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by Luther Mallory

Is Canada catching up in terms of supporting its urban artists? Kardinal Offishall gives it to us straight.

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Corb Lund is a versatile singer/songwriter. Find out how he avoids country clichés and puts a particularly Albertan stamp on his music.

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...With A Little Help From Their Friends

by Andrew King

As much as artists are in a DIY scenario these days, it doesn't mean that building a village of friends and supporters out of other bands isn't vital to your success in today's music market. Read on about Cancer Bats and its punk rock family.

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by Kevin Young

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by Chris Taylor-Munro

Steve Jordan, Keith Harris, and Danny Craig are on deck this year to tell us about what it takes to sit in the producer's chair as well as sit on the drum throne. "What do you call someone who hangs out with a bunch of musicians?" Don't even dare go there!

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DEPICTED: **CANCER BATS** JAYE SCHWARZER (BASS), SCOTT MIDDLETON (GUITAR), LIAM CORMIER (VOCALS), MIKE PETERS (DRUMS)





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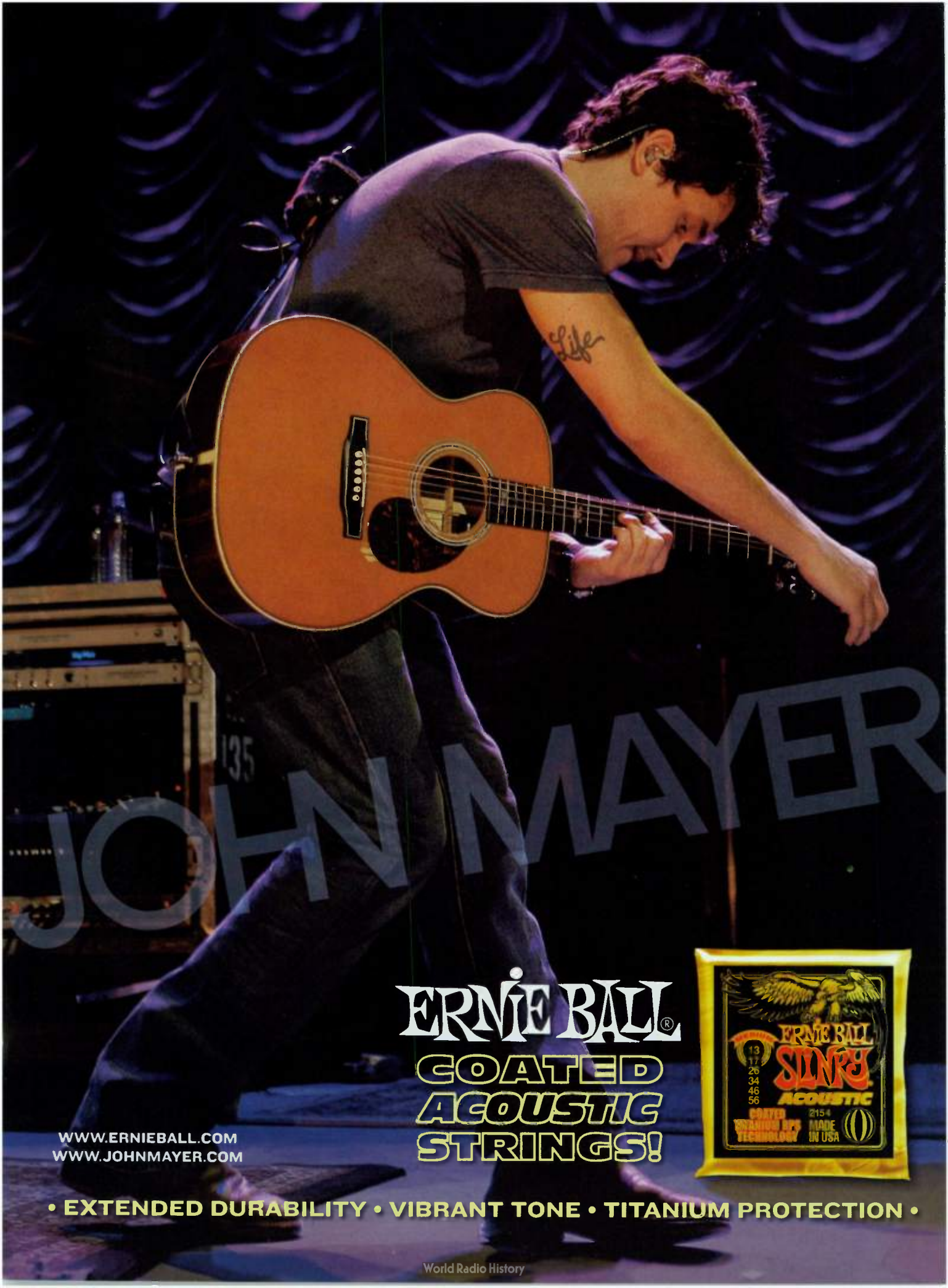
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FeedBack

