your computer will be fairly high. It almost goes without saying that a fast CPU, large hard drive, and plenty of RAM are required. Thoughtfully, you are given several options to scale back the resources of the pianos to help keep them playing smoothly – from altering the buffer sizes, limiting the number of available voices, to not loading components of the piano such as the pedal samples. You can also reduce the number of sample layers, which should be fine for when the piano is played in a mix. For solo work you will want to load the whole sample set.

Some other nice touches include being able to control sustain pedal resonance characteristics and being able to add a synth-pad layer to the pianos for more modern sounds.

Make sure you visit the website and download the latest patch (Ivory 1.5 is updated automatically if using the Italian Grand expansion). In my case, version 1.60 for the PC added a much needed stand-alone version of the program with a new presets browser and sample-accurate rendering.

A short word on the Italian Grand expansion: be aware you will need Ivory version 1.5 in order to run it and as mentioned above it will also require another 19 G of hard disk space beyond the already installed 40 G from Ivory.

So, my fellow sleuths, the case is solved. What we have here is one meticulous set of pianos. For me what separates Ivory from their competitors is the attention to detail and depth of musicality. The nuances have to be heard to be appreciated. All-in-all, a great piece of software and an amazing virtual instrument.

For system requirements, demos and pricing visit www.synthogy.com.

Eric Price has worked in the music and software retail industry for 20 years. Located in the Niagara Region, he offers custom-built computer systems and instruction in music software. Contact Eric at eric@gepconsulting.ca or visit www.gepconsulting.ca.

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World Radio History

Furman SPB-8C Pedalboard

by Levon Ichkhanian

Furman Sound has a 32-year history, producing high-quality, professional products since 1974. Their products fall into two categories: the audio and video signal processors (on which the company was founded) and the innovative AC power conditioning and distribution products, for which Furman is best known for.

The SPB-8C is a rugged power conditioned stereo pedalboard with a hardshell case.

FEATURES

Pedalboard

- Solid, non-slip base with room for many stompbox/effects pedals
- Pedal effects attach securely to 13.75" x 26.75" Velcro pad
- Stereo effects return, effects loop, and amplifier outputs
- Eight individually isolated, regulated and protected 9 V DC outlets, with power cords included
- Four widely spaced 120 VAC, 15A outlets allow enough room for wall warts, with master power switch
- 9 V DC power jacks and all signal jacks are insulated and isolated, eliminating noisy ground loops
- Furman's standard level of spike/surge suppression and EMI/RFI filtering assures clean power
- Toroidal transformer for ultra low-noise performance
- Rugged construction to withstand years of on-stage use and abuse
- Extra long (10') removable AC cord

Case

- Durable hardshell case built to withstand the rigours of road, travel, and gigging
- Retractable, luggage-style handle slides into lid of case
- Inline skate wheels
- Heavy-duty latches
- Accommodates pedal board with effects attached, letting you leave everything patched together as you like it.

Weight: Pedal board: 8 lbs. (3.63 kg), Case (with board): 18 lbs. (8.16 kg)

Dimensions: Pedal board: 3" H x 28.5" W x 20.125" D
Case: 7" H x 28.5" W x 20.125" D

Warranty: The SPB-8C is protected by a limited three year warranty covering defects in materials and workmanship.

Note: Each DC output is rated at 120 mA, as well as being individually protected against shorts. If one pedal goes out, the rest will continue to function. Further, these DC outputs are individually isolated, eliminating noisy ground loops. The SPB-8C also includes four widely spaced AC outlets.



THE TEST

Out of the shipping box, true to their claims, it is a rugged, heavy duty suit case. The retractable, luggage style handle makes it easy to pull around and the inline skate wheels maximize the ease of transport; you don't have to carry it, you just roll it.

The one feature that immediately stands out above all is the patch bay: I found it very user-friendly. It is organized in such a way that you can have unlimited set-up flexibility. The SPB-8C's stereo patch bay contains eight 1/4" switching phone jacks, featuring sturdy metal bushings, connected in two stereo loops. This allows a single guitar or instrument input to feed multiple mono and stereo effects boxes, send and return from remote effects, and feed up to two amplifiers simultaneously. In addition, the SPB-8C offers two levels of surge and short circuit protection, as well as Furman's standard level of RFI (Radio Frequency Interference) and EMI (Electro Magnetic Interference) filtering.

The base where you set up the pedals, which I will call the canvas, has plenty of room. I arranged my pedals on the canvas within seconds. If I wanted more of a permanent set-up, Velcro could be utilized. With everything hooked up and ready to play, I was anxious to hear how it would sound. Well, it blew me away. It is quiet ... no hum, no noise, just my guitar through the pedal tone.

I set up two amplifiers and sent two identical signals to the respective amps. Due to the way the patchbay is configured, the feed to the the Right Channel is split from the Left/Mono signal path

using the Left/Mono Rack effects send jack.

The result – a huge sound!

You can also add a mono/stereo effects rack along with your pedals and utilize one/two amplifiers in a multitude of setups.

The SPB-8C is truly meant for the player that wants to mix and match pedals from different manufacturers and have the flexibility to set them up and switch them around with ease. It will last you forever, not only because of its heavy-duty construction, but because it is also the kind of pedalboard that once you buy it, you will immediately have a professional pedal board that's stereo and power conditioned! What else would you need in a pedalboard? There would be no need to buy another one for a very long time, and for a suggested list price of \$576 it's a steal considering how much a custom made pedalboard would cost that has the same features!

Levon Ichkhanian is a Toronto-based musician and freelance writer.

Distributor's Comments

We are extremely pleased with the reaction of the marketplace to the SPB-8C since its release last year. Users have really responded to both its rugged and convenient construction AND to the fact that it incorporates Furman's world-renowned power conditioning. It's a well designed, roadworthy piece of gear that will last for years.

—Mark MacLellan, Furman Product Manager
SF Marketing Inc.

Ultra Adjust Hi Hat Stand (9607ML-UA) & Catapult Linear Motion Bass Drum Pedal (GCLMSP)

by Chris Taylor-Munro

Gibraltar is well known for its quality and ruggedness for pretty much any piece of hardware you could need for drum and percussion set-ups these days. They may have started out as a “replacement” parts company but has now grown to include many impressive names on their artist roster, who use their hardware exclusively. Two new products have been the subject of my quest for new and innovative drum stuff this time around: the Catapult Linear Motion Bass Drum pedal (GCLMSP), and the Ultra Adjust Hi Hat stand (9607ML-UA).

First is the Ultra Adjust Hi Hat stand.

This stand uses the gearless ball positioning points Gibraltar uses for tom arm attachments in two locations, between the tri-pod base and your cymbals. Each point is capable of nearly 360 degrees of rotation, allowing 8" of height adjustment and a nearly infinitesimal placement regardless of pedal board location. I say nearly because at the lowest possible angle the arm can obscure the tightening of the drum key style bolt. If you sit relatively low playing your kit you may find the Ultra Adjust isn't capable of being low enough without having your cymbals at an angle. On the other hand, players who prefer the hats higher up will love this stand. Pedal feel is on the firm side as the cable running between the two positioning points is like those on the remote hats albeit much shorter in length. Resistance is somewhat present even at the lowest setting of the standard tension adjustment. The legs are able to rotate 360 degrees allowing for multiple pedal set-ups, and if that isn't allowing

enough room you should opt for the “Non Legged” (9607NL-UA) model. One comment with regards to design is the use of a tiny set screw to hold the top half portion in place. It's annoying to fiddle with and will no doubt get lost at some point in a tear down. Why not use the drum key style bolt? Overall the mission is accomplished, but with some needed design upgrades and feel issues to address.

Next, and most certainly my favourite of the new products, is the Catapult Bass Pedal. Another example of thinking outside the box that doesn't often happen with drum gear – as we drummers think we've got it figured out or say to ourselves “why should I change things now?” This pedal is the result of Gibraltar consulting with experts in the biomechanics field and its fundamental purpose is to facilitate the natural motion of your ankle in relation to the foot board, reducing

fatigue. Pedal feel is direct, smooth as butter, and very responsive. The cog wheel running up and down the shaft is dead silent as well. Resistance is provided by a single spring mounted to the base plate underneath the footboard, completely invisible when playing the pedal. I had several drummers try this pedal and every one of them commented on how great the pedal felt, but noticed how much longer the pedal itself was relative to conventional pedals, forcing you to sit back farther from your kit than usual – also forcing you to make small adjustments all around your kit.

Heel up players

had no issues with getting ample volume, however, using the heel down technique and sliding your toe rearward on the foot board did not result in a significant gain in beater travel. Translation: tougher to get greater dynamics in the “forte” range. Miking the bass drum and getting more monitor assistance should alleviate your volume issues until you gain strength with the new pedal. Lightweight and simple in design, it makes for a travel-friendly pedal that should stand the test of time with minimal maintenance. By far, it's the coolest new pedal to come along in years.

Gibraltar continues to introduce new solutions to age-old problems drummers encounter with set-up and execution – ideas that will require some getting used to but make playing more comfortable (comfort is key), add new textures to your rhythms, and exercise the conventional hardware design theories.

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

Distributor's Comment

Thanks for the review, and thanks to Chris for putting the new Gibraltar products through such a thorough testing process. As he notes, Gibraltar is famous around the world for innovative products that are designed to work with any brand of drumset, and these two items certainly carry on that tradition.

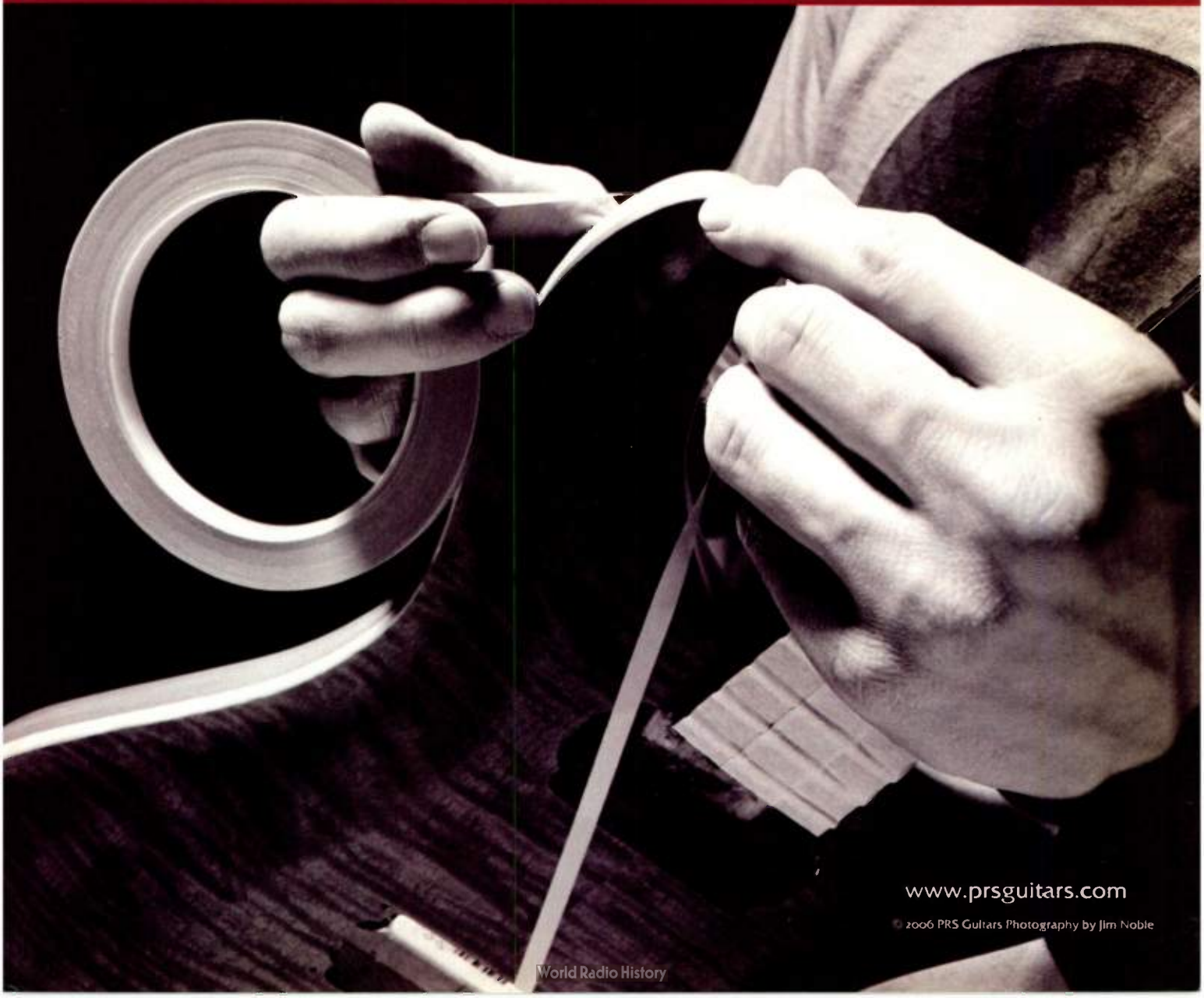
Just a quick note regarding the Ultra Adjust Hi-Hat: Chris' concern about the adjustment set screw has already been noted by the factory, and a design modification is in process to change these to drum key adjustments as he suggests.

Dale Kroke
Senior Vice President, General Manager
B&J Music Ltd.

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World Radio History

Do Your Own Acoustic Thing

by David Gogo

I like guitars. I have lots of them, and sometimes I even play 'em! Playing came easy to me and I seemed to be able to get a decent sound right away, which is a good and bad thing. The bad thing was not having to learn proper techniques or how to read music because I felt that I didn't need to. I sometimes regret not having skills that I was either too impatient or too lazy to learn, but I suppose that my style has unique qualities that wouldn't have developed if I had stayed within certain parameters.

Although I can appreciate technically proficient guitarists who can fly up and down the fretboard with amazing ability, I much prefer hearing someone like Albert Collins hitting "that" note! Just one, from-the-heart, note! To me, music is about emotion and feel, not math and gymnastics. It's like comparing a Picasso painting to the schematics of television. I read that my hero, Guy Lafleur, was terrible at doing drills at hockey practice but once the game started he jumped on the ice and created magic. I can relate!

I think the biggest breakthrough for me as a guitarist was recognizing my strengths and weaknesses and having faith in what I was capable of without trying to be someone I'm not. I'm not saying that you shouldn't explore various styles and genres (and some players can do it all and well!) but you don't have to be all things to all people! Find out what you do best and try to be the best at it. Try to develop a style and sound that is uniquely you! Not only will this help in defining you as a performing artist, but getting called in to do sessions to play on other peoples' recordings to be "you" is a good thing. Corner the market!

I'm known primarily as an electric guitar player, but my acoustic shows have recently become more prominent after the release of my latest album, *Acoustic*. The transition from being a loud and proud shoot 'em up lead guitar star with a full band pumping behind you to becoming a sit-down solo artist armed only with two guitars older than my daddy can be daunting! Once again, I realized that to make this work I had to rely on my strengths and learn from people I admire. As much as I wish I could play fingerstyle as well as Ken Hamm, I don't! And it's a little late to start now, but that's OK. Why compete with someone who is out of your league at his own game?

I decided to look at this situation not as a disadvantage, but as a challenge to bring my strengths as an electric lead player to my acoustic show. This can be difficult without a band, but I've managed to adapt. After watching some of the top acoustic players do their thing, I've managed to get my own show together. After seeing Geoff Mulduar at a festival in New Mexico I learned to completely relax and find comfortable tempos and grooves that make you and the audience feel good. I had a tendency to let my nerves affect my sense of timing before this, but now I just try to chill out and let the music flow.

Another way to relax is to not worry about the sound being poor. The best way to achieve this is to control your environment by taking charge. Some purists may not like this but I run my acoustic guitars through a small amp. This way,



I'm in control of the tone and it's a no-brainer for the sound man. The amp also acts as a monitor that I'm in control of. Since I don't use the actual monitors at all, this is handy. A very simple setup: a vocal mic, an amp mic, and no monitors. Pretty hard to screw that up! I have a 1930 National Resonator guitar that I play in either open D or G, and an ancient Gibson L-Junior in standard tuning. If I play near home I use a Taylor 12-string for a couple of songs that I run through a DI.

As much as I love rocking with the band, there is a certain freedom that I enjoy when playing acoustic. It's a nice change of pace, and when I return to playing electric I find that my chops improve and my hands and fingers are stronger. And I can turn it up to 11!

David Gogo is a 2007 Juno-nominee and two-time Maple Blues Guitarist of The Year. His latest CDs Vibe and Acoustic are available at record stores nationally and through his website at www.davidgogo.com, where you'll also find his instructional guitar DVD.

Where Are The Keys?

A Primer On Making Your Keyboards Cut Through The Mix

Part I

by Andrew Craig

It seems like a common complaint among keyboardists: we're never quite loud enough in the live mix. I can't count the number of times that I've gone to see bands perform, bands that feature some of the country's brightest keyboard players, and wished I could actually hear what the keyboardists were doing. Then of course, there are the occasions when I was the keyboard player on the bandstand, and I'd spot a colleague of mine cupping his hand behind his ear while looking pointedly at me - signaling that once again, my work wasn't being represented in the mix.

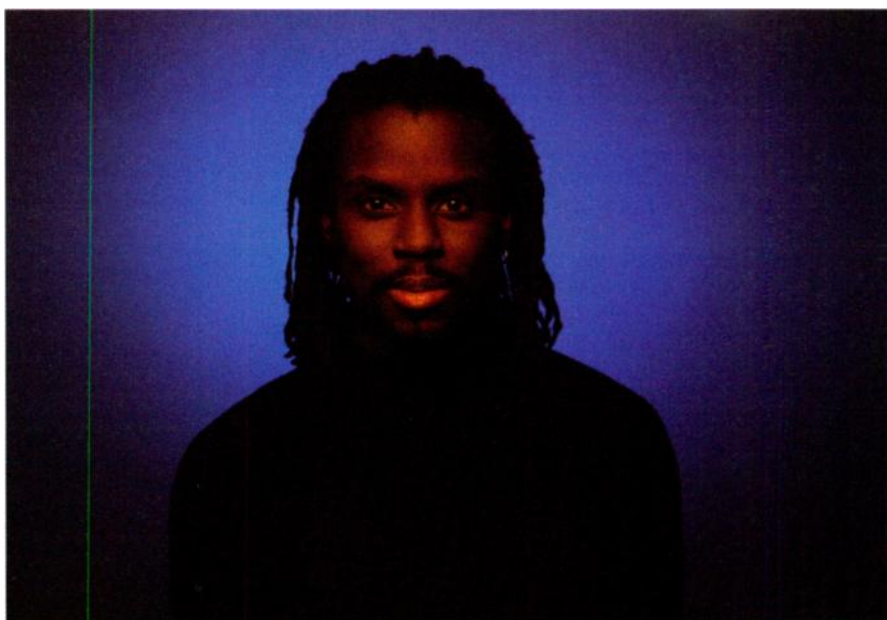
So why has it become common that keyboard players are left out in the cold? To me, it comes down to a few factors:

- stage amplification
- programming skills
- relationships with front-of-house (FOH) engineers
- orchestrational thinking

Let me talk about each of these for a bit.

My Stack Don't Say Marshall

On stage, drummers, guitar players, and bass players tend to have the advantage. Acoustic drums tend to cut through no matter what, and manufacturers have spent years developing guitar and bass amps that can match the power of acoustic drums while giving players a range of tone choices. Only recently have manufacturers really applied themselves to making decent keyboard amps. I encourage you to invest in a good-quality amp, so you don't have to rely on monitors for your sound. Be discerning! Try amps out in the store by listening to the sounds with high-fidelity headphones first, then through the amp, and listen for the differences. In some situations, having your own stage sound is the difference between being heard some or not at all.



FOH Engineer: Give Props To The Man

The FOH engineer is the performer's last buffer before the sound hits the audience, whether we like it or not. It's amazing to me how few musicians understand this simple fact. Typically, FOH engineers have a natural bias towards guitars, basses, and drums. Keyboards, for many engineers I've encountered, are kind of an annoyance. I take it upon myself to make my sound as easy as possible for the FOH engineer to integrate into the mix.

First and foremost, talk to the engineer! Introduce yourself (if it's not someone you work with regularly), and explain what role you play in creating the overall band sound. Is your job to cut through with stabbing, jarring patches? Do you create a wash with ethereal pads? Do you run a lot of arpeggiators? Or maybe you trigger drum loops? Whatever you do, you have a much better chance of being heard if you give the engineer an idea of what to expect. Be nice - you don't have to kiss ass, but in this business, relation-

ships are everything. The engineer will remember that you took the time to talk to him/her.

Think Like A Composer

Perhaps most importantly, listen to a lot of music, and get a good sense of orchestration. Listen to everything: symphonies by Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky; big band arrangements by Gil Evans, Sammy Nestico and Billy Strayhorn; synth work by Wendy Carlos, Herbie Hancock, Kraftwerk, Depeche Mode, Brian Eno, Nine Inch Nails, Daniel Lanois - anything that will give you a sense of how different sounds combine to make new textures without fighting each other. And keep refining your synth chops - there's nothing quite as satisfying as having the bandmates wonder how you keep coming up with those perfect patches.

Andrew Craig has been a professional keyboardist for over 20 years, in addition to his work as a composer, arranger, producer, director and broadcaster. He's performed with artists such as Ashley MacIsaac, Molly Johnson, and Wynton Marsalis. He's based in Toronto.

Warm-ups Part I

by Marc Rogers

Ask any musician who has suffered tendonitis or carpal tunnel syndrome about the importance of warming up...

I'm going to introduce my favourite warm-up exercise away from the instrument. I do this one every day, and often several times a day if I'm doing a lot of playing or practicing. It's a great stretch because besides warming up your hands and forearms, it actually can improve your flexibility and finger independence if done on a regular basis. Before we go any further, I must caution you that, like any stretch, progress should be gradual and you should immediately stop if you feel any pain. If you are patient and do the stretch on a regular basis you will notice results.

This exercise is intended primarily for your fretting hand (your left, if you're right-handed like me) but it can be done on both hands. For sake of illustration, I'm using my left hand in the photographs. To perform this stretch on your right hand, just reverse the hands in my directions.

You should start by holding your left hand out flat with all the fingers and thumb extended, and the palm of your hand parallel with your forearm so your wrist isn't bent at all (fig. 1). Place your right hand over your middle, ring, and pinkie fingers on your left hand, leaving your index finger free to move (fig. 2). Now, slowly move your index finger towards the spot on your palm directly below your thumb, while keeping your other fingers and your thumb in place (fig. 3). It's unlikely that you'll actually be able to touch the palm on your first try, but go as far as you can. You should feel the muscles in your forearm being stretched. Hold this position for a count of 10, then release and shake your left hand out, letting it go completely limp. This will help prevent injury. Repeat this exercise with your middle,

ring, and pinky fingers one at a time, remembering to support the other fingers with your right hand and not to move your thumb at all. Most people find the pinky finger the hardest one to do initially, but with practice it will become as flexible as the other fingers (fig 4).

If you keep at it, you'll definitely notice improved flexibility and finger independence. This is also a great stretch to do if you're playing your bass for a long period of time and noticing that your forearm is stiffening up – it's saved me on more than one long acoustic bass recording session! Next time, I'll get into some great warm-ups that you can do on the bass. Enjoy!

Marc Rogers is currently the bassist for The Philosopher Kings, Jon Levine, Susan Tedeschi, Chris Seldon, Karen Kosowski, and Sunshine State.

He is also active in the Toronto recording and session scene. You can check out his website at www.marcrogers.com and his tour dates at www.myspace.com/marcrogers.



fig.1



fig.2



fig.3



fig.4



The Gretzky Effect

by Brent Fitz

Hero worship – we all need a little bit of it. I think it’s important to strive to be more like our heroes, and they certainly don’t have to just be musicians to have an impact on us as drummers and as people. Neil Peart, Jeff Porcaro, and Buddy Rich are three of my biggest drumming influences. Another one of my idols is Wayne Gretzky – not a drummer, but “The Great One” of the hockey world. I’ve always thought that sports figures and musicians are a lot alike, and it has nothing to do with wanting to become celebrities or anything related to that, but because of the years of physical and mental dedication both careers require before success can ever be reached. Unless of course, you want

way, was not only able to break all the NHL scoring records set by his hero, but also become the greatest hockey player ever. He changed the world of hockey in the same way The Beatles changed the music world. Gretzky was even lucky enough to have the opportunity to meet and spend time getting to know his idol in person, much like The Beatles got to hang out with Elvis at Graceland.

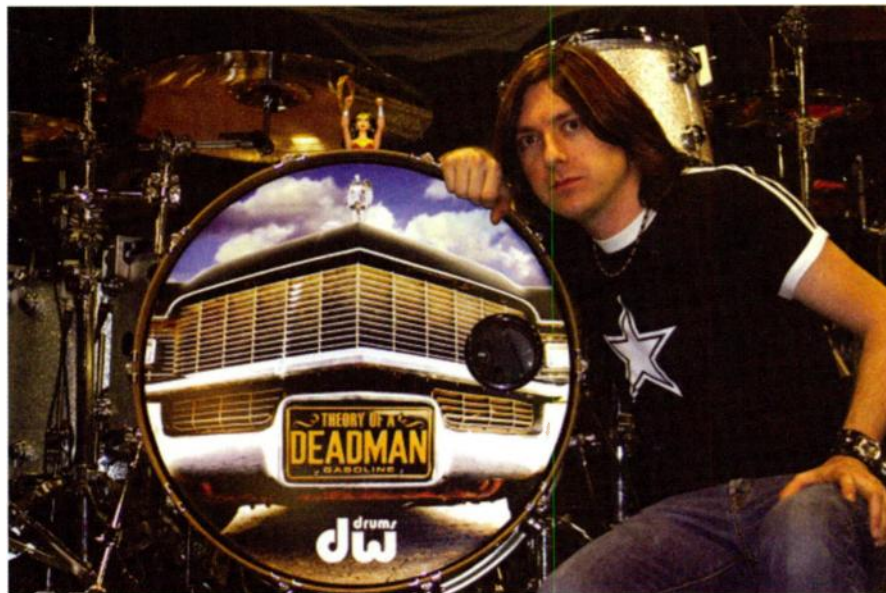
Gretzky has even taught me a lot about how to practice being good – at practicing. Maybe you can say he just practiced a little better than everyone else. It’s all about work ethic. As a kid, he spent countless hours in his parent’s backyard rink perfecting all the basics of hockey that his father taught him – and then continued working on them

it is important how you play it. Gretzky was never considered the fastest skater, but still somehow would skate circles around all the other players. He simply practiced being a better skater. Also think about this: if you are reading a book and skim through the first few chapters and only read the last part of the book, well, you’re likely going to have to read the book over again to understand what you’ve just read. Without completely reading it from start to finish, you’re only cheating yourself. Even if you do read it from cover to cover, in order to really understand the book, you’ll likely need to read it several times anyway to fully understand it. Having better fundamental understanding of music will only give you better knowledge and improve your musical vocabulary around other musicians.

There is a big difference too between practicing and performance. All of us need to learn to not confuse the two. Buddy Rich never did. Performance should take place **ONLY** after you’ve spent plenty of time perfecting what you intend to perform for an audience on a stage, or at a hockey rink, or wherever. You could pretty much say that Gretzky put on a legendary performance for audiences every time he skated onto the ice, much like seeing a talented musician in concert. And when you buy a ticket to go see that person entertain you with their performance, you expect them to hopefully perform to the best of their ability. How well they might perform at that particular time can be directly related to how well they have prepared with practice over many days, months, or years leading up to it. The bottom line is that the best musicians and athletes always stand out from the others, and it’s usually fairly obvious, just like a great actor.

To me what’s most inspiring is knowing there are plenty of young musicians and athletes, right this second, spending countless hours practicing to become more like their heroes everyday. And the one with the right determination is certain to become the next Great One.

*Brent Fitz is the drummer for Theory Of A Deadman. He grew up in Winnipeg and currently resides in Las Vegas. Brent endorses DW drums, SABIAN cymbals, Pro Mark drumsticks, Remo drumheads, DDrum electronics, and Hart Dynamics electronics.
www.brentfitz.com
www.groups.myspace.com/brentfitzfansite.*



to be on *American/Canadian Idol*, then you’re more likely to be a star overnight! Interestingly, I’ve met many guitar playing athletes, and plenty of musicians who are great golfers and hockey players. Maybe that has something to do with us all aspiring to be something that we’re not; guess it’s tough to say.

Though I’m a big hockey fan, I’ve never once thought about being a pro player. Music has always been my only focus. But as a musician, I still find inspiration in knowing that as a kid, Wayne Gretzky had such determination to be as good as his hero, Gordie Howe, and how, in a very gentlemanly

throughout his career. It’s the same philosophy we can approach to drumming – to never stop learning the very basics of rhythm and time keeping. GREAT time keeping is something we can spend our entire lives trying to improve on. We always want immediate gratification when trying to learn something new, and practice is not about that, but is the only means to eventually obtaining that gratification. Just because you’ve spent five minutes learning to play a particular new beat, and now think you’re ready to play it very fast or whatever, never forget that it’s not important how fast you can play it, but

Constructing A Good Blues Solo

by Pat Carey

All scales are in C concert. All scales to be played ascending and descending and over entire range of your instrument.

The image shows six musical staves, each with a label and a letter in a box. Staff A: Blues scale (C Pentatonic scale). Staff B: Pentatonic scale. Staff C: Major Blues Scale. Staff D: F Mixolydian scale. Staff E: F Mixolydian scale starting on C. Staff F: Pentatonic (Adjusted 3rd), Major Blues scale (Adjusted 3rd).

In this column I am going to give you some basic scales that are used over blues progressions and from which blues riffs are developed. In the end analysis, what makes a good blues solo is a particular player's phrasing, tone and emotion, but before we get to that point we need to know what notes to play and where to play them, and by listening to other players we can create our own blues ideas.

The starting point for playing blues is the blues scale (See A). (For ease of explanation, we are using the key of C. All 12 bar blues and various scales can be transposed to all 12 keys.) The blues scale is important due to its bluesy sound, using the $b3$, $b5$ and $b7$, but also because it is diatonic in nature. To explain what this means let's look at the structure of a basic blues.

We see that in a standard blues we have three chords: C7, F7, and G7. The C blues scale can be played against all three of these chords making it a diatonic scale, or a scale based on the I chord, in this case C. In other words, when we go to F7 (IV) and G7 (V) we don't switch to the F and G blues scales, we continue to use the C blues scale. Try playing the notes randomly from this scale with your own phrasing and rhythms. Once we get a handle on the blues scale we then turn to three more scale types: pentatonic, major blues, and Mixolydian (See B, C, and D).

These scales are affected by root movement and need to change when the chords change.

For example:

C7 (I)	F7 (IV)	G7 (V)
C Pentatonic	F Pentatonic	G Pentatonic
C Major Blues Scale	F Major Blues Scale	G Major Blues Scale
C Mixolydian	F Mixolydian	G Mixolydian

These scales will all work in their particular root positions, but if we treat the C7 (I) and F7 (IV) diatonically we get better voice leading, and a stronger sense of the key center.

If we look at the C Mixolydian and F Mixolydian scales

(See D, E), we notice one thing – there is only a one note difference between the two: E natural, in the C Mixolydian, and E^b in the F Mixolydian. If we take the F Mixolydian scale and change its root note to C and then look at it next to a C Mixolydian scale, we can really see how close they are.

We can now think of using one scale over C7 (I) and F7 (IV) but keeping in mind that we must adjust the third note for the F7 (IV), E^b instead of E. We can apply the same idea to our Pentatonic and Major Blues Scale (See F). Keep in mind that when we switch to G7 (V) we must treat G as the root and adjust our Pentatonic, Major Blues, and Mixolydian scales to G for that one bar or revert to a C blues scale.

I hope this helps as a launching pad for learning to play the blues, and remember, in the end, blues is all about the feeling!



Pat Carey is the saxophone player for Downchild Blues Band having joined the band 23 years ago. Pat also leads his own jazz group, Pat Carey's Jazz Navigators, which has just released its latest CD South By Southeast available at www.Iridescentmusic.ca, along with Starlight, Pat's previous CD. Pat is also a saxophone and clarinet instructor at The Merriam School of Music, as well as being a busy freelance musician performing weekly with Sophia Perlman & The Vipers, Bradley & The Bouncers, Big Rude Jake, Chuck Jackson & The Allstars, and The Nomads. patcareysax@aol.com, www.myspace.com/patcareymusic.

Articulation

by Al Kay



Articulation is one of the hardest concepts to teach to students, but I believe it to be one of the most important. I will concentrate on just the beginning of each note (knowing what to do with the middle and the end of the note is important too!), which must be shaped by the player to define the style of music played (classical, jazz, etc.), and the emotion or mood the composer or arranger is implying. In addition, performing in different venues (small jazz club, large concert hall), your role in the band (section, lead, or soloist), and giving the music your own unique sound all add to the complexities of producing a perfect note.

The Basic Tonguing Concept

A jazz player playing a middle B \flat /C quarter note (played *f*) needs to come up with an air speed of 10 km/h (it doesn't, it's just for this example) to vibrate her lips and produce that note. If she didn't tongue the note ("Hoo") it would take quite a few milliseconds to go from zero to 10, giving a softer, unfocused start to the note. For this jazz attack (hard, accented) the player needs to have an *instant* 10 km/h to give the note the energy, life, and punch that the music demands. To understand the correct concept we need to isolate the start of the note. Away from the horn, take a big breath and place your tongue on your top teeth. Try to exhale (use firm abdominals, but relax your upper body and neck). For a second or two your tongue should be stopping the air from escaping, building up lots of air pressure. When you quickly pull back your tongue there should be an explosion of built-up air pressure (remember spitting sunflower seeds, or peashooters?). Don't push any air after the release – concentrate on the initial release. Repeat this quite a few times until you get consistent results.

On The Horn

Get ready to play a middle B \flat /C. Big inhalation, but delay the release of the air with your tongue for a second (which in real playing situations you would never do), and let it go. You should end up with a loud, accented, instant note that has an extremely sharp-edged attack.

This is the shape of that jazz note:

An instant, accented start to it, a quick decay.



This inferior note has a fuzzy start:
A sluggish tongue release.

Repeat a few times. Try playing a descending B \flat /C scale (short quarter notes) one note at a time, making sure you set up each note correctly, and listening for the "snap" at the beginning of each note. Repeat each note until it's perfect then go to the next one. Once you get the concept try to reduce the pressure build-up time until just before the note. Metronome at 60, 4/4 time, count three beats rest, inhale on beat four, start to blow, your tongue building up lots of air pressure behind it just a fraction of a second before the big release on beat one. If you've been achieving consistent results, try constant quarter notes. If they sound good, bring out a swing/latin chart and try to play some parts of it using your new intense articulation. The music should have more energy and excitement now. If it's not consistent, go back to the start of the process, visualize the note shape, and isolate the beginning of the note using the correct concept. Keep the note shape the same for all dynamics (soft playing uses smaller intensity), and from your lowest to highest notes. (In the future I hope to have an article on improving your high range, part of it talking about this same concept to easily nail notes in the high B \flat /C to F/G range!)

For many jazz or Latin tunes, using this note shape gives clarity, energy, brilliance, projection, and a very confident rhythmic feel to your playing, which is ideal for a soloist in front of a large, loud band! This intense articulation will definitely make your sound cut through to the back row of the hall.

Al Kay, Head of Brass at Humber College, is very active as a jazz and classical soloist, a member of True North Brass, and a Yamaha artist and clinician. His website is www.alkay.ca.

Audio Interfaces 101

by Paul Lau

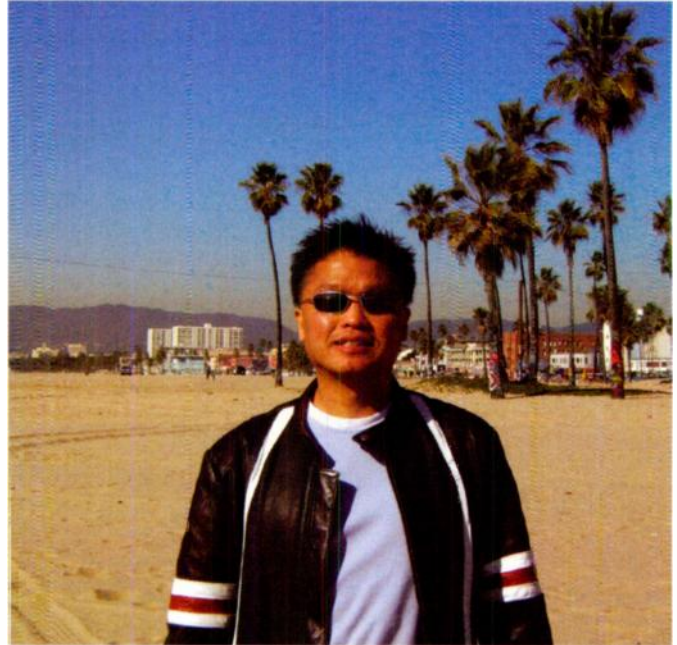
There have been two milestones in the music industry since computer audio interfaces appeared more than 20 years ago. First, MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) allowed one to harness and control multiple keyboards and sound modules from different manufacturers at once in software. Shortly thereafter, dedicated professional quality audio interfaces appeared as the second milestone, launching an exciting new era of digital recording with cost effective compatibility across the board.

Audio interfaces translate and convert sound waves (analog) into the digital language of ones and zeroes. Generally speaking, musicians find that the quality of home computers that include sound capabilities tend to be consumer-grade and have noticeably less fidelity in reproducing sound, or are lacking in overall sound quality. Therefore, dedicated interfaces are a must when working seriously with sound.

There are three main types of audio interfaces. One of the earliest was the PCI audio card connected directly to the computer's motherboard. It may or may not have a breakout box with multiple audio inputs and outputs and MIDI connections. PCI cards usually offer the best integration with the computer and the most accurate MIDI timing. But if you've never opened up a computer, installation could be quite daunting. And even after getting the card settled into the motherboard, you still could have resource conflicts with other cards. With that said, when your only choice was a PCI card interface that didn't have a break-out box, there was the added cost of integrating a mixer, which was also somewhat cumbersome. Many of you will remember purchasing at least a four-bus board as the required first step in the crazy world of wiring and connecting all the extra cables so you could monitor what you were recording in real time. Initially, USB 1.1 seemed to be a quick fix with a separate external box that plugged into a computer's USB port. But practically USB 1.1 was relatively a slow protocol, so there's a bandwidth limit and you could not get many channels of great fidelity. You'll probably get, at the most, four simultaneous channels, or only use one to two channels at a time in a small home studio setup. If you are demoing and just having fun this is quite sufficient.

When FireWire interfaces arrived with considerably faster communication, most pro musicians switched from USB 1.1. Even though buying into this new format was more expensive, the switch was well worth it – resulting in added bandwidth and fidelity. In other words, you could track more and the A/D to D/A converters were superior in quality to the USB 1.1 devices. Not until USB 2 arrived did musicians have a choice to either use FireWire or USB 2 without really losing ground on either format. Today, most new computers have built-in FireWire and USB 2 connections on the motherboard, but if not, the FireWire/USB card costs are minimal.