Notes On The Niagara Music Forum

**NIAGARA
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First of all, thank you for a wonderful full day of information. I am glad that I came down from Toronto to see and hear what is going on. There were very informative speakers on a myriad of subjects.

Johnny Max
www.johnnymaxband.com
www.sundaynightsoul.com
www.myspace.com/thejohnnymaxband

Thank you so much! I enjoyed the forum immensely and felt that it was very well organized!

Karen Smith

Ed. Thanks to all who attended and spoke at the Niagara Music Forum. We have already scheduled for next year: Saturday, October 17, 2009.

Showcase Protocol

We sent in a Showcase submission via Sonicbids. We were on standby then not picked. We have some really big things going on, and right now are one of the highest-endorsed, unsigned acts in Canada. Is there any reason why we were not picked? We would love to be in your publication.

Eric Broadbent
www.findingcore.com
Chatham, ON

Ed. Thanks for submitting, Eric! As you can imagine, narrowing down the submissions to three per issue is an exciting challenge, and as a side note to our readers, the first and best step in being selected is submitting an EPK that contains great-quality audio, print-quality photos, and detailed contact info. And take a leaf from Eric's book – it's always good to follow up! www.sonicbids.com/cmshowcase.



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ASSEMBLING YOUR PRESS KIT

Part 2: What Comes Next?

by Andrew King

Welcome to the second and final Indie Insider installment on putting together your press kit. In "Part 1: Getting Off The Ground" (as appeared in the September/October 2008 issue of *CM*), we explored the basics of assembling your press kit – what it is, what goes into it, and then some tips on how to effectively get it out to the right people. So once you've compiled a basic press kit, sent it out, and built up a wee bit of steam, what comes next?

Well, in Part 1, we discussed how to get your basic press kit – be it an EPK or physical package – out to local media, webzines, and the like to spread the word of your music. Now, assuming that went over smoothly, you'll need to develop follow-up materials on an ongoing basis, as well as newer packages for the bigger fish – radio, print publications, larger webzines, etc.

Custom-Fit

Making sure you're sending the right things to the right people is crucial at

this stage in the game; you can't be wasting anybody's time. Shelby Hoffman does Marketing and Promotions for Victory Records, which houses Canadian acts like mainstays Silverstein and Comeback Kid, as well as up-and-comers like Farewell To Freeway and Arise & Ruin, and so evidently has experience developing

bands in the Canadian media.

"Should we be after coverage of a new album, we'll make sure the major players get an advance copy," she says. "For something like tour press, we exploit the use of e-blasts to reach a much broader scope of writers. The blast will include a release regarding the tour, a link to music, and other materials that will sell the writer on the band."



CHRIS WHITE

One thing Victory has that is extremely valuable is an online press centre that hosts digital content like high-res photos, bios, album artwork, and more. This way, if you're sending out a record for review, writers can access any further information should they want it, and completely skip it if they don't. This also makes follow-up a breeze for the writer, and sometimes, coverage depends on what's available and when.

Chris White, Programming Director with 104.9 The Wolf in Regina, offers an example of what you'll need to send for airplay consideration: "I need a bio about the band – where you're from, how you got together, who's in the band ... basically, as much background as you can give us. I don't know that a glossy 8 x 10 is that important for radio."

If you're sending to radio or a programmer, you'll also need to find out how the station likes its content delivered – CD? WAV files? MP3s? "We get everything as an MP3 from the record companies, so that's the dominant medium," comments White, who goes on to say that the format is ideal because it's instantaneous – you can get your music anywhere in a heartbeat.

Keep It Coming

Once people know who you are, you won't be sending your bio and photo around every time you announce a tour. "A lot of bands have us on their e-newsletter mailing lists," says White about how the station gets news updates from bands. "I think it's smart of them. The majors are all doing this too, so it brings you to their level." Similar to this is the press release.

"Press releases can be created for a multitude of events," says Hoffman, "whether it be a tour, an appearance on *The Tonight Show*, or even a new band-member. A release will draw attention to something you want noted and recognized." You're trying to keep yourself current and relevant, therefore making programmers and writers interested in your happenings.