This leads us to today's new breed of hardware that has not only multiple inputs/outputs, but physical surface control (connected via either USB or FireWire). These are the mixer type interfaces that control your software interface. So why are these surface controllers so cool? Well, with one simple example, imagine using a mouse to simultaneously move five faders at one time on screen: you can't! The ability to



use your hands to grab faders that move multiple faders on screen is a practical need in mixing applications. With such an interface, there are various other useful and production-oriented applications that apply here.

Also, there are interfaces that incorporate not only analog inputs/outputs but also digital inputs. Two of the most commonly known and used digital inputs are S/PDIF and ADAT. S/PDIF is usually an added bonus on most audio devices, whereas ADAT (or light-pipe) has a protocol and specific cable that can transfer eight tracks of audio simultaneously. Those that are familiar with, or have a closet full of, old Alesis ADAT tapes can easily transfer and re-mix ADAT digital tapes to one's hard drive. This is a time-consuming task but once the transfer is done, the fun begins with visual editing and mixing! (We will examine the five digital audio input/output formats in a future article).

When considering audio interfaces, remember the power in your computer may dictate the logical purchases of external hardware. Itemizing your needs in a production/recording setting is the first step. The entire setup will under perform if not built systematically from ground up. Finally, digital audio interfaces have changed recording techniques forever but the performance plays the most crucial central role in production.

Paul Lau B.Sc. – Musician/Producer/MIDI/Digital Audio Specialist, Director of PowerMusic5Records (www.powermusic5.com)/Manages/Promotes - John Boswell, Tomorrow's Excuse, Way of Life, 68pornomags, Ghetto2Ghetto, Jason Storer, Mark Battenberg, Wendy Zheng, and Anne Bonsignore ... just to name a few. Member of the Cool Christian Pop Band Scatter17 (www.scatter17.com).

Sing With Power, Range, & Control

by Paula Shear

Why A Well-Trained Voice is Always a Natural Sound

The creative process is, on the one hand, a journey of self-discovery, and this always means there is an aspect of trial and error in the quest for vocal freedom. No one but you, can feel what is going on inside. However, for most aspiring singers, the pathway to unlimited possibilities comes from guidance that opens the doorways to a truly empowered voice.

What I always tell my students is that as a singer you have to think of yourself as an athlete. You want to develop vocal stamina and laser beam precision so that what you get is what you intended.

This brings me back to the issue of natural sound. As human beings, we learn through repetition, so we want to bring things to the conscious level to then be tucked away, back into the subconscious. You do the work to make it easy. You can't be thinking technically when you're performing; it's all about feel. At that point you want to lose yourself in the emotion and the lyric, a palette of colours and vocal range at your fingertips.

What is unnatural is anything that strains your voice; that feeling of reaching for a note, pulling with your throat, and forcing can all do damage. You want to rid yourself of all tension, and as Poverotti once said, "the enemy of the singer is the nerves." You need to have your energy radiating outward, not holding onto it, to be in flow. Understand that singing is an extension of speech. It should feel effortless.

So what brings us back to natural sound? First of all, you sing on the exhale of your breath, literally, so you want to develop immaculate breath control. The diaphragm is located beneath the lungs, and as you inhale, flattens down, causing the lower abdomen to expand. Exhaling, the diaphragm rises to a dome-shape and the rib cage contracts.

The most powerful, high, clear notes actually have less air being released. In varying degrees you bear down with your diaphragm, choosing how much air is being released, creating variance in tone, power, intensity, or subtlety.

So this is marriage of breath support and vocal placement.

Three Breathing Warm-ups

1) Inhale and exhale slowly. Lower rib cage expands around front, sides, and back. No expansion in upper chest or shoulders. Open mouth, smile – a relaxed jaw eliminates tension. Visualize drawing air up through the roof of your mouth, then long exhale diagonally down and out. Repeat eight times.



2) Inhale four seconds/hold four seconds/release four seconds. Repeat eight times. Then do same thing for eight seconds once.

3) This one is much more complex. Inhale slowly and keep your rib cage expanded, releasing air through slightly parted teeth by pressing the tip of your tongue against bottom teeth for a kind of 'tz' sound. Time yourself in seconds – the longer the better, for a slow, even, quiet, and compressed air flow.

Voice Placement

Now, here is where it starts to sound strange, but you literally want to learn to sing down to your high notes. If you put your hand in front of your mouth, smile with a relaxed open mouth, and

exhale a stream of breath onto your hand – notice the focus of that breath going downward. Trying to sing up is like swimming against the tide. Essentially, you can target from a low note down to a higher note by approaching diagonally down, and sound vibrates in the "mask" (forward through cheekbones, sinuses, etc.), creating overtones.

Sound Is 'Hung' In Four Basic Placements

1) Hard palate (front roof of the mouth)

The chest voice resonates closer to spoken voice. This extends over an octave until you hit what is termed the first break. At this point you may feel that you want to reach up, but forcing your chest voice up is inviting disaster for your vocal chords. What you need to do is target down a higher area from above through the hard palate.

2) **Lower nose and sinuses** This may entail thinning the tone and targeting down to this higher area in the mask with a mixed tone, in the realm of the sinuses and lower nose. Note: This does not mean nasal! You become nasal if they are blocked off. Resonate a few notes, then move to placements 3) and 4).

3) Bridge of nose/behind the eyes*

4) Upper head*

*Highest vocal range.

Correct vocal warm-ups and exercises begin with sounds like humming, lip and tongue trills, scales, etc. These, however, are subjects for another day. With great technique together with developed phrasing, style, and artistry you can unleash a voice that literally soars.

Paula Shear is a Toronto Singer/Vocal Coach who has guided singers at all levels, from beginners to recording artists. She teaches how to open your voice to unlimited power, gain octaves, and discover the beauty of singing with ease in a diversity of styles: rock, R&B, pop, & jazz. She is soon releasing a CD featuring Bernie Senesky, Rob Poltel, Kieran Overs, Mark Kelso, Robi Botos, Frank Botos, and others. Contact: sedonah@sympatico.ca.

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World Radio History



Nick Raskulinecz

Rich Chycki

In The Studio With RUSH

BY KEVIN YOUNG

Imagine spending five weeks producing one of the first bands you saw in concert. That's what Nick Raskulinecz experienced when he got the call to produce *Snakes and Arrows*, Rush's latest record. "Nick was very young the first time he saw us," says guitarist Alex Lifeson. After hearing the band was working on a new record, Raskulinecz asked his management to approach them. Initially, they explained that they already had a producer, but two months later the situation changed — Rush called back. For Raskulinecz it was a dream come true. "For both he and Rich Chycki, our engineer, there's a whole era of Rush that's close to their hearts," says Lifeson. With that perspective, Raskulinecz approached the new record with the intention of concentrating on capturing very specific characteristics that typified the feel of earlier records.

Assembling that kind of experience, says *Snakes and Arrows* Engineer/Mixer Rich Chycki, had great benefits for the process. He first met Rush while working on a recording of "Closer To The Heart" for the CBC's Tsunami relief show and has also worked on its R30 DVD. When we spoke he was actually in the process of mixing *Snakes and Arrows* in 5.1, at Mixland Music and DVD in Wasaga Beach, ON. "In this situation the benefit was that there was no translation required. Nick would say 'this is what I'm looking for' and I could just dig in and do it. Everyone shared a common vision so it worked out really well."

That vision, and Raskulinecz' energy, propelled the sessions forward. "When I got involved they had already been writing and doing pre-production," says Raskulinecz. "I went to Toronto for two different one-week trips for about two and a half to three months apart. Then we took a three-week break, met up at Allaire Studios and tracked the whole record in 36 days.

"The second concert I ever saw was the *Moving Pictures* tour. I was 12," he continues. The industry, and how we use and view music, has changed unalterably since then. Though the rock and roll mystique has taken a bit of a beating, Raskulinecz didn't let that interfere with his efforts to capture all the old magic, fire, and mystique of Canada's most successful power trio on record. There's a lot of talk of the death of the album these days — the less value is attached to music, the more the record seems doomed. Much of the initial justification for using illegal P2P was that there were fewer tracks worth listening to on any given record and so, for value for your money, you'd be better off to buy only the single. That's not the case with Rush. They just don't do throwaway album tracks. Nor do they write singles or individual songs, says Lifeson. They make records.

"Everything is connected, and a lot of it has to do with the thematic connection of Neil's lyrics. It's always been about the albums for us, and I don't see that changing," Lifeson says. Beyond being what they do, it's what their fans want, and they've built a relationship and nurtured it carefully for too long to lose sight of that. "I think we're solidly where we should be with this record."

Recorded at Allaire Studios in Shokan, NY, and mixed in LA's Ocean Way Studios with Raskulinecz and Chycki, the album is a return to the feel of older Rush records, Raskulinecz says. Known for his work with the Foo Fighters (*In Your Honor*, *One by One*) and his energy and animated production style, Raskulinecz is no stranger to producing high profile projects. Still, he gets the chills thinking about the Rush sessions. Unlike some projects *Snakes and Arrows* didn't wear him out, he explains. "I'm energized and re-freshed. I'm proud of this record, and the three of those guys for taking a chance with me. These guys can get anybody in the world to work with them. I'm the luckiest person in the world, man. It's Rush — are you kidding me? I get to work with one of my favourite bands. We had a blast."

Originally, the plan had been to go to Allaire only a week to record drums, but before the end of their first night they decided to stay. The vibe and seclusion of it was a big part of the allure. "It was one of the most inspiring places I've ever been to make a record. Hell, our cell phones hardly worked. We lived, breathed, ate, and slept the record," he says — working from roughly 10 a.m. to whenever they wanted to, sometimes heading into the control room at 2 a.m. if the urge struck them. When we spoke, just prior to release of the *Snakes and Arrows* first single, "Far Cry," Raskulinecz was still having trouble believing just how smoothly the process went. "The whole thing doesn't even seem like it happened, because it went by so fast and it turned out so great," he laughs. "It was amazing." So much so, they quickly became a very tight knit team, leaving the mountain a handful of times.



ABOVE: Neil Peart tracking drums, helped along by Raskulinecz.

Bottom: Geddy Lee tracking vocals.

Studio Photos courtesy of Andrew MacNaughton.

In The Studio With RUSH RUSH DISCOGRAPHY

CM: The band nicknamed you 'Bouge'?

NR: 'Cause of my air drumming and making drum sounds. I always go... Bouge.

CM: What's 'Bouge' the sound of?

NR: It can be a snare drum or tom.

CM: Being such a big fan of the band, were you intimidated at all?

NR: I was the most nervous the first time I met them, but within 10 minutes they made me feel totally comfortable. One of their managers picked me up at the airport, took me to Geddy's house, dropped me off in the driveway and said 'call me when you're done.' We talked for two or three hours about music and recording techniques, and really got a feel for what everybody was thinking, and during that conversation I told them exactly how I like to do it – I like to join the band.

CM: Did you impose a process on the sessions, or was it a meeting of the minds?

NR: I do it the way they were doing it already, so we just fleshed out how to move forward. I like to spend a lot of time on pre-pro and get everything worked out before we go into the studio. That's why we were able to track the record so quick.

CM: So many people are making records in their living room and producing themselves – what do you think someone who wants to produce their own records could learn from watching you work with players of this calibre?

NR: Just having that objective voice, you know? The music will never be as close to me as it will to those three guys, so it's a lot easier for me to say 'that could be different, or that could be better.' It's really, really hard to produce yourself in a lot of ways. I don't think that's producing. I think you're just recording when you're doing it that way.

CM: What do you see as the difference between just recording and producing?

NR: If you're producing yourself, you're never really able to stand outside of it. People that make records in their houses, and have never worked with producers, or worked in studios, have no idea what they're missing out on. There's a wealth of knowledge that producers like myself have because we've been doing this for so long. Getting it done right, he says, is an art. There's a right and wrong way to do things when it comes to engineering. You might not realize you're doing it wrong when you're doing it in your bedroom and it sounds killer, and then you give it to somebody else to mix in a recording studio and you go, holy shit, that sounds terrible. What was going on here? Well, your house isn't tuned. Your bedroom wasn't built to be a room to listen to 65 hz in and guitar tones and drum sound and vocal sounds. Granted, some people make great sounding records in their house, so kudos to them, but it doesn't really work like that for me.

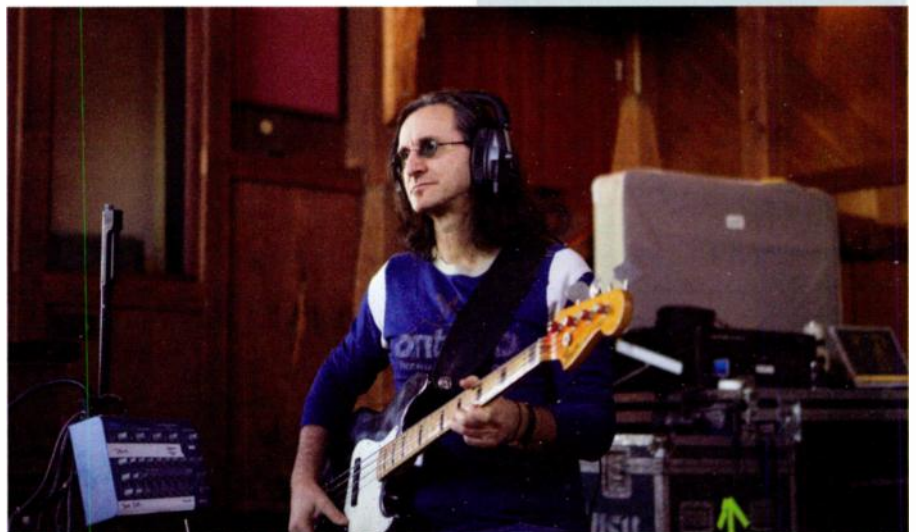
Feel is very important to Raskulinecz – not just the feel of individual performances, but also the overall vibe of the sessions. "When the sound is right – and if you're a musician you know what I'm talking about – if the sound is right and everything feels right, you're going to deliver the goods." And getting the band to deliver the goods is what Raskulinecz focuses on...

NR: That's what my job is. After you get everything arranged and get the songs figured out, you put your pom poms on and be the cheerleader for the team. There were a lot of really inspiring moments making this record: watching Neil Peart play drums like he does, and standing three feet away from Geddy Lee when he's recording bass tracks. It's one of the most inspiring things I've ever been a part of. We really made a performance record – they're playing everything. There's no audio manipulation, no sitting in front of a computer for hours and moving things around and fixing things and replacing things. There's zero of that on this record. These guys don't need that technology. Basically, the main reason we use it is because of the speed. It's a hell of a lot quicker to make records than it is with tape. There's no comparison.

CM: What's the difference between editing to get the performance you want as opposed getting good solid performances from the players straight up?

NR: It just feels different. You can cut something up and make it perfect, but all the records I know and loved

- 1974 Rush
- 1975 Fly By Night
- 1975 Caress Of Steel
- 1976 2112
- 1976 All The World's A Stage
- 1977 A Farewell To Kings
- 1978 Archives
- 1978 Hemispheres
- 1980 Permanent Waves
- 1981 Moving Pictures
- 1981 Exit...Stage Left
- 1982 Signals
- 1984 Grace Under Pressure
- 1985 Power Windows
- 1987 Hold Your Fire
- 1988 A Show Of Hands
- 1989 Presto
- 1990 Chronicles
- 1991 Roll The Bones
- 1993 Counterparts
- 1996 Test for Echo
- 1997 Retrospective I
- 1997 Retrospective II
- 1998 Different Stages Live
- 2002 Vapor Trails
- 2003 The Spirit Of Radio
- 2003 Rush In Rio CD
- 2003 Rush In Rio DVD
- 2004 Feedback
- 2005 R30 DVD
- 2006 Rush Replay

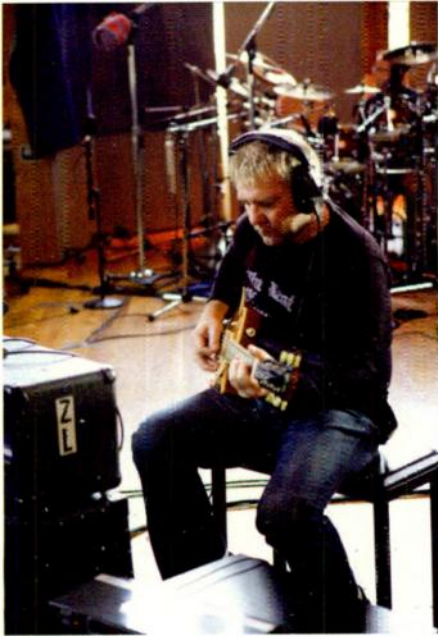


and listened to when I grew up weren't perfect. You can hear those imperfections in the old performances: out of tune vocals, missed drum hits and stuff like that. When you just listen to music none of that matters. The song is what's important. I don't want to get absorbed into the technology, I don't even think about the technology. I just think about the song and how it feels. That magic you get when you hear a great song, to me, that's the most important thing. I don't care if it's perfect. It's how all of the instruments work together. When you listen to

a great song, you don't hear each thing individually. You hear it as a whole.

CM: You're really animated in the studio and really get into the performances?

NR: I do. I'm a fanatical air drummer, guitar player, everything. That's how I do it. I'm standing three or four feet away from Geddy and I'm playing with him, same thing with Neil. I'm definitely all about feel. If it doesn't feel right, then it's not right yet. And I think that's how



AT LEFT: Geddy Lee's black Jazz makes an appearance.

ABOVE: Alex Lifeson: "...turn it up and go."

records used to be made. Like I said before. I try not to get overwhelmed by the technology, because the technology can take the song away.

CM: What do you mean?

NR: You become so wrapped up in fixing little things, but in reality they're not wrong, that's part of the vibe. You don't listen to music with your eyes. You listen with your ears. You look at it and there's the kick and there's the bass and you go, 'well I need to move that.' It's automatic. Your ears don't hear things the same way because your brain isn't processing it the same way.

CM: How do you go about getting to the point in the relationship where you walk up to Neil Peart, Alex Lifeson, or Geddy Lee and say, 'you know, I don't like that?'

NR: I pretty much did that immediately. I think that's one of the reasons that they went in my direction. After the initial meeting we went down into the basement and listened to some of the demos they were working on. I immediately said, 'this could be better, that could be better, this could be different.' And I think they were, like, 'holy shit, this kid just came in and, told us what he thought' instead of sitting there and telling them how great they were. Part of the producer's role is to be brutally honest, and hopefully you're in that position because the band likes your work. If I'm recording with the Foo Fighters, and Taylor doesn't nail a drum track, I tell him to do it again. If Dave isn't singing great, I tell him to do it again. It's exactly the same thing with Rush. Because I'm so familiar with their records, I know what they're capable of achieving.

For Raskulinecz, the biggest thing was to capture the feel of early Rush. That meant using their past work as a template to drive the process, getting deep into songwriting, arrangements, instru-

For more info on Rush and *Snakes and Arrows* check out www.rush.com

ment choices – everything. "Everybody got equal treatment," he says. "Look, Neil Peart is probably the greatest drummer in the world, but if it doesn't sound right, or feel right, then he needs to go do it again. The very first day we did a drum track, and it was awesome. When he was finished, I said, 'okay, we got that and it's great, but what if you try it this way.' He thrives on that."

Raskulinecz also had a very concrete list of things to capture that make up Rush's sound and feel – Taurus Pedals on almost every song, for example. "For me, that's a huge part of the sound of Rush. We changed guitar sounds on every song to give every song its own identity," he says, employing a lot of Lifeson's and Lee's classic guitars: Lifeson's tobacco sunburs: ES 335, his Les Paul, his Telecaster, and Lee's original black Jazz Bass.

"We worked off the demos and Neil tracked to those," says Raskulinecz. "Some of the songs we cut with Geddy and Neil playing together on the floor. Then we started overdubbing guitars, and at that point, we used both rooms at the studio. Alex did guitars in one room and me and Geddy did vocals in the other studio." Doing vocals and guitars simultaneously isn't usually the way Rush records, but it shaved roughly eight weeks of their process, Lifeson says. Then again, the whole process was a little different, he explains. . .

"Typically we'd go into a studio on the first day of writing and continue writing for 8-10 weeks and then move into a studio and start recording at that point." This process was more casual, Lee and Lifeson working three days a week, in five or six hour sessions for just over a month. "We only live a few blocks from each other. It was very relaxed and easy. We started last March and carried on that way for about five weeks. We went to Neil's place in Quebec and spent a couple days with him, went over the material and got a feel for the direction. Then we went into a studio in Toronto in May and worked for that month, continued writing and got caught up on the songs that we'd written."

Overall, it was more like the approach they took earlier in their career: "Ged and I wrote acoustic guitar and electric bass, which was very different from what we'd been doing for a long time. In the early days, that's how we wrote, but not in the last 20 years. There was an immediacy about the music. When you write on acoustic you know right away if it works or not and if it doesn't it's quite obvious to you." Although they worked from demos, they didn't allow themselves to be limited by them. "I didn't feel precious about anything. I wanted to start from scratch all over again."

He's come full circle, he explains. "I think the main approach to my sound now is straight into the amp, turn it up and go. There's something that just grabs you about it. It touches something. And I think that's why classic rock is such a successful format these days cause it's got all that in it."

Rush however, is hardly your average classic rock band. Anyone remotely familiar with the band knows the starman graphic – created by Hugh Syme, it first appeared on 2112 in 1976, a symbol of the abstract man against the masses. In many ways, it's symbolic of Rush's approach to music and career from the very beginning. After forming in 1968, the band immediately went through extensive lineup changes. It wasn't until Neil Peart joined in 1974 that the band solidified. Change has always been an integral part of their career, as is

their individual development as musicians and their tendency to embrace new technology and musical styles without diminishing their own character.

"They've never gone backwards," Raskulinecz says, and his approach was never intended to change that. "It was never really about making them sound like old Rush. It's about making it feel like an old Rush record. Rush is never going to sound like it sounded. They're never going to make 2112, or *Moving Pictures*, or *Hemispheres* again – it's always been a forward-thinking band."

"I think the album does come across like that," says Lifeson. "It's hard for me to be objective about it, obviously, I hear elements of our whole history in the record." Still, the sound is fresh, he adds.

No surprise. From their early blues-tinged metal through their unique take on '70s prog and right up to their new release, *Snakes and Arrows*, they've never resisted evolution. Rush has survived changing musical and industry trends, the pitfalls of fame, and temptations of fortune, as well as personal tragedy. Along the way they've influenced countless musicians and rank fifth behind The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, KISS, and Aerosmith for consecutive gold and platinum albums by a rock band. Since *Moving Pictures*, arguably their most well-known release, they've consistently released new material and routinely sell in excess of a million records each time out, still pushing the envelope musically, for both their fans and themselves.

This time out, pushing the envelope took them to a place, Lifeson says, they haven't been in some time. . .

"For the first time in a long time I'm really eager to get back in the studio and do some more writing. It was such a wonderful experience. There was never any moment where I felt we were stressed out or up against the wall." A great deal of that, he says, was due to Raskulinecz's and Chycki's enthusiasm and their ability to keep things moving. "I would love to get back with that combination and do another record sooner than later."

The source of the excitement in the studio, judging from Raskulinecz's feeling about the album and the process, is the band itself, the chemistry that has held fans enthralled for almost four decades. It's a long, deep-seated chemistry – the kind few acts are able to maintain. "We're great friends. I've known Geddy since I was 12 years old. We've had so many of the same experiences," says Lifeson. "It's the same thing with Neil. We've gone through so much together – great experiences, difficult experiences, and, even at this stage of our lives, we're always laughing. It's just wonderful to be around each other, even before you take in work." And that work is still incredibly satisfying for all of them – more than ever, in fact. "There's a flow to this record, from beginning to end – it's really connected – a real album – we're really, really proud of it." ■



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

The GOLD



FIND *dogs*

BY KEVIN YOUNG

For anyone who doesn't know yet, The Golden Dogs is one of those rare acts whose fly-in-your-face sound is as impressive on stage as on record. "It wouldn't feel right if the live show wasn't at least as interesting as the album, you know what I mean? I think good rock and roll shows ... I come out of the show feeling energized, feeling inspired to do my thing more. I hope to be that kind of band," says lead singer/guitarist Dave Azzolini.

Although they share some sonic ground with other Canadian indie notables, the band has a uniquely-defined sound that's hard to pigeonhole. Within a few bars of the first track on their 2006 effort, *Big Eye Little Eye*, it's easy to see why. Low key hooks aplenty, punchy arrangements, and some serious chemistry. With its 'Beach Boys on speed' vibe, Azzolini and keyboardist/vocalist Jessica Grassia show personality to spare, trading vocal licks over chunky guitars, pounding pianos, and some seriously violent drumming. Happily, the record showcases the same kind of reckless musical mayhem the band does in concert – the kind that makes you wonder how they're holding the whole thing together.

Overall, Azzolini says he's happy with where the band is right now. He wasn't always so positive. The Golden Dogs has done some struggling along the way, in terms of getting the band together and keeping it together. Since leaving Thunder Bay in the late '90s to form the band in Toronto, Azzolini went through a number of incarnations of the lineup to get it right. Bandmate, and now Azzolini's wife, Grassia, stayed back in T-Bay for three years before catching up with him.

"They're all multi-instrumentalists," says Azzolini. "Ever since I started recording I always played the basic rock instruments, these guys are just better at it. It really makes for dynamic interaction. It's a well-rounded, creative unit."

Even after her arrival, the lineup didn't solidify until just recently. Back home the two had played together in a band their bio pegs as 'so embarrassing they refuse to talk about it.' "There was nothing really bad about it," says Grassia. "We were in a wedding band." They made good money, but neither wanted that to be their primary gig. "The scene in T-Bay is small – if you want to play in a band, you do what you can, and thank God, because that's where we actually met ..."

Keyboard players don't usually grab the spotlight as effortlessly as Grassia does. You wouldn't think it from seeing the band live, but Grassia says it took some time to feel as comfortable on stage as she clearly is now. "I'm a really shy person – might be hard to believe seeing the show, but I am." Certain songs help get the band rolling, she explains. "We start every show with 'Birdsong' – the first song on the last record – that's the song that gets everybody in the mood to play a show. It's our opening cheer – we've never had a bad performance of that tune, in our eyes, it gets us ready. 'Nineteen Eighty-five' gets us in that groove too."

Watching the band play, there's very much a sense that they're in it together. "When I'm on stage," she says, "I feel like I'm supporting the greater good. There's not that much pressure. [With] This band, there's so much energy you don't have to worry about being the centre of attention." Grassia's manic stage presence certainly takes the heat off her husband, but the whole band steps up to draw your attention around the stage. They've now been together on and off stage for nine years – married for four – and the chemistry the two

THE GOLDEN DOGS

Big Eye Little Eye



have on stage is undeniable. "And off stage too – that kind of helps out. We just let people have a little glimpse of what we're like. It's great for us, because we get to do everything together. I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for Dave. He'd be doing it for sure – I don't think he'd be having as much fun as he would if he didn't have someone helping him out."

Right at this moment, the only help Azzolini needs is in getting out of bed. When we spoke the two were just waking up – or, at least, thinking about it. Given that it's roughly 2 p.m. you might be tempted to say, "yeah, well it's about time." But given the energy they put out on stage, they could probably use the rest.

The live show has always been an important focus for them, says Azzolini. By the time their first EP was released in 2003 they were already in pretty good shape. Local weekdies picked up on the buzz of the band's release party at the El Mocambo club in Toronto, reviewing the show and helping grow their local audience. The show isn't just about what happens on stage, he explains. "We were trying to put a lot into the actual venue." In the Elmo's entryway they hung three 4' x 8' panels by cartoonist Sean Ward, who was still working on the third one as the audience filed in. "It was part art installation/part rock show."

That ethic survives now – at their Lee's Palace gig this past January the band converted the stage an enchanted forest, courtesy of a veritable jungle of plastic greenery rescued from the set of their last video, "Construction Worker." The care they take to make the show stand out is evident, and refreshing – it's something too few bands concern themselves with. The window dressing is nice, but even if they were playing in a bare room under fluorescent lights, their barely restrained

The GOLDEN dogs

energy would suck you in. The energy of the live show was very much a natural development, says Azzolini. Since the lineup solidified last year it's gone through the roof – "Now that we've got the right people the energy is spread across the stage." The trick now is to keep the band together to exploit that comfort and chemistry. "We've had a lot of fits and starts. It's always volatile trying to keep a band together – five different personalities and they have their own bands. You never know what could happen in the span of a year."

Or in the span of pre-production for your record, for that matter...

After signing to True North Records, and consolidating their two EPs into one record, things started rolling for the Golden Dogs – plum opening gigs, showcases at SXSW, and Popkomm in Germany. With a reasonably solid band and success coming their way, what Azzolini and company really wanted to do was to get back in the studio and record a new record. As luck, fate, and Murphy's Law would have it, however, shortly before tracking started, their last drummer quit to attend school in Britain.

As it happens, the change actually helped pull the band together. Because of the chaos surrounding the recording process they did a lot of work in pre-production so they could get more work done in less time in the studio when producer Paul Aucoin came in. With the arrangements solid going in, Aucoin could concentrate on quality control and the mix. Their live ethic and enthusiasm comes across loud and clear throughout the album. Recorded in Toronto at Hall Music, it was very much a song-by-song process. "Depending on how we do it live and depending on what feels best," Azzolini explains. For all the uncertainty around the lineup, the record sounds incredibly consistent. Azzolini credits the fact they had to get a fair bit done in a short period of time. "We wanted to prove something at that point."

And they did. Instead of rushing out to find a new drummer, bassist Taylor Knox stepped in to do double duty on drums. To say he worked out well is bit of an understatement. On record and on stage Knox looks, and sounds, like he's going to explode at any second. "The Halifax New Year's show," laughs Azzolini. "It was one of those schlocky rock moments – Taylor stood up, he takes a drink of water and it's going down his face and all over the toms. I saw it happening and there's a big giant drum fill and I was, like, 'do that stupid rock thing.'" Def Leppard moments aside, what makes Knox stand out isn't just what he brings to the band as a personality. In the studio he not only upped the bar in terms of enthusiasm and musicianship, his performance seems to be the fuel that drove the band on tape. The result makes *Big Eye Little Eye* an ideal blueprint for a kicking live show, but even with their growing reputation as a must-see live act and the good vibe on stage, Azzolini is cautious about being overly optimistic. "The more success you have, the more you're playing, and these guys, the more we're touring and playing, the less they can play with their own bands. Hopefully one day we can get the tours going together, but then the energy is spread thinner." It's kind of a double-edged sword, he explains.

As confident as he is with the live show and the current makeup of the band, Azzolini is equally confident in the music. He knows the songs resonate with people and that alone goes a long way to keeping a band together. "I'm very happy with the CD, and the live show wouldn't be as good if the songs weren't as good." He also recognizes that the material wouldn't come off nearly as well without such solid performances on and off record, and he's hoping to strike a balance, keep this lineup solid, and get them into the studio soon. With good reason – rounded by bassist, Stew Heyduk, and guitarist Neil Quin, it's an unusually strong band. "They're all multi-instrumentalists," says Azzolini. "Ever since



I started recording I always played the basic rock instruments, these guys are just better at it. It really makes for dynamic interaction. It's a well-rounded, creative unit."

For all that, Azzolini knows there's a lot that goes into keeping a band together beyond the satisfaction of putting on a good show. First and foremost, making sure their dynamic interaction is as balanced as possible on tour. Finding a way to get along well in small spaces even when you're not getting along well...

Canadian Musician: How much touring have you done over the last couple of records?

Dave Azzolini: Thankfully we haven't gotten pushed to our limits. It's good that we're going out to Victoria with this band – in terms of their circumstances as people they're ready to go on tour without losing a job they care about. If we went on the road in the past, it wouldn't have been the same dynamic.

CM: Had you done the cross-Canada tour before?

DA: Our first one was with this lineup and thankfully so. We went to Halifax, then back to Toronto. We went to Victoria, then back to Toronto. There was a little bit of treacherous weather. Roger's Pass on the way back was tough.

CM: Beyond SXSW have you done any other US tours? Europe?

DA: No, now we're ready for that thing to happen. I'm hoping next year we'll be able to tour Canada in the summer and not have to risk our lives so much. We've got a few labels interested in France and Germany and we're hoping to get there in the springtime. We did Popkomm Festival – had a few promoters out from Norway, Denmark, and Germany.

CM: That helps when you're trying to sell the live show.

DA: That's why SXSW and those types of festivals are so important, especially now that we have the show coming together so well. If we can keep everything together for SXSW this year, if we can get a few people from these different places out – we're relying on a few lucky things to happen.

CM: Any adjustments you've had to make along the way to get along on tour?

DA: We let each other get angry – you know? Ten hours in a van in the prairies... we actually get along very well for five people with very different personalities; this tour made us see that it's okay to be angry around each other and just have our own space.

CM: Does getting out on stage help balance the mood?

DA: You get all that tension out on stage. The camaraderie comes back after you're on stage and any bullshit gets thrown out the window. It's just the band playing, and that's what you're there for. We've had bad gigs too though...

For more info check out www.thegolddogs.com.

Everyone does. Sometimes it's a question of draw, other times of expectations. Town to town the character and size of the crowd changes drastically. One night it's a packed house where the band is definitely preaching to the converted, the next it's, well, not. The ups and downs are all part of the gig, as are the self-inflicted wounds they occasionally result in.

If getting along by allowing everyone to go through their own thing on the road is our rule #1, rule #2 is just as important, i.e. keeping a close eye on your personal sanity. And nothing helps you do that like ripping it up to celebrate a particularly good night. That just happened with the Toronto show – we weren't sure how we'd do at Lee's and the fact that we did so well – we had to celebrate that one. So the next gig suffered rather furiously I was not in any shape to do a good show – my voice was ripped up so bad. Stuff's going to happen."

CM: You obviously take the shows seriously but not too seriously?

DA: It's about having some connection and raising each other's energy. In Toronto we have the assistance of people we can't bring on the road because our van only fits so many people – our friends, lighting guys, sound...

CM: Are you bringing the greenery?

DA: No. We left that for the video people. That's another example of stuff we can't do in other places.

Plastic plants, a full crew, and a packed house doesn't hurt, but it's the band's genuine attempt to share the spotlight that makes the Golden Dogs so compelling live. Keeping players on board isn't much different than keeping your audience on board – you allow them to invest something in the project, a deeper contribution than just filling space in the mix and on the stage. Azzolini's earlier comment about touring with his band member's other projects isn't just blowing smoke. There's a real commitment to making the show stand out by showcasing the talent of the individual players. More than just spreading the energy around the stage – something that's actually prompted Azzolini to tone down his own performance – there are times when other members in the band literally step up to the mic. And whether it started as something purely political, or was just good time to give Azzolini and Grassia's voices a break, Quin's mid-gig solo turn at the mic is a fantastic moment in the show.

CM: Do you always have Quin come out and sing a couple of songs?

DA: We've been building that. He had this 40-second song we've been using right after "Run Amok," because, that song, you have to be going at 100 km an hour. You're supposed to hear that song in a car ripping down the highway so right after that song we need something to take the energy to another place.

Usually that's the spot for

Quin to do the 40-second song, but at Lee's he did a longer

song and we've been doing that more as

kind of a mid-set break for me and Grassia

and Heyduk.

CM: What's the song called?

DA: It's his own song. It's called "Kindergarten." We've always tried to do that as a band. I think we lost a little bit of perspective on the show when we were trying to keep the band together. Now that the lineup's solidified more focus has gone into the show. I think as we're becoming more confident as a band, stuff like that can take place. Knox is also a songwriter and I hope to get him out there and showcase him a bit more. And Jessica, her voice is amazing so with the next album I'm hoping to utilize all these amazing elements – if I can keep it together. I always put that at the end of the sentence, just in case.

CM: Are you trying to add new songs into the set?

DA: It's tough – the more shows you play, the less time you have to rehearse. We try to slip it in at sound check. It's not a very thorough jam session – to find the basic rhythm and parts, you need time to develop that.

CM: It's about little moments.

DA: Yeah, they make it the best. Those little connections on stage where you go into the wrong part, by accident, but for some reason someone else will go into the same part by accident. All those little ethereal connections come into play after a while. The last western tour really solidified it. I think our Vancouver show, after we almost went off the cliff on the Cocahalla Highway, that night we played so much more intensely as a band than we've ever played before and I was never into a live show than I was in that Vancouver show.

CM: When you say you almost went off a cliff?

DA: Well, we were fishtailing and if we didn't turn the music down and say "Steer into it. Steer into it" at the same time anything could have happened. That just kind of put it into focus. It made us more intense as a band.

That intensity is helping the band build their show and their audience. The latest single, "Construction Worker," an Azzolini/Grassia co-write, is out now, they've had a song recently placed on Veronica Mars and, as of this writing the band is out in force, for another helping of the road. Azzolini recognizes that every band's path is

different. Yours, he says, growing naturally, and growing it naturally means delivering on stage and building a dedicated following city-by-city and night-by-night. "That's been our path, as opposed to being thrust into something we're not ready for."

For an indie act, with limited airplay and limited budget all round, getting on stage is the most important place to make an impact and a connection to the people who can help keep you in kibble and doing what you love. Too often bands seem to think a successful live show is mostly about hitting the right notes in the right order – they could learn a fair bit from a Golden Dogs show.



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

db Clifford

It is a cold Wednesday night in February but dbClifford and his band were heating up Supermarket, a new trendy venue in Toronto's funky Kensington Market. In the back room, past the long wooden bar and through the almost empty dining room, the small crowd that braved the cold to catch this free show was treated to a world-class performance by a multi-talented performer. • BY LONNY KNAPP

Recently signed to Sony/BMG Canada, dbClifford is every A&R person's dream. At only 27 years old, this singer/songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and producer is already a veteran of the industry; he just might be the complete package. Mark Jowett, co-founder of Nettwerk Records and dbClifford's manager, believes that dbClifford possesses many of the qualities that contribute to success: "he is an accomplished musician and writer, and he is marketable in terms of image, which is important in mainstream music, but more importantly he is amiable and cooperative. He is intelligent and willing to work hard. It is easy to work with an artist like that."

But in the fickle music industry, which seems to value style over substance, will these attributes translate into record sales and ultimately commercial success?

Without doubt dbClifford is talented. His debut album, *Recyclable*, released March 16, on Sony/BMG is truly a solo effort. "I did everything myself," he says. "I produced it, arranged it, engineered it, played all the instruments, and wrote all the songs. Literally it was just me alone in a room for six months."

He makes it sound so easy. In fact everything about dbClifford seems to come naturally. He is intensely focused on his career but comes across as good-natured and easy going. He is

earnest and seems to be free of the overwhelming ego that weighs down so many talented people. If you ask him how he came to be proficient on so many instruments he will say with modesty, "music came to me naturally."

His one-page bio from Sony/BMG states that dbClifford was "labelled a child prodigy after mastering the opera *Carmen* on the piano at age five." But he seems uncomfortable with the label and believes his propensity for music owes more to his unique upbringing than to innate talent. "I would never use that word," he says. "I think it was an environment thing. I grew up surrounded by good music and my Dad was a musician – he provided me tons of opportunities. I grew up in a really good environment to become a musician."

dbClifford says that his upbringing was unique. "I grew up in the south of France. My mom is English and my dad is French and Tunisian. I had a very cosmopolitan education, not a religious upbringing at all. France is a very Catholic country and all the kids around me went to Sunday school. I always felt that I stuck out in that way."

While his friends were immersed in bible studies, a young dbClifford was discovering music. "I played music all the time. I grew up in the country so there wasn't much else to do. We had a piano and at the age





dbClifford

of four I picked up the melody for *Carmen*, playing it with two or three fingers on the piano."

His father recognised his son's potential and immediately enrolled him in piano lessons, "which like every other kid on the planet," he hated, but stuck with nonetheless for the next 15 years.

When he was 11 his parents bought him a drumkit, which enabled him to join a rock band, and it wasn't long until he picked up the bass and the guitar. "I would put albums on and learn the whole album on each instrument. I was always playing because I was isolated in the middle of nowhere."

Through his teens he practiced diligently and at age 18 he was accepted to the prestigious CIAM School of Music in Bordeaux, France.

"CIAM is a music school with tons of nerdy musicians," he explains. "It is like a regular school except instead of going to class for two hours of history you get two hours of sightreading followed by improvisation."

dbClifford believes that attending the CIAM was like being a cast member of the American television series *Fame*. "I was a huge fan of that show as a kid and I always wanted to be in a school like that. It was very comparable except we only learned music. We didn't get to do drama and dance," he says smiling.

While attending CIAM he met another musician by the name of William Cartwright. They formed a duo and began collaborating under the moniker Supanova. (No relation to *Rockstar-Supernova*, the reality show that spawned *Supernova*, the band fronted by Toronto's own Lucas Rossi.) The two recorded a demo and on a whim sent it off to Interscope Records without expecting much to come of it. "We got signed on a fluke," explains dbClifford. "We just sent them a demo and the next thing you know

they are flying us to Los Angeles. We had dinner with Jimmy Iovine, (legendary co-founder of Interscope Records) and Dr. Dre. It was just out of this world."

Supanova eventually signed a huge multi-album deal with Interscope Records. For the two boys from the south of France it was like living a dream. "We got a lot of money and a big advance. We rented a couple of apartments and started to live the big life," he says. But the dream was short lived. "Nothing came of it," he explains. "I think the demo we recorded was just too good. It was too good to be a demo but not quite good enough to be the album. If (Interscope) had the guts they would have just mixed it and released it. I think it would have sounded like the stuff the Neptunes have done recently - Lo-fi but really funky."

Disheartened and without a record deal, dbClifford found living in Los Angeles disagreeable: "People in L.A. are very fake. It is all about the money there - it is not a rumour; it is true. If you live in L.A. that is all that matters."

Ready for a change of scenery dbClifford headed north to Victoria, BC, and immediately fell in love. "Victoria is a small paradise. People are very laid back and super healthy. They don't care if you are the King of England or just some dude. Victoria has more sensitivity to it than Los Angeles or America in general."

Only a month after arriving in Victoria dbClifford received tragic news and was called home to France. "I lost my Mom that summer. She was very sick but it was a surprise. She was still alive when I got on the plane from Vancouver but died before I arrived in Paris."

He was understandably devastated by the death of his mother, but her death ultimately became the catalyst for creation. "When I found out my Mom had died I flew home for the funeral. I did a lot of thinking.

For a month I was just thinking constantly. I came to realize it was time to do a solo project."

Before returning to Victoria to get started on his solo project dbClifford needed to make a final stopover in Los Angeles. "I went back to L.A. to sell all my furniture and stuff that was in storage. At that point I needed money so I sold everything: my furniture, my clothes, and my van to make enough money to buy the gear to do the album."

Returning to Victoria inspired, dbClifford devised a plan. With so many influences to draw upon he had to decide what kind of album he wanted to make. "I decided I wanted to do a pop album. I wanted it to be really organic: just drums, piano, bass, guitar, and vocals - that's it. No tricks, production stuff, or samples."

With that decision made he moved on to the next step: setting up the studio. "The first month and half was spent plugging, patching, lifting heavy things, trying out mics and preamps, and basically just getting dirty."

With the hard work out of the way he was ready to start tracking. "I made a list of the 10 songs I was going to do and I started with the first one. I put down a click track, recorded a temporary piano part, laid down the drums and then the bass, re-did the piano, added some guitar, and finally the vocals."

A lot of time was spent experimenting with various preamps and mic placements to achieve the warm and true sounds you hear on *Recyclable*. When it came to getting the drum sound dbClifford had a particular sound in mind. "For each instrument I had a main influence. For the drums it was Ringo meets Questlove (drummer of hip-hop legends the Roots.) Laid back and simple like Ringo but funky and soulful like Questlove. The drum sound is pretty dry and punchy and not too roomy. It was recorded in a dry room using very few mics. I didn't want a big over-produced sound."

"I am a musician first, not a lyricist. So I chose three words that best described the kind of album I wanted to make. I wrote the words on a piece of paper and stuck it to my computer screen. Everything I wrote had to fit with that concept."

"Opinionated," "romantic," and "naive" are three words that dbClifford kept in my mind when penning the lyrics for the songs on *Recyclable* and, though it wasn't his intention, he says that the three words can also be used when describing him. He states that he is, "definitely romantic, absolutely naive, and more than certainly opinionated."

dbClifford insists the songs on *Recyclable* are about more than "chicks and cars." He believes that a good pop song "doesn't have to be corny, and just because



Photo by Cindy Brooks

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dbClifford

it is catchy it doesn't mean it can't have a concept or something meaningful to say."

For the majority of the record he sticks to the typical pop music topics of love, loss, and lust, but he doesn't shy away from heavier subjects.

"I Have a Dream" is a tune about racial equality and based on the famous speech by Martin Luther King. "I have always had a thing for that speech," he says. "It is one of the greatest moments in history."

dbClifford admits that he has "weird influences," and he found the inspiration for "Simple Things," the first single from *Recyclable*, from an unlikely source. "I wanted to write a song where the verse would establish a picture of the world where you read the news and hear all about these terrible things like wars and priests touching little children. Then the chorus is about little things that come around everyday and make life worth living. It is loosely inspired by "My Favourite Things" from *The Sound of Music* but musically the songs don't have much in common."

There are also songs that expose his more personal and intimate side. "Give Me Another Day" is about a bad break up, while "About a Girl" is inspired by his first crush. He admits that both songs were inspired by true events but penning the tracks must have been a cathartic experience, as he seems to have gotten over the girls in question. "The songs ended up being stronger than the relationships that inspired them. Some of the girls I don't even talk to anymore."

With album tracked and ready to mix, and after half a year spent in isolation, dbClifford was ready to collaborate and enlisted the brother of his Supanova bandmate to mix *Recyclable*. "Joby Baker mixed the album," he says. "He is a brilliant up-and-coming producer. I wouldn't be surprised if you started to hear his name more often in the next couple of years."

Finished product in hand, dbClifford began to shop his record, a process made easier by the fact that he had a label in mind that he believed would make the perfect home for his solo album. "I heard about what I thought was a little company called Network. Someone suggested that I call Mark Jowett."

Jowett was impressed by the album but didn't feel that it was right for his label. He needed to be convinced. "I listened to it and I thought it was pretty good but I thought for our label it was too commercial."

He passed on the album, but dbClifford was not easily discouraged. "He was fairly insistent," recalls Jowett.

"I didn't let him hang up," says dbClifford. "I told him, 'I think you need to listen to it again.'"

"I did and I started to recognize that

there was real depth to the songwriting, the production, and the performance. I realized that he was a significant artist in many ways but because he had the potential to get on mainstream radio he would be hard to promote for a small label," says Jowett.

Jowett once again passed on signing the album but offered dbClifford his services as manager. "Luckily he was looking for management and I had an A&R situation with Sony/BMG. I sent them the album; they loved it and ended up signing him. So I ended up as manager and publisher of dbClifford."

dbClifford applied his commitment to simplicity when forming his live band. "I have always had a thing about trios," he says. "If you can't afford to have horn sections and guitar players and percussionists it's best to keep it simple."

On the small stage in the backroom of Supermarket, backed by drummer Johnny Five and bassist Rick May, dbClifford hovered over the electric piano. The band held a month-long residency and attracted a small but loyal following. When dbClifford stands up and digs into his Roland RD600 stage piano a group of girls near the back of the room got up from their chairs and start dancing and singing along. The sound created by the three guys on stage was authentic and powerful. As they embarked on an extended improvised tangent or locked into a syncopated funk jam they seemed to be connected by telepathy.

"It's like we can read each others minds. I think it has something to do with us being born on the same day," says Rick May bassist, veteran sideman, and elder statesman of the band. May has played with some of the biggest names in the industry and had provided the bottom end for such notable performers as Sass Jordan, Ricky Lee Jones, and Taj Mahal. May has even played bass for Michael Jackson and appears in his videos for "The Way You Make Me Feel" and "Dirty Diana." "I did a couple of gigs with Michael but I didn't tour with him," he says. "It was a great experience. I got to meet Bubbles (Michael's chimpanzee.) He really liked me and I got to hold him."

May, who was born in Philadelphia but has since become a Canadian citizen, met dbClifford while gigging in Victoria and was immediately impressed by the depth of talent possessed by the considerably younger man. "He is world class. Most of the people I've worked with don't compare to him. He is an incredible musician. It is a treat to be working with people almost half



Photo by Cindy Brooks

my age. For him to want me to play with him means a lot to me."

Recyclable is in stores and dbClifford is on tour to promote it. The video for "Simple Things" is on air and the second single is on the radio. Sales figures are coming in and Sony/BMG are beginning to see if their marketing and promotion campaign successfully connected dbClifford with consumers.

It is not easy to establish an artist in today's market and Jowett knows that it takes a lot of work to excite music fans. "It's highly competitive in the mainstream market. We have to be resourceful, patient, and diligent. It is important to have a strong team and label that believes in an artist, we are lucky to have that with Sony/BMG and Network. It is not just about the first song going to radio; it is much broader than that. We do a lot of online marketing these days, as well as touring, press, and promotion; there are many components to focus on when trying to break a new artist."

dbClifford is an artist that doesn't rely on dance steps or gimmicks to sell records, and he is optimistic about his shot at success. He believes there is a market for great songs played by great musicians; however, he knows that success won't come easy. "The challenge is that this album is not for 15-20-year-olds. I make musician's music and when I recorded the album I had people who would listen to Steely Dan, The Beatles, and James Taylor in mind."

He feels that an older audience will appreciate his music but marketing to an older demographic is a challenge because 30-something-year-old music fans are less likely to come into contact with media that promotes new artists and spend less time watching MuchMusic, or surfing the web.

Still dbClifford is confident. "I think there is a place for this album," he says. "It is just a matter of marketing it in the right way and getting it to the right audience. I am hoping my music will speak for itself." ●



Lonny Knapp is a Toronto-based freelance writer.



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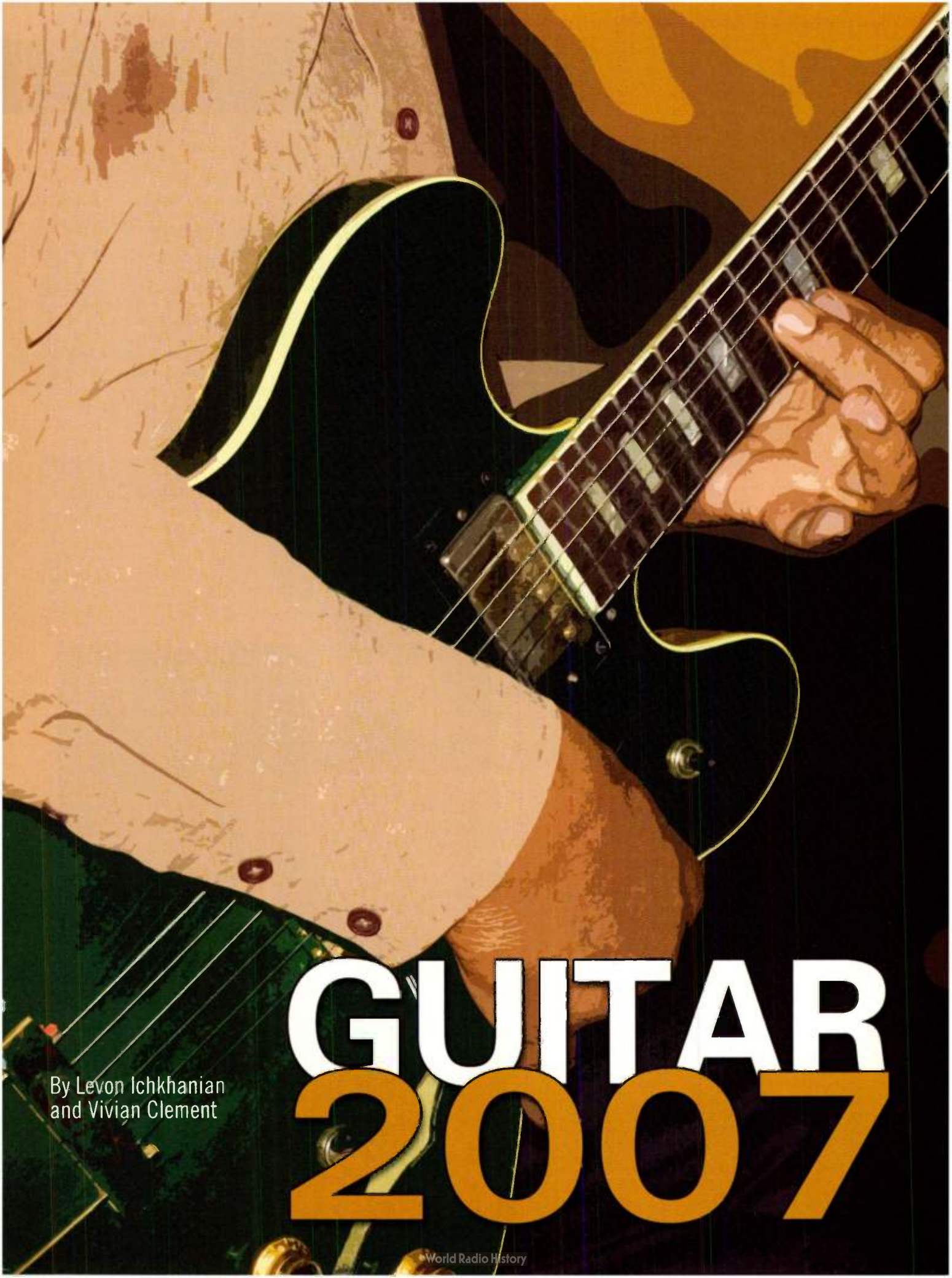
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Don Ross, Lee Ritenour, Sonny Greenwich, and Badi Assad are all persons of marked musical individuality. They have graced stages all over the world in solo performances or with their groups. They have inspired many.

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their work, you'll guess their names a few bars into a piece and for those of you that aren't familiar with their work, read on, be inspired, and check out their music!

Don Ross has managed to do what no other player has done: win the prestigious US National Fingerstyle Guitar Championship twice! He's master of alternate tunings and an innovator of fingerstyle guitar techniques. A solo performer of the highest order.

Lee Ritenour is a founding member of contemporary jazz group Fourplay. He's a studio ace/producer and pioneer of instrumental guitar music with 40 solo albums to date. Ritenour has also played on over 2,000 albums ranging from Barbara Streisand to Pink Floyd. Lee's most recent CD *Smoke n' Mirrors* features Daniel Jobim (grandson of Antonio Carlos Jobim) and Zamojhohe, a singing sensation from South Africa.

Sonny Greenwich is an innovator who has created his own distinct guitar style. Sonny has played with Miles Davis, Charles Lloyd, Wayne Shorter, Pharoah Sanders,

McCoy Tyner, Chick Corea, saxophonist John Handy, Sun-Ra, the funk-rock band Bootsauc3, jazz saxophonist Jane Bennett, and pianists Marilyn Lerner and Hilario Duran.

Badi Assad is a one-woman powerhouse. A solo performer with no boundaries, to see Badi in concert is truly an experience. She sings, plays guitar and percussion – fusing the music of Brazil, jazz, classical, and beyond all at the same time.

these days including yourself, David Occhipinti, Andy Scott, and more. All I can say is keep playing because I enjoy listening.

BA: Yes! Tommy Emmanuel!

Who and what inspires you?

DR: I don't listen to a lot of guitar music as a rule. I never have. I guess it's because I'm really not very interested in guitars or guitarists in general. I love music, no matter what instrument it gets played on. That said, I think Bruce Cockburn had more to spur my interest in what the guitar can do than any other player of the instrument. I'm mostly into composers of modern music like Steve Reich, Keith Jarrett, and Pat Metheny (a guitarist, ironically ... but a guitarist who composes at the keyboard, which I think is awesome). I also love really loud rock music. Imogen Heap, Sly and the Family Stone, Ricki Lee Jones, and Bach. Is that stupid enough?

LR: I love lots of different kinds of music. It's almost like an actor doing a movie; you become that part. And yet I always have Lee Ritenour to hang on to, where I can't even get rid of it even if I try, and I do try



Sonny Greenwich

What I remember most about my time with Miles Davis at the Colonial Tavern was sitting with Miles night after night, which he wanted me to do, and listening to the comments he would make to anyone who would come up and try to make conversation with him; comments that I can't repeat here.

Miles would make the same comments about the solos that the band would take, like "what is that funny ---- that Wayne's playing?". And also, when a tune was finished and the band was looking at him as "what do we play next?", he would just look back at them from where he was sitting and say nothing, so they had to scramble for the next tune. It was very funny.

I also remember waving hello to my friend Lenny Breau who was in the audience.



Lee Ritenour

Has anyone caught your attention in the guitar world recently?

DR: Andy McKee, a young acoustic player from Kansas. I met him a few years ago and I suggested to the guy who runs the US label I'm affiliated with (CandyRat) to sign him. They made a few YouTube videos and now Andy has one of the most viewed and the all-time highest rated video on the site. He's a wonderful composer, which to me is a way more important fact than that he is also a very good guitarist.

LR: Recently I was listening to this young blues guitarist, Dereck Trucks. He's strongly immersed in the blues and slide in general but he's obviously got a little jazz in him too. You can tell he likes a lot of different sounds – very talented. I have met John Mayer; he's incredibly talented and I am definitely a fan of his. He is one of the real guys, very dedicated to his craft.

SG: No one in particular has caught my ear recently in the guitar world – I think because I came from a different era. What I mean is the straight jazz players without any gimmicks like flanges, y'know, things that change your sound, or give you more opportunity to play from the help of that, rather than doing it yourself with finger action and working the amp the way I did when I was coming up. I think that's why I like to sometimes sit down and listen to the magic of someone like Ed Bickert. Sometimes, when listening to some guitar players, I wonder what they would sound like without the effects.

I get more out of it (Bickert) than, for example, listening to the western styling of Bill Frisell, but I do like Pat Metheny, who is a very good musician. I heard a solo by Reg Schwager the other day that caught my ear.

I think the guitarist who most impressed me lately is French guitarist Sylvain Luc, mostly because I'm working on solo guitar of late, and I enjoy his harmonic sense. But there are a lot of good guitarists around



Don Ross

The beauty of playing solo is that it's so low-maintenance to arrange a tour and just be responsible for one's self. Onstage too, I can do whatever I want or whatever people request and there's just no boundaries. Conversely, I adore collaboration, and the only reason I don't do more of it is for economic reasons. Touring is stupidly expensive, and just because I bring more people on the road doesn't mean that the money magically gets better. So, I have a family to feed and I have to make things as cost-effective as possible, especially since I'm performing essentially an alternative form of music with a smaller, but more devoted, audience. But sometimes I wish I could magically afford to bring my favourite musical friends on tour with me full-time.

actually, a lot! It always ends up sounding like Lee, which is a good thing. As a kid I loved anyone that could play the shit out of the guitar whether it was country, folk, blues, jazz, fusion ... that contributed to my lifelong passion of trying different kinds of music. And music education, the more music education you have the more depth you have as a musician, then you have the ability to paint all these different pictures and keep growing!

And for inspiration, it is my son, the great musicians that I play with and the constant learning!

SG: A search for universal truth is what has always inspired me and that means I've studied sacred texts from different epochs over the years, and this has had a great effect on my musical ideas. *Peace Chant* and *Hymn to the Earth* were influenced by this, and meditation has always played a part in my composition and outlook on life. Sound itself, whether it is from an instrument or the human voice has always interested me and I've always tried for purity of sound, even getting there through distortion; like peeling an apple to get to the apple. I suppose that's how I see improvisation: as peeling away the melody to get to the essence and, in the process, expressing your interpretation of it.

BA: Focal dystonia is a neurological disorder that I was diagnosed with in my left hand. Basically, my fingers wouldn't do what I wanted them to. I couldn't play guitar for two years. Before that experience the reason for my entire life was indeed the music I was playing through my guitar. My voice was always present but it was not the focus in my mind – the focus was always the guitar. Not being able to play made me rethink everything: my perspective on music and, subsequently, my relation to the guitar.

I discovered that music, inspiration, and creativity were living in me and all around me and not only through my guitar. I ended up developing another interaction with my voice, my body, and percussion,



Badi Assad

which made me into a musician – whereas before I was strictly a guitar player. When I recuperated my guitar chops the focus of my music had already shifted to the voice and to my ability to mix my vocals, mouth, and body percussion all with my guitar at the same time.

What advice do you have for up-and-coming guitar players?

DR: Don't listen to too much guitar music. Guitarists tend to be too dogmatic. You also end up sounding too much like one player or another. If I hear one more guitarist who sounds like Chet Atkins, I think I'll eat my face.

For God's sake, keep an open mind. Listen to everything: old music, new music, weird music, pop music, music from countries with names you can't pronounce. It's ALL music, so it's all good for you. Well, some of it's crap, but MOST of it is good for you.

Also, double on another instrument if you can. Percussion is good, because western musicians tend to suffer from their culture's lack of rhythmic imagination. Playing drums is a great way (along with dancing) to get one's whole body playing music. Piano is good because music theory is laid out in black and white in front of you. It's hard to learn theory on a guitar, because there are so few visual cues to help you. I also think that it's important to be an intuitive musician (i.e. a natural musician who can figure things out alone), but one

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of the non-intuitive tools that goes hand-in-hand with learning to play is learning theory and harmony. It's an indispensable skill, and one that a person can actually learn relatively quickly, especially if the person plays already.

LR: Music education is the only insurance policy a musician has. With younger musicians, nobody thinks about what it's going to be like 10 years down the road. That's the trick. It's not the most difficult thing to be a professional musician for a year, two years, maybe even 10 years. Once you're in it for the long haul – that's where music education pays off, that's where the depth comes in. One may have something that's stylistically hot for a minute, but once that goes away and they don't know how to do anything else, that's a problem. So Music education is number ONE.

Also you have to be a bit of a chameleon. It's good to understand music recordings, software, sounds, and to play some other instruments like piano.

In other words: versatility.

SG: As far as up-and-coming young guitarists are concerned, I do get e-mails and calls from guitarists who send me their work. I try to help by giving suggestions, but mainly I say to try to use the influence of many great musicians who have come before, to get to your own voice – and that includes classical music.

Years ago, I was playing with my own band at the Colonial Tavern in Toronto when a man came up and handed me a note and took off very fast. The note said, 'you'll never be another Django Reinhardt.' I didn't have time to tell him that I had no intention of being Django. Why would I want to be? I can remember listening to my father's recording of Charlie Christian and thinking I like the playing, but it's not what I'm looking for. As a matter of fact, Charlie Parker intrigued me more.

BA: Don't be afraid of new things. Keep your mind and heart open! Technique is a door to freedom. When you get through that door, forget technique and play with your heart. It is the way of reaching other souls. And isn't music about that?



Rush Guitarist Alex Lifeson On Effects, Guitar Heroes, Tunings, Writing On The Acoustic, & Learning From Your Peers.

I've come full circle. I prefer not to use any effects or very few effects, whereas in the '80s it was all about effects. And certainly in the '80s the band was a different band: we used keyboards a lot more. I found it a lot more difficult to find where the guitar was supposed to sit and how it was going to work within the whole sonic combination of all these different keyboards. Consequently, the sound was quite processed and quite bright and quite clean and clear and cutting. That's what I felt I needed to do to get around that. Keyboards play virtually no role in our music right now, a couple little spots here and there, so it leaves so much more room for the guitar to fit in the midrange. I like to develop parts that are accompanying parts that are perhaps what a keyboard would have done – adding

a colour or a tonal shading or something like that. It's a lot of fun to create that and mess around with that, but I think the main approach to my sound now is straight into the amp, turn it up, and go. There's something that just grabs you about it. It touches something inside. I think that's why classic rock is such a successful format these days – 'cause it's got all that in it.

The concept of the guitar hero doesn't seem to be as prevalent as it was. Music has changed so much, it's so much more diverse. I kind of miss that. Every aspect of the industry is different – how we perceive music and how we use it. It's everywhere now – commercials on TV, it's everywhere, so it's changed the complexion of that whole guitar hero aspect in a rock band. I don't know if it exists anymore. Can you think of any bands that are like that?

There are lots of great guitar players around but they don't really stand out or are the driving force in the band. To me that's where all the emotion comes from – and especially a three-piece like Rush is. Geddy and Neil are so complex in their arrangements and the way they play things. Geddy plays a lot of chords and it leaves a lot more room to develop a guitar part.

The tunings that I used particularly on some of the acoustic parts forced me to look at the guitar in a whole different fashion. Playing in tunings that you're not used to, it's like starting all over again. And finding positions that you were used to now don't really work or else they create something completely different was really inspiring and sent me off in different directions. I'm always looking for something a little different, something a little more bizarre or unexpected. And I think that's part of my style.

I'm very careful about what I listen to when we're writing. In fact, I try not to listen to music much at all when we're writing. However I did go to a couple shows recently. I went to see Tom Emmanuel when he played in Toronto. In fact I went two nights; he did an acoustic set that was just mesmerizing. And I went to see Steven Bennett as well, a harp guitarist. And he played a little United church out on the Danforth. So it was a great little venue with the acoustics in the church and him playing. We got together afterwards – had a drink and jammed a little bit and talked about guitar playing and tuning and all those sorts of things.

I also went to see David Gilmour when he was in town. I was really moved by his set. He did *On An Island* as a first set, took a break, and then played all the classic Pink Floyd stuff in the second set. I popped by and we chatted for a bit. It was the first time that I'd met him and he's a wonderful, gracious guy. We talked about all the same things that we found inspiring in guitar playing and it was really great. We talked about writing on the acoustic. And he said, "Yes, of course. That's how I do it. Everything starts with the acoustic."

So that was all very motivating for me without actually listening to anything that's new and trying to pick something up. That can sneak into your writing and I think that's a little bit of a danger. But it was great to actually make contact with a few players and find some inspiration there.

Steve Vai epitomizes the rock guitar god of the '80s. By the age of 18 he was attending Boston's Berklee School of Music. After sending a copy to Frank Zappa of "Black Page" (one of Zappa's most technically challenging guitar compositions), Zappa was so impressed he decided to add him to the band.

Joe Satriani is famous for being one of the most technically proficient guitarists to recently emerge. He is also known as being Steve Vai's guitar teacher.

Albert Lee was born in England and played R&B guitar in the mid-'60s. In the '70s he became one of the best rockabilly guitarists around. Lee is one of the most in-demand session guitarists in Los Angeles as well as Nashville where he is renowned for his country playing.

Kenny Wayne Shepherd began playing Muddy Waters licks from his dad's record collection at age seven. He produced his first CD, *Ledbetter Heights*, when he was only 17. Shepherd is currently touring his latest record, *10 Days Out: Blues From The Backroads*.

Describe your live gear.

SV: I use the following:

- signature Carvin Legacy head for amplification
- signature DiMarzio cables
- new signature dual distortion that I designed with Ibanez (available at retail by the end of the year)
- signature Morley Bad Horsie Wah
- Little Alligator volume pedal
- Sobat phaser and TCG system
- signature Ibanez Jem guitar
- Ernie Ball strings & custom Ibanez heavy gauge picks
- I also use a lot of chutzpah, but you can't purchase that

JS: My Ibanez JS1000/1200 guitars through various pedals, then into two JSX heads, one dry, one wet, each going through two JSX 4 x 12 cabinets. We use the cabinet's DI output for the PA.

AL: Fender Tone Master 100 W 4 x 12 with Celestion Neodymium speakers. They are very light speakers and I cut a hole in the back of the amp. It's a good amp although not my favourite. I haven't used pedals for the last 12

years. For a while I was occasionally using a Lexicon PCM42 delay unit. Right now I have three Korg A3 rackmount effect units and I like the sound of them. As far as guitars go, I worked with Ernie Ball and helped redesign one of their Music Man guitars, which is what I am now playing. Size-wise it's slightly smaller but the neck scale is the same as a Fender Strat or Tele. It's very comfortable to play and also has a whammy bar. The pickups are Seymour Duncan single coil.

KWS: I'm using two Fender 1964 Vibroverb Amps. They're the reissue models. I don't like to bring my vintage amps on the road and these are great amps. My guitars are a 1961 and 1958 Strat, which I bring on the road. I also use a Dunlop Wah-Wah pedal, an Ibanez TS808 Tube Screamer, and a TS9 Tube Screamer. I've

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got an Octavia and a chorus pedal made by Analogue Man. Also a Dunlop Univibe. Right now I'm working with Fender to design a signature guitar.

Do you feel there will ever be a resurgence of the guitar hero as in the '70s and '80s?

SV: No, although I do believe the guitar is always re-surg-ing (and perhaps regurgitating). Any new guitar hero will do it his or her way ... and most of the rest follow.

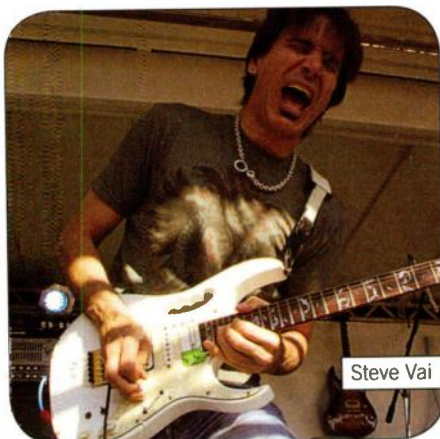
JS: No. It will be different. No way to tell in what way.

AL: I think so. At the moment there seems to be a lot of young bands that only play chords very loudly – lots of grunge. A lot of good players will come up through these bands. We all stood on the shoulders of those guitarists that we love and eventually became like them. There are some really great young players these days and I think a lot of it has to do with the accessibility of the guitar. It's a lot easier to pick it up now than when I was learning guitar.

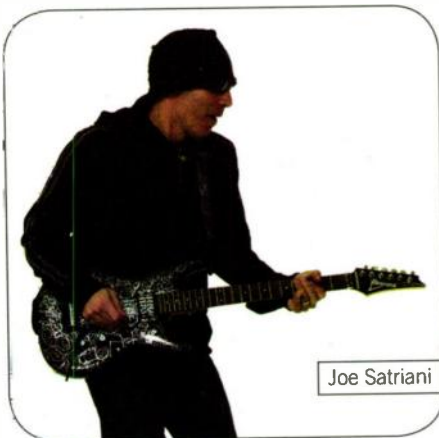
KWS: I think so. Most music is cyclical. Things become popular for a while and then they aren't. But they come back eventually. I think we're due for it. For a long time now there weren't any guitar solos in a lot of the songs. But people eventually crave it. Someone is gonna come out and do it, and then everyone else will jump on it.

Are you self-taught or have musical education? What advantages and disadvantages are there to both?

SV: I took lessons from various people while I was a young teenager. Joe Satriani was my first teacher, but I also studied with various teachers in jazz, etc. while attending high school and music college. I believe a developing guitarist should seek out education on the instrument (and in music in general) if they feel compelled to do so. Some



Steve Vai



Joe Satriani

do not want their playing diluted by musical academics and others have a hankering to understand theory, tone, technique, etc. My advice is to do what you want. But first you have to know what you want.

JS: I was taught classic music theory in high school.

AL: I first took piano lessons when I was around 10 or 11, but by 12 I discovered the guitar and taught myself. For a year I borrowed a guitar to play on. There weren't many musicians to see back then so I learned by listening to records. Jimmy Page and I were good friends and we hung out together. We played the same clubs. A lot of those guitar players came up around that same time.

KWS: I'm self-taught. I play by ear. If you're gonna have an education the advantage is that you can score music or do session work at a studio. Someone can throw a chart in front of you and you can read it. But I find creativity comes from within, so for me it's better to be self-taught.

Are guitarists naturally competitive against each other?

SV: Virtually everyone in the world is competitive ... whether it's with themselves, with others, or – most tragically – with their views on their God in comparison to the other guy's God.

JS: Yes, just human nature I suppose.

AL: There's a certain amount of competitiveness, but there's also inspiration. Everyone has something to learn from one another. I always felt I was making my own niche. I'm lucky enough to do what I do quite well. I've been involved with Steve Lukather and Steve Morse, whom I both admire greatly. None of us can play like each other so it's more like we have a mutual admiration.

KWS: Yeah. But not in a negative way. For some people it can be negative though. It all depends on your personality, which gives you a healthy attitude or not.

What is your dream piece of gear and what would it do?

SV: I don't usually dream of guitar gear, but it would be nice if there was something that could accurately track what you play and convert it to music notation. Sure ... there is stuff that claims to do that, but they all fall short.

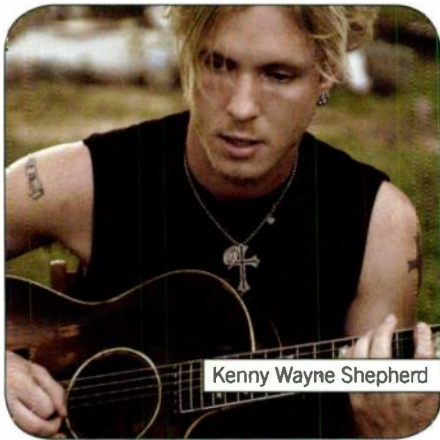
JS: A microphone that magically makes my voice sound awesome!

AL: I don't really crave anything. I do like old guitars and would like to get a Gibson Southern Jumbo, maybe even a Gretsch 6120. I just can't justify spending \$5,000 to \$10,000 on a guitar. I also like a nice Jazz Gibson L5 from the '50s or Gibson Super 400 from the '50s.

KWS: I have a lot of gear that I'm happy with but one of the best pieces of gear is the Dumble Overdrive Special. I've used it in the studio before. It's by a guy (Alexander Dumble) who makes them by hand. They're hard to get and he won't make them for just anyone. You have to drop about \$25,000 to get one.

What is your practice routine?

SV: I run a loop and just play for hours until something truly absurd comes out. I then make a study of it and try to figure out how to expand on its bizarreness and impact. I work it until it becomes



a natural part of my language on the instrument and performance vocabulary. These days I'm focusing a lot on dynamics and phrasing. These are the elements that make a melody speak.

JS: Just playing along with other records and working on my own compositions.

AL: Ha! I hardly ever practice. Steve Morse gets really annoyed with me

'cause he practices about three hours a day! I guess technique comes easy for me. But on the other side of the coin I'm working a lot. There's hardly a day that I don't do a gig. I actually get renewed enthusiasm when I don't touch the guitar for a week. I'm lazy. But I've come full circle - I love the piano. I actually play two or three songs on the piano when I perform. If I did devote time to practice it would be on the piano or the mandolin.

KWS: Usually I practice every night on stage. But at home I'll sit around and play for a couple of hours several times a week. I don't play scales - just jam and play through tunes. On the road I could practice but I spend a lot of time doing sound checks.

Who or what inspired you to play guitar and who or what inspires you now?

SV: I was always attracted to the instrument. It looked beautiful to me and whenever I played it, it felt like Christmas. The thing that inspires me most to play these days is a good idea.

JS: Jimi Hendrix is still my main inspiration.

AL: My all time favourite player is Jimmy Bryant. He was a country swing player who first appeared in California in the '50s. He's astounding. The first time I heard him play on the radio I was amazed. I had the pleasure of playing with him before he died. I can't really play any of his songs but I feel like I caught the essence of what he played. Also Lonnie Donegan was a big influence. He hit the scene in the mid-'50s with skiffle music. Anyone coming up at that time listened to him. His records were very exciting. Eddie Cochrane I had a chance to meet before he died and I saw Chuck Berry. But back then you didn't see anybody, you just listened to their records.

KWS: Stevie Ray Vaughan. I met him when I was seven years old. From that point I wanted to get my hands on a guitar. A lot of my heroes are Strat players. It's a very comfortable instrument.

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Who are you listening to now?

SV: I try to listen to my kids most of all, but musically I'm listening to a lot of contemporary classical music by composers such as: Luciano Berio, Stravinsky, Giorgi Ligetti, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Elliot Carter, etc. As far as rock music goes, I listen to whatever Devin Townsend releases. He's as brilliant as any of the composers I mentioned. Also, there is this kid named Zack Wiesinger who plays the guitar. He's 19 years old and creates a tremendous amount of work, much of it very artistic.

JS: Paul Gilbert's new solo record, the Killers, and some old Miles Davis.

AL: I have to say I don't listen to a lot of guitar. The last 20 years or more I have

been collecting classical music. I like orchestras. I don't listen to metal a lot, it's just not my taste; I can't get past the sound. I actually listen to opera these days because my daughter's an opera singer.

KWS: I'm in the process of a new record so I try not to listen to outside music. When I'm not getting ready for a new record I like to listen to a lot of the same stuff, like Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, and those guys. I also listen to Government Mule. The guitarist for the band, Warren Haynes, is amazing. He did stuff on my third record. ●



Albert Lee



Levon Ichkhanian is a multi-instrumentalist. He plays guitars, oud, bouzouki, and banjitar. Contact: www.levonmusic.com.



Vivian Clement is a jazz/blues guitarist performing in the Toronto area and recording in her studio "Exodus Studios" in Mississauga, ON. Her website is www.vivianclement.com or www.exodusstudio.ca.

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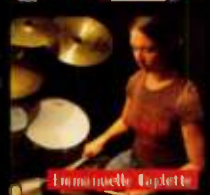
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Songwriting

by Emm Gryner



Instead of telling you what to do or how to write, I'll outline what I do in a day of writing, in hopes that it will be of interest to you.

Most people my age have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). If you didn't get to enjoy ADD-relieving drugs (because they weren't available when *Magnum P.I.* was in its heyday), you kept your wandering mind busy with video games, building forts, or playing with Lego. Today, the temptations are e-mail, the Internet, and TV as distractions. Whatever happens to be my distraction on a given day, I make a pact to go to the piano first. I work best in the morning so I try to use that time to piece words together – some of which have been lying around for days, weeks, months. Sometimes it's a title, other times it's a theme. I also cancelled my cable, which puts me out of touch with pop culture but sure gives me lots of free time to write! I recommend it!

I go where I can be completely alone and where the instrument I'm playing sounds the best. I write in an old church near my house. I write on an upright piano in the choir balcony, and I make sure no one is around. The combination of personal quiet and the sound of the piano is extraordinary. It gives life to everything. I have not done very well writing in dead rooms, or rooms with wall-to-wall carpet or places where you can't feel the air around your voice or the notes you're playing. Maybe it's a live thing – many bands come alive when they play in a club or a hall, so I apply that to where I write too.

To remember ideas, I'll jot down melody ideas in the form of musical note names (just A, B, C, F#, etc.) next to the lyrics so I can remember melody ideas that go with certain words. I also write down what key I'm writing in, or what the tuning on the guitar is. Sometimes I sing things into my phone, other times I record something roughly on Wiretap. Like, embarrassingly rough!

I also take full pride in my superstitions – I always need to write on lined paper with a nice pen (I'm fond of the Pilot G-Tec-C4 – \$3.99 at Staples – try it!) I almost always write the alphabet on top of the page, which helps me come up with my snappy, Juno-nominated rhymes. I NEVER write on an empty stomach. And I try not to worry if in the moment, I've written cheesy words, as they'll usually be revised later – while I'm driving, while I'm cleaning the house. A lot of writing gets done when I'm not near the piano.

I know I'm done when I'm exhausted, or get a good feeling about the song. I always give things time – a day or two or a week – to make sure I haven't re-written "Tarzan Boy" by Baltimore by accident.

My one bit of advice would be to write what you love, not what is trendy. Trends are a trap – I've learned this all on my own. Hope this has been of some help!

I have never read a book about songwriting, so to be asked to write a column on songwriting is new for me, and a little frightening. Any advice I've ever received on songwriting has ended up echoing in my head like the useless but acerbic insults of one of my old Catholic school teachers. I fear that if I dish out advice, you might think of my words when you sit down to pen a song, when truly you should be surveying your personal feelings.

This being said, I have often wondered how certain writers come up with their material. I am equally fascinated though unnerved by "professional songwriting," "writing on demand," and "writing solely for money" – all of which, in my opinion, turn the magical craft of putting your emotions to song into something more like the transaction of money for hooch, or the humdrum routine of the door-to-door salesman who pedals people things he hopes they'll buy, but would never in a zillion years buy for himself.

I don't deny that everybody wants to write a song that people love. I do! But to write primarily with feeling, with your senses alive, and your heart in the right place means something very different than to write with your head in overdrive, thinking, "How can I get this to sound like Maroon 5 in 20 minutes or less?" or "If I go to the root note in the chorus, and sing real high-like I might be able to upgrade my Pro Tools system and whoop it up at NAMM next year!"

Emm Gryner is a writer, musician, producer, and label owner. Check out www.emmgryner.com for more information.

Laying Down Electric Guitars

by Chris Tedesco

When it comes to recording electric guitars, there are really no rules. However, in my experience, there are a few misconceptions about the art of capturing a good sound. You absolutely must begin with a good sounding source and this applies to miking anything. Once you've achieved getting the sound you want out of the rig, then you can start throwing up mics and trying different techniques. Most engineers have their own systems built through experimentation and experience but generally speaking, anything goes.

Speaking with Steve Chahley, Chief Engineer at DNA Recording Facility, some good points were brought up. Agreeing that every situation is different, "more times than not, the guitarist's live setup and sound doesn't apply when they get into the studio," says Chahley. "In a live setup, gain, volume, and EQ settings are dialed in with a very different purpose in mind and that purpose is to make sure the guitar can be heard during the performance, which sometimes sacrifices the tone." In addition, overdrive pedals and such could be used live to get a bit of boost during certain parts of the song but in the studio, it is sometimes better to drive the amp naturally from its native controls, especially if it's vintage.

The MOST important thing to do, and if this is the only piece of advice that you take from this article then I've done my job, is to make sure that the guitars that you're tracking have been set up and tuned correctly. There is nothing worse than discovering that the guitars and bass are slapping each other as a result of poorly set up intonation and tuning when you've already tracked 12 songs this way! Sometimes it's obvious right from the start but sometimes it's not. The situation becomes worse and worse as you move along, especially when you're layering guitars.

Once you've set up and tuned, you can now start listening to the amp. Get the sound that you're after by adjusting the amp while being in front of the cab, not behind it. It's common sense that the mic(s) are placed where the sound comes out of, so put yourself in the place where the mic would generally be positioned and listen. Be careful not to blow your eardrums out! Start at a lower volume then gradually increase it.

You're now ready to toss up a mic or two. Now this is the debatable part of the



piece! "There is no right or wrong way of miking a guitar amp although there are a few things to watch out for," says Chahley. Speakers in general produce a Sound Pressure Level (SPL) that you need to take into consideration when miking. This refers to the pressure caused by speakers moving air. You can distort the microphone easily by having the amp too loud,

or by having the mic too close. If you're using a condenser or especially a ribbon mic, you can actually destroy the diaphragm or ribbon at loud volumes. Placing the microphone perpendicular to the speaker is probably the first thing to try. The speaker's face is made up of the cap, which is the smaller protruding circle in the center, and the cone, which is the larger circle surrounding it. Pointing the mic's diaphragm at the point where the cap meets the cone should give you the "best of both worlds" sound. The more you move the mic towards the center of the speaker, the more hi and mid frequencies will appear and oppositely, the more you move towards the outer ring, the more low end frequencies will appear. If you're using a two-mic set-up, then the second mic could be placed at a 45-degree angle and pointed more towards the cone, giving you some extra low end. At mix time, these two tracks can be blended together to give you one sound. This is an example of a simple close mic guitar cabinet setup. There are endless ways to place microphones in different configurations to achieve a good sound. Setting a mic back a few feet from the cabinet as opposed to a few inches will give you another colour at mix time.

If you're using a combo amp with an open back, you have a few more options because you now have sound coming from the front of the amp, as well as the back. Applying the same technique as above to the front, try adding a mic to the rear to capture some lows and low mids. Just remember, you need to flip the phase of the back mic because when the speaker moves forward (pushes), then the front mic diaphragm moves inward and the rear mic diaphragm moves outward. Without getting too technical, if you don't flip the phase, it will sound like crap!

Getting a good guitar sound depends on more than just mic technique. We have to take into consideration things like the actual mics you're using, the pre-amps, the compressors, the multi-track and even the cables. You don't necessarily need a Neve pre to get a good guitar sound, but it definitely helps. The key is experimenting! Be creative with the setup, keep mixing in mind, and tune the damn guitars!

DNA Studios is owned and run by Chris and Dave Tedesco and hosts Steve Chahley as Chief Engineer.

Acoustic Guitar On Stage

by Ken McNeill

There are so many different types of acoustic guitars available today: 6-String, 12-string, nylon string hollowbody, semi-hollowbody, some with pickups some without, and each one will have its own characteristics.

Whenever a band's stage volume is robust I prefer to use the electronic pickup inside the guitar first.

Using the guitar's internal pickup rather than a microphone helps with separation by minimizing the amount of bleed from stage sounds like percussion, guitar amplifiers, and other instruments. These sounds will also reach the pickup but at a much lower level. Sometimes even a vocal sound will reach the pickup.

Stage Monitoring

Secondly, the internal pickup will help with stage monitoring. You will be able to get more headroom (level) before feedback when having the sound routed back to the wedge monitor. There is a limit though – when you start to hear a howl this is the sound of the body of the guitar resonating due to the sound waves from the wedge monitor being reproduced, vibrating the guitar body and moving around inside the guitar then being reproduced again by the pickup. If you have some tone control on your acoustic guitar pickup like low, mid, and highs, make an adjustment to help smooth out the hot spots.

Microphones On Acoustic Guitars

When using a microphone to capture an acoustic guitar for live sound I found that the microphone of choice really depends on the sound of the guitar and the sound the player wants to hear.

A large diaphragm cardioid condenser microphone works well in most cases, particularly in the studio where you have the option of placing the microphone at a distance to capture the most natural sound of the guitar. However for live music, depending on the band lineup, this opens the door for other sounds to bleed into the guitar microphone and somewhat limits the amount of stage monitoring you can achieve.

A Hyper-cardioid microphone will work well, allowing minimal bleed as long as you choose just the right angle.



The right microphone angle is relative to the sound you want to get. Moving the microphone closer to the sound hole then closer to the bridge will yield some very different results. Experiment with the microphone angle until you find the right sound.

Then there are times when a good old dynamic microphone like a standard SM-57 seems to work the best. Keep in mind that you will not be able to stop all the bleed but minimizing it really helps.

Best Of Both Worlds?

At times you may want to use both the pickup and a microphone. The pickup can give you the up-close sound of the strings and more headroom in the monitors, while the microphone helps to capture the instrument as a whole and includes the sound of the body of the guitar. When using this technique you may hear some phasing due to the different distances of the pickup and microphone in relation to the strings.

By moving the microphone around and varying the levels between the two signals, you can achieve a good, workable combination.

This article was written with the assumption that the acoustic guitar is set

up and tuned properly. Remember, no matter how good the microphone is or where you place it or how you utilize the pickup it will not correct intonation.

Keep Your Cables In Shape

The signal from your pick up is the signal you want to reach the DI box that goes to the mixer and the same signal you want to have at the input of your amplifier if you're using one.

One worn cable in the setup can destroy a perfectly good guitar signal.

Walking on cables, which happens, eventually wears out the effectiveness of the shield, this is something you may not notice for some time.

If you use a lead cable for too long it can even become microphonic, that is to say, it becomes hypersensitive to vibration.

Keep all your contact points clean including the input and output jacks on the guitar and any pedals in the setup. Check for cracks and wear and replace bad cables with the best you can afford.

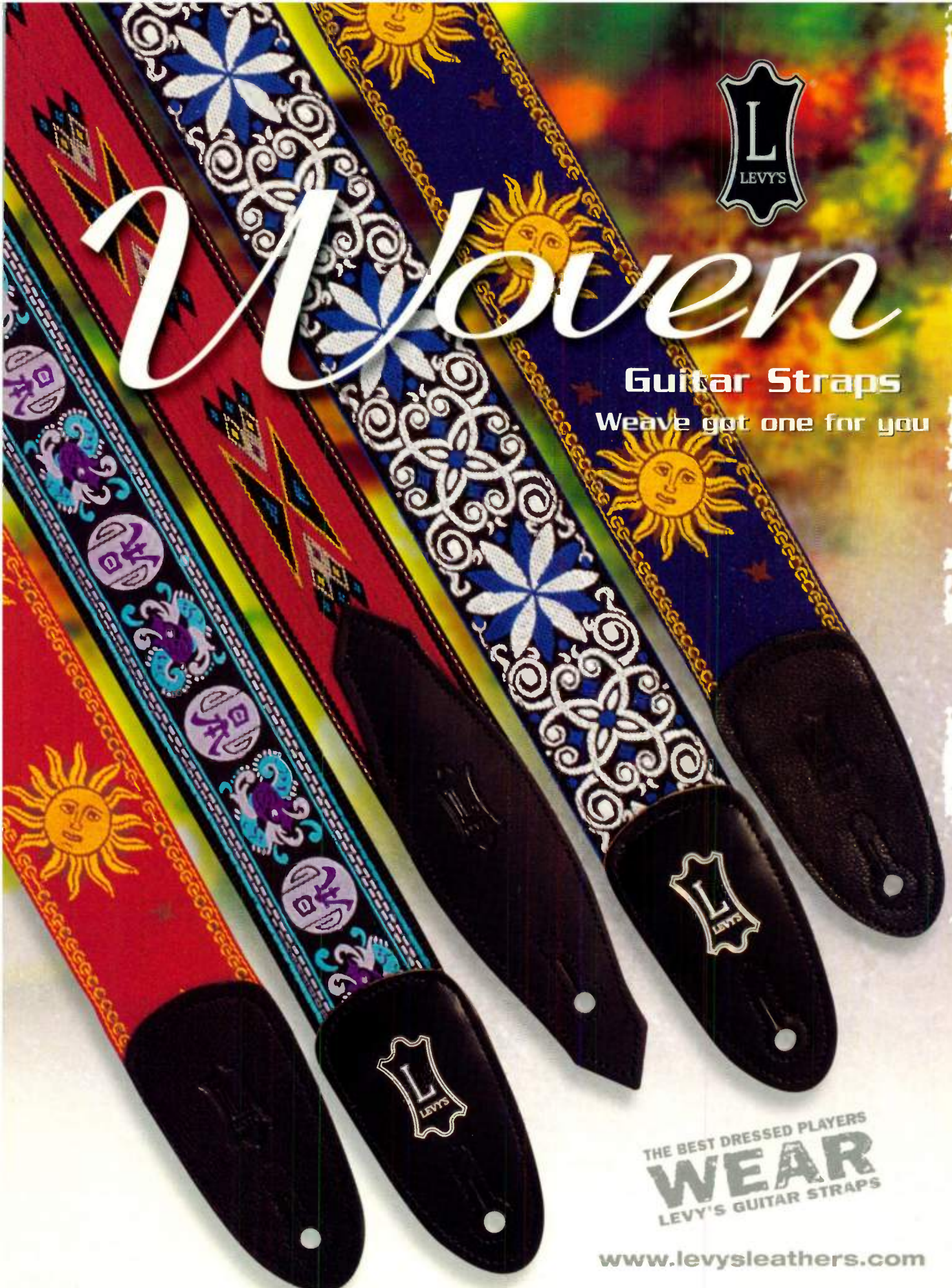
Ken McNeill is a veteran sound engineer and is Technical Coordinator at the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga, ON.



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Showcasing

by Sue McCallum

Bands at every level showcase. This past March at Austin's SXSW The Tragically Hip showcased – you might think “my God, why would they showcase?” but Austin's festival is internationally HUGE in the music industry and you see all levels of artists and bands flocking there to perform. With so many levels of artist showcasing, I'm focusing my point surrounding North By Northeast (NXNE). It takes place June 6-10, and it has a great reputation of selecting the best new music from Canada and internationally.

So first of all, congratulations, you've been chosen. Get excited and now think about this: what do you want to achieve with this show? Your aim should be to gather all the right people together to get you to the next level. Do you want the music media to be there? Do you want to get a manager, an agent, a publisher? Make a list of who you want to attract and focus on your list.

Let's start with media. Do you want advance coverage in the local media? If you have a budget for a publicist, get one. If not, most festivals and clubs these days provide local media contacts. So make eight to 10 packages or more, send them to the correct music contacts at the daily papers, online music sites, the weeklies, the music magazines, campus radio stations, and entertainment TV stations that feature music. Mark NXNE clearly on the envelope and follow it up with a couple of detailed e-mails and a couple calls. Follow-up is one thing, overkill another – and there is a fine line. Some media just get mad if you pester them too much. Make sure they have everything they need and that is: music, contact information, a 300 dpi .jpeg by e-mail or a link, your website info, and maybe a few clippings or quotes. Get them excited and remember 400 other bands are doing the same thing. So do it early. If you are hoping that the weeklies will do something, remember their deadlines; contact them at LEAST a month in advance and



if there is something unique about the band make sure they know that. The media want a great story – that is their aim. Now with that list you made earlier of all the people you want at the showcase, properly invite them and focus on getting them there. That's the hardest part, but get them excited. Maybe it's an agent or a manager or a club promoter or an international distributor. Do some research to make sure you are spending your time on the right contact, think of the match. Don't focus all your energy contacting someone who just does blues if your act is pop, for example.

During this type of festival, whatever location you have been given and whatever time slot you have – embrace it, work it. Get a hold of the other acts on the bill because they may want to split on flyers or advertising. Also remember you are surrounded by music fans at the conference hotel and at the other events. Target these people too if they are just standing around. Not everyone has a full agenda some make their decisions on the fly, so get them interested. Flyers, signs, posters, T-shirts, busking, airplanes ... well that can get expensive but not all publicity stunts cost money.

At the club you are dealing with sound techs and stage managers and a lot of them are volunteers, so make sure you are respectful to all around you and all the other acts on the bill – and that includes being ON TIME. It's an old saying that rock shows are always late; well, since the rock show became corporate, rock shows run on time, and specifically at a festival like this. You have a specific amount of time and hundreds actually depend on that. You and everyone else are listed in print in schedules at specific times, so start when you are supposed to and don't go over your allotted time – you could potentially throw hundreds of other people's schedules off. It's not cool.

Of course, first and foremost your band needs to be ready. Obviously the sound and visual are most important but you would not be showcasing at NXNE if you were not together, so it is up to you and your band to bring it. Kick some @\$\$! Your performance that night needs to be a million dollar performance. You have invited all the right people you want to be there to advance your career, so make them take notice. Most importantly, have a blast and make it worthwhile, isn't that why you are doing it?

Sue McCallum is the Director of National Promotion at True North Records.

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SONOR S-CLASSIX SERIES

■ Sonor has recently released a new drumkit series that features the classic images of Sonor in the '60s and '70s: the S-Classix Series.

The S-Classix Series features a thin Scandinavian birch shell that balances powerful treble and mid-range pitches, providing a well-balanced bottom end. The lugs are the same as Sonor's Delite and SQ2 series and feature Sonor's Tune-Safe feature, which prevents tension screws from loosening during hard rim-shots or loosely tuned batter heads. The bass claws protect the hoop while the spurs are built for quick and easy set up and surface resting options. This series also features a newly designed Total Acoustic Resonance (TAR) system, square-head tension rods, and power hoops.

Sonor's slotted tension rods are available as an option for the S-Classix Series. Drummers can also choose from the included 400 series hardware or any other range of Sonor hardware. Choose from four wood veneer finishes: ebony, rosewood, walnut roots, or grained maple; and choose from the retro coverings: white oyster, blue oyster, red pearl, black pearl, grey slate, and white pearl. The S-Classix Series also offers a selection of wood, steel, and brass shell snare drums in 12", 13", and 14" models.

For more information, contact: Coast Music (A division of JAM Industries Ltd.), 514-457-2555, 800-363-8460, 800-263-5851, FAX 514-457-0055, info@coastmusic.ca, www.coastmusic.com.



Stanton FinalScratch Open Scratch Amp

■ Stanton Magnetics has recently released a new audio interface that allows DJs to decide which software they would like to use with the Stanton Scratch Amp: FinalScratch Open.

FinalScratch Open Scratch Amp is a low latency FireWire 96 k/24 bit audio interface that is compatible with a variety of software applications and is ideal for programs that do not ship with a sound card. It provides output connection to the DJ mixer and headphones from the computer and provides connections needed from turntables, CD players, and mics.

MIDI is applied on the Scratch Amp so users can connect external control surfaces and audio devices to their DJ software. Scratch Amp is an ASIO/WDM device on Windows, and a CoreAudio device on Mac OS.

For more information, contact: Erikson Audio, 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, info@eriksonaudio.com, www.eriksonaudio.com.



Planet Waves Humidipak

■ Planet Waves has recently released a new accessory that Bob Taylor of Taylor Guitars says is the most important accessory since guitar strings: the Humidipak Automatic Humidity Control System.

The Humidipak is a two-way humidity system for guitars. It makes all of the necessary humidity adjustments without water, drips, or a mess. Designed

for wooden instruments, it emits and absorbs moisture as needed to maintain 45 per cent relative humidity. Simply place the Humidipak packet in your guitar, shut the case, and let it go to work for you.

For more information, contact: D'Addario Canada, 905-889-0116, FAX 905-889-8998, orders@daddariocanada.com, www.daddariocanada.com.



YBL-822G



YBL-830

YAMAHA YBL-830 & YBL-822G XENO BASS TROMBONES

■ Yamaha Canada Music has recently released two new bass trombones to its Xeno line, the YBL-830 and YBL-822G, which are ideal for professionals and semi-professionals.

The YBL-830 improves upon the YBL-613H with a redesigned slide crook material and slide bracers that increase flexibility and response. Its valve rotor section has been updated to allow smoother airflow to the second rotor and a new thumb saddle has been added for comfort. This bass trombone comes with an ABS Xeno-type case.

The YBL-822G replaces the YBL-622 with a newly designed D-slide assembly that provides improved response and removal of condensation. It also has a new convex, lightweight valve cap that offers better control of slotting and projection. It also ships with an ABS Xeno-type case that has a shoulder strap and side handle. This bass trombone also comes with a Douglas Yeo Signature Series mouthpiece.

For more information, contact: Yamaha Canada Music Ltd., 416-298-1311, FAX 416-298-1311, www.yamaha.ca.



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Levy's Rastafarian Straps

MSSC8RL, MSSC8RC, MSSC8RP

Levy's Leathers has released a new set of guitar straps that are made of cotton with suede leather ends: the Rastafarian straps.

The ends of the Rastafarian straps feature a patch of either the Lion of Judah, chevron, or a peace symbol. The patches are all featured in bright red, yellow, and green Rasta colours.

For more information, contact: Levy's Leathers Ltd., 204-957-5139, FAX 204-943-6655, levys@levysleathers.com, www.levysleathers.com.

HotGear

ILLUSION 3

Rock guitarist and founder of British rock band Ritual, Re Bethe has designed the third version of the legendary Illusion – a left-handed electric guitar.

The prototype of the Illusion was built in the '80s and the finished version was produced in 1990. This version was published in *The Ultimate Guitar Book*. Bethe has mastered both the 6- and 12-string guitar and has been making his own instruments since he was 14, due to lack of left-handed instruments.



The Illusion 3 is made from 300-year-old Brazilian mahogany. It has copper inlay and silver overlays and features Plate Resonance system mechanics. The body is reminiscent of a medieval war weapon and the headstock is designed like no other.

For more information, contact: Re Bethe, +011 (0) 207-326-4971, rebeth@mac.com, www.ritual1973.com.

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C 5

AKG Acoustics C 5 & D 5 Mics

AKG Acoustics has recently released two new vocal microphones for live performance: the C 5 and D 5.

The C 5 condenser vocal mic and D 5 dynamic vocal mic each feature a dent-resistant spring steel wire mesh grille cap and a rugged zinc alloy die-cast housing. They each also feature an integrated shock absorber system that minimizes noise handling. They also include gold-plated XLR output connectors, a vinyl carrying bag, and stand adapter.

The C 5 features a 24-carat gold-sputtered housing and a removable Presence Boost adapter. The D 5 dynamic includes the Laminate Varimotion diaphragm technology. This mic is also available as a switch model with an On/Off switch, the D 5 S.

For more information, contact: Soundcraft Canada, 514-595-3966, FAX 514-595-3970, information@soundcraft-canada.com, www.soundcraft-canada.com.



D 5 S



Reason Tutorial DVD

A new tutorial DVD has recently been released for Propellerhead's Reason software for version 1, 2, and 3.

There are 38 in-depth videos, totaling over three hours of material. Viewers will learn everything from how to set up Reason, recording audio and MIDI, to the most complex effects in Reason with tips and tricks from experts Steve Kostrey and Morgan Pottruff. Whether you are a new Reason user or a seasoned pro, you're sure to find a lesson within the easy-to-use graphic user interface. This DVD is cross-platform compatible.

For more information, contact: ASKVideo, 905-231-1692, FAX 905-231-1693, www.askvideo.com.

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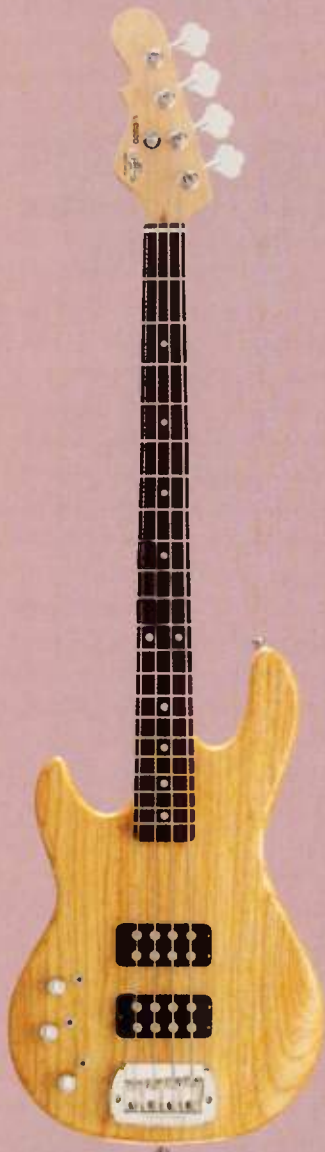
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G&L Tribute Series L-2000 Lefty Bass

■ G&L has released a new electric bass designed for left-handed players, the Tribute Series L-2000.

The L-2000 features a maple neck and rosewood fingerboard as well as two G&L Magnetic Field Design humbuckers. Controls include G&L Tri-Tone active/passive electronics, 3-way mini-toggle pickup selector switch, series/parallel mini-toggle switch, preamp control mini-toggle with high frequency boost, as well as volume, treble, and bass boost/cut controls. Available in a natural gloss finish, the L-2000 also boasts a Saddle-Lock bridge.

For more information, contact: Kief Music Ltd., 604-590-3344, FAX 604-590-6999, sales@kiefmusic.com.



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KERRY KING MARSHALL JCM800 2203KK HEAD



■ Legendary guitarist for Slayer, Kerry King, has always relied on a mid-'80s 100 W JCM 800 2203 head, which he calls "the Beast." That head has been replaced with the new Marshall JCM800 2203KK Head.

"To me Jim Marshall is the ultimate rock star because he makes us all sound better," says King. "It's an incredible honour to have my signature on an amp right next to his."

King has also always used an outboard 10-band graphic EQ to boost the mids in his guitar signal. Therefore, the 2203KK features a built-in signature EQ curve/boost with adjustable intensity named "Assault." King also always employs a Noise Gate to ensure total silence when he's not playing, so this head boasts a built-in studio-quality noise reduction and a quartet of KT88 power valves.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music, 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, info@eriksonmusic.com, www.eriksonmusic.com.

Tanglewood Guitars TW170-AS Grand Auditorium



■ Tanglewood Guitars has recently released a new addition to its Premiere Series, the TW170-AS Grand Auditorium acoustic guitar.

The TW170-AS is ideal for folk guitarists as it's well suited for fingerstyle and flatpicking styles. It features a solid spruce top, solid mahogany back, bounded mahogany sides, maple binding, Kluson style tuners, vintage-style reinforcing volute, and abalone inlays. The companion TW170-AS-CE-B model is also available and features a B-Band pickup and cutaway body.

For more information, contact: SF Marketing Inc., 514-780-2070, FAX 514-780-2111, info@sfm.ca, www.sfm.ca.

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■ Cymbal maker SABIAN has given its Xs20 B20 cast bronze series an enhanced, professional look.

The tonal grooves in the Xs20 were cut into the surface by hand-cut lathing. It contains 20 per cent tin and 80 per cent silver-bearing copper. This is the maximum amount of tin in a cymbal, making it more durable and musical. The Xs20 is crafted in a Natural Finish and is available individually or in Sonically Matched sets.

For more information, contact: SABIAN Ltd., 506-272-2019, FAX 506-272-1265, sabian@sabian.com, www.sabian.com.

Smart Loops MIDI Drum Loops Volume 3

■ Provider of pro audio and web-based recording services, Smart Loops, has released Volume 3 of its MIDI Drum Loops software.

MIDI Drum Loops Volume 3 includes over 240 unique loops, providing over 500 measures of drum groove fills. Ideal for hip-hop, rap, and R&B music styles, these are professional-quality loops that can be used with any MIDI-compatible music software or hardware sequencer. Each loop is provided in four formats: MIDI Groove Clip, Standard MIDI File Type 0, Standard MIDI File Type 1, and Session Drummer 1.

For more information, contact: Smart Loops, 905-430-0028, info@smartloops.com, www.smartloops.com.

Warwick Just-A-Nut III



■ In 1982 Warwick released Just-A-Nut, which was enhanced in 1997 with Just-A-Nut II, which had better materials. Today a new update has been released: Just-A-Nut III, which uses Tedur.

Tedur is a plastic material reinforced with fibreglass. It was tested to be able to transform vibrations using ultra sound measuring. It is also extremely stiff and ductile. Just-A-Nut III has a base plate that is firmly glued onto the instrument's neck and an upper part with the related nut notches. The upper part is floating and can be height-adjusted by a screw mechanism. The two solid notches guarantee an exact guidance.

By omitting the sidewise brackets that were used in previous models, the nut edges are less sharp, optimizing comfort. Just-A-Nut III is available for fretless basses and for all Warwick bases in 4-, 5-, and 6-string versions. By the end of '07 Just-A-Nut III will be able to be equipped on 8-, 10-, and 12-string basses as well.

For more information, contact: EfKay Music Instruments Ltd., 514-633-8877, FAX 514-633-8872, www.efkaymusic.com.

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a regular contributor to *Canadian Musician*, *rollingstone.com*, *jam.canoe.ca* (Lowdown), *Access*, *Applaud!*, *Words & Music*, *Gasoline* and others, is available to write artist bios, news releases and corporate profiles – or fix existing ones. Recent bios include Edwin, Justin Nozuka and Shaye.

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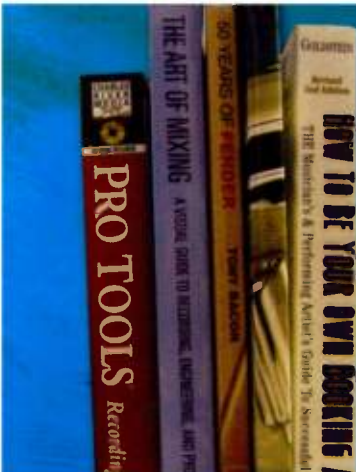
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CRUSH LUTHER

Who: Crush Luther
Where: Toronto
What: pop-pourri
Contact: High 4 Records, 31 Jarwick Dr. Scarborough, ON M1H 2H1, 416-466-8307, darrin@high4records.com, www.crushluther.com

Groovy pop band Crush Luther is one of the acts that prompted Darrin Pfeiffer, the drummer in SoCal's Goldfinger, to get into management after he moved to Toronto. "Matt Fury, the guitarist, e-mailed me in 2004 or so to check out his band's tunes on their site," recounts Pfeiffer. "The songs grabbed me right away and I wanted to manage them even without seeing them. When I first saw them at Rancho Relaxo, I was convinced I made the right decision." Formed in 2002, with members from London, ON and Arnprior, ON (near Ottawa), vocalist Luther Mallory, drummer Brent Mills, guitarist Giggi Bongard, bassist Bodan Mulholland, and Matt "Fury" Leitch have released demos before: including a self-titled, self-produced, self-released CD in 2006 that they sold off the stage. This new album, available on Pfeiffer's High 4 Records, is also self-titled and contains seven songs from the 2006 demo - "City Girl," "Slowdance Anywhere I Go," "Big Sky," "Don't Fight About It," "When We Were Golden," "Trouble," and from the second pressing, "Dear Ensenada." The vibe ranges from the light island-flavoured big pop of "When We Were Golden" to the quirky spy-cool killer pop of "Jody Looks Out For Himself." The dozen songs were produced by the singer at Iguana Studios, Pocket Studios, and Crush Luther Studios and engineered by the drummer. The video for "City Girl" reached #1 twice on Much-MoreMusic's Top 10 and the new video for "The Cools" is due in mid-May.



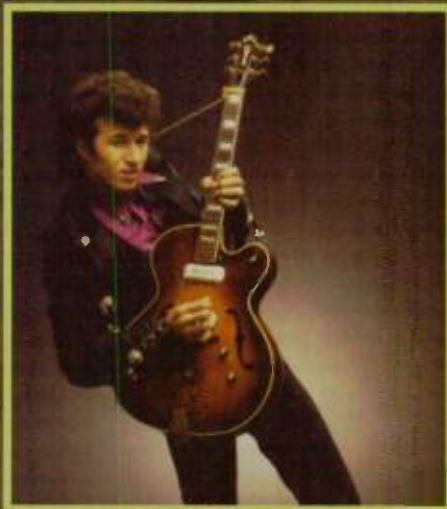
Toronto music journalist Karen Bliss is the Canadian correspondent for www.rollingstone.com, and operates her own Canadian music news column, *Lowdown*, at <http://jam.canoe.ca/Music/Lowdown/>. In addition, she writes for *Gasoline*, *Teen Tribute*, *Words & Music*, *Access*, and others. She has also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

PAUL JAMES

Who: Paul James
Where: Toronto
What: blues man group
Contact: paul@pauljamesband.com, www.pauljamesband.com

Paul James gets invited onstage sometimes by Bob Dylan, his friend since 1986 when the enigmatic legend unexpectedly asked to guest with him at the Nag's Head North, but the Toronto-based roots/blues guitarist and singer is just as content entertaining in clubs, at festivals, colleges, and private functions. He's Canada's Dick Clark of the blues guitar, never aging, and playing with as much enthusiasm as he did in the '70s. Along the way, he has performed with Bo Diddley, John Hammond, Lightnin' Hopkins, Spencer Davis, Sunnyland Slim, and released a series of albums independently, often paying tribute to the artists whose songs he covers in his marathon sets, such as Willie Dixon, The Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry, and of course, Dylan. His newest album, *Lost In The Blues*, contains 14 originals, all in that same bluesy, early rock 'n' roll vein. From the trippy-tongued jitterbug swing of "Boogie Woogie Baby" and so-titled "Jitterbug Swing," to the strange milk cow lament "Bull Calf Blues" and Spanish-flavoured love song "Rosie," James is so embedded in the tradition his originals can stand up to the classics.

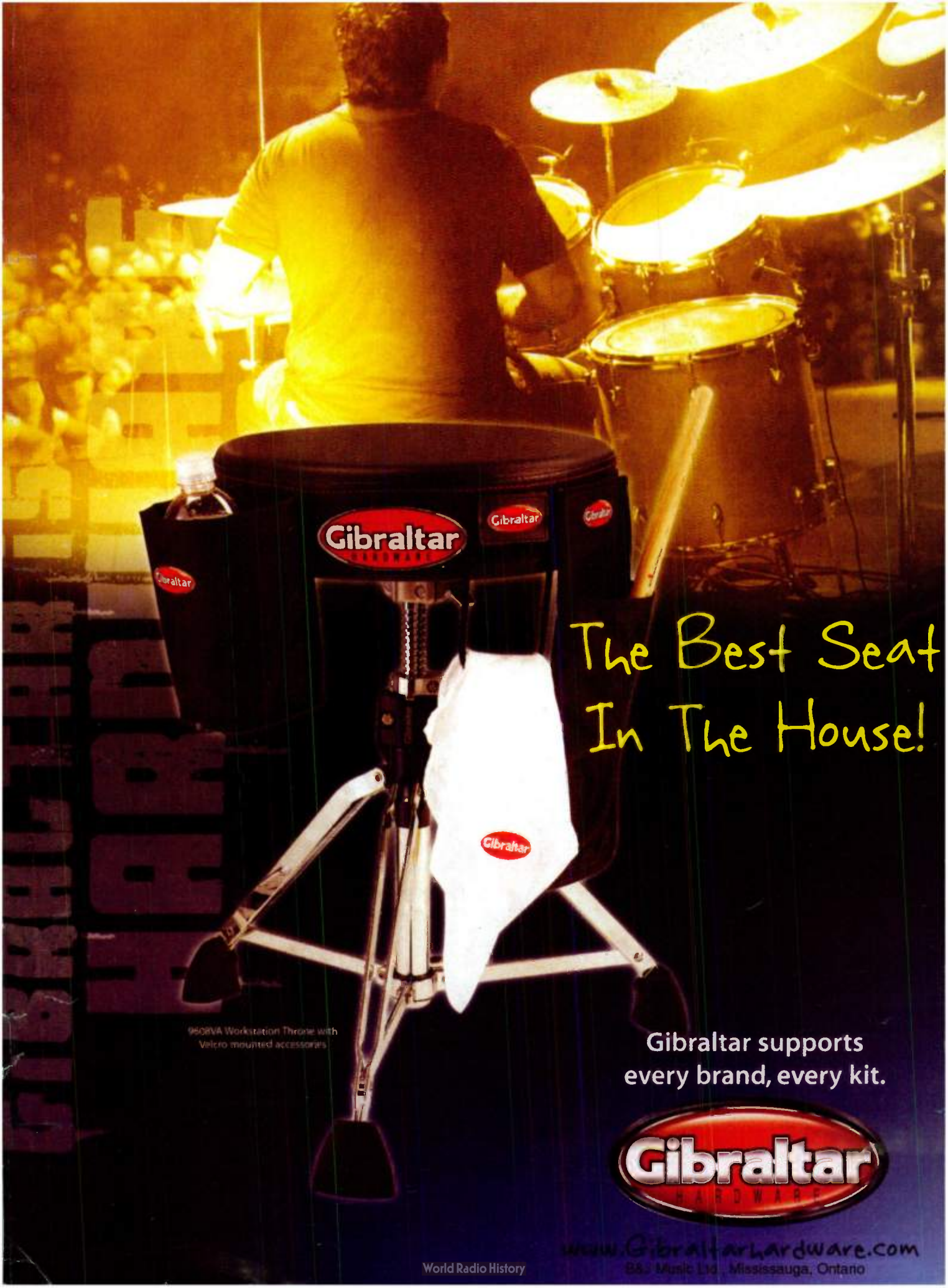
He is backed on the recording by Gary Gray (piano, organ), Henry DeClemente (drums), and Alec Fraser (bass). James, who plays all guitars, harmonica, and percussion, co-produced the album with Fraser at Liquid Sound. Fraser engineered.



MORGAN MAYER

Who: Morgan Mayer
Where: Regina
What: teen power
Contact: Management, Terry Mayer, 306-525-1311, 306-584-5711, FAX: 306-565-3741, info@morganmayer.com, www.morganmayer.com, www.myspace.com/morganmayer

Morgan Mayer has achieved a lot in her 16 years on the planet - and now she wants to rule it. *iF I Ruled The World* is her second solo album, so she's already ahead of most. But is it good? Well, yes. It's not adult music by any means, leaning more towards a cross between Avril Lavigne and Kelly Clarkson, but the songs are good enough for airplay, as radio is discovering with the first single, "Hang On Every Word." By late April it was on its way to cracking the national top 50 Hot AC radio chart and has remained bulletted in the MediaBase Hot AC Top 100 and was a Top 20 success in Regina. Of the eight songs on the album, she co-wrote six, and while the lyrics may be young in sentiment, it wouldn't work if they weren't. "Let It Go," which she wrote by herself, is a fierce pop song about a girl trying to get over someone, while "Hang On Every Word," a lyric she had no hand in, is about an obsessed girl. The songs are straight-up pop/rock, more aggressive than the self-described "girlie-pop" on her 2004 solo debut, *A Little Of This*. Mayer, who is classically trained as a vocalist and released her first recording of two Christmas songs when she was just 11, says *iF I Ruled The World* is influenced by what her father's taste in rock music, which she heard growing up. All the songs were produced by David J. Taylor (Sylvie, Despistado) at Regina's Ze Studios, with Mayer co-producing "Everything" and "Average Girl." It was engineered by Dave Fries and mixed by Jared Kuemper.



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