White offers a great piece of advice in that by keeping your news specific to a certain region – Regina, for example – you're helping that station or publication promote its home city while promoting you. Make yourself relevant to specific audiences, and stations or publications covering that audience will be far more inclined to share the news.

Some additional tips when it comes to press releases: "If you're sending things via e-mail, links are always a great tool, as well as a limited number of attachments," says Hoffman. "Keep it concise and to the point – no need for lots of documents that people will have to print out."

An Extra Shove

"This is a lot like applying for a job, in a way," says White about trying to score coverage. And he's absolutely right. You're trying to sell yourself with a single package, but to just send it in and hope for the best is unwise. Ever hear of follow-up?

"Sincerity goes a long way," offers White about follow-up. "Even if you send me your package first and then a personal call or e-mail, it's always nice to be personable." Hoffman says after you've been speaking with your contacts for a decent amount of time, you'll get a feel for the type of communication they prefer, be it phone or e-mail.

"Keep it conversational, but be professional," offers Hoffman on the tone to take with the media. "You have to make writers think your band will be beneficial for them to cover, not the other way around. Think of the audience of that magazine or area, and directly apply that to why you will interest those people."



SHELBY HOFFMAN

Some Final Tips

With the record industry in its current shape, it seems most media outlets are taking more risks with their content – up-and-coming artists are getting airplay on major stations, satellite radio offers a number of niche stations to off-kilter genres of music, and both web and print publications exist for pretty much every music scene on the quilt. “We don’t need the government to tell us to play emerging acts,” says White about The Wolf. “And I think more people are catching on to this.”

Other tips from Hoffman: “Get a feel for what coverage is available.” Don’t ask for a CD review from a publication that doesn’t review CDs – it shows you haven’t done any homework. She also reminds you to keep as current as possible with everything you’re sending out. “If this is your fourth album, don’t include press cuttings from your first.” Finally, don’t write off an outlet that passes on coverage – keep in touch, and maybe that’ll be your break next time.

It’s clear that White likes dealing with acts that are serious about what they’re doing, and your press materials are often a main indicator of whether or not you fit that profile. Don’t ever hesitate

going out of your way to make connections – the business is built on them. “The way music is now,” explains White, “it’s easier to make it on your own than ever before. Do it yourself if that’s what it takes.”



Andrew King is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician.



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The service eliminates promo CD manufacturing costs, postage, packaging hassles, and several others. Labels like Roadrunner Records and Sony/BMG Canada are currently employing the service for content delivery for their acts. Also check out sister services like DMDS Burn, eNotes, and DMDS Direct, ideal for independent artists and labels, providing the features of DMDS with easy and flexible integration.

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The S.A.C. gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Music Fund's Creators' Assistance Program, administered by The SOCAN Foundation.



MUSICIANS Who Care

Canadian Artists Supporting Small Places

Several reputable Canadian artists have joined with Amnesty International's Small Places initiative to raise awareness for individuals or communities at risk of harm. The program is running until December 10, 2008, and invites all Canadian musicians to participate in helping out the less fortunate.

Since being announced in the September/October 2008 issue of *CM*, the program has received attention from a host of Canadian artists. David Usher has designated his fall tour as part of the Small Places Tour, bringing awareness to U Gambira's case and has invited Amnesty to have a presence at his shows across Canada.

Jason Collett has also invited Small Places on tour, while east coast act Wintersleep designated two recent shows as Small Places events, with more coming up. Alanis Morissette invited Amnesty to table at her five recent Canadian dates. Six Shooter Records donated tickets and swag from several of its artists for auction to raise funds.

Again, musicians don't have to travel or change performance commitments to participate. You can engage in Small Places by donating tracks, offering tickets to upcoming shows, or simply raising awareness about Amnesty International through any means available.

For more information, contact Small Places' Musician Liaison: 613-219-9642, tnemchin@amnesty.ca, www.smallplaces.ca.



Jason Collett has invited Small Places on his current tour.

Photo: Victor Tavares



John Lennon Educational Tour Bus.

John Lennon Bus Visits TIFF Headquarters

CTV hosted the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus as one of its initiatives during the Toronto International Film Festival. The non-profit mobile audio and video production facility, sponsored by Maxell, was onsite during TIFF to assist teens enrolled in the Shoot With This program and The Remix Project.

Shoot With This is a film mentorship project for kids from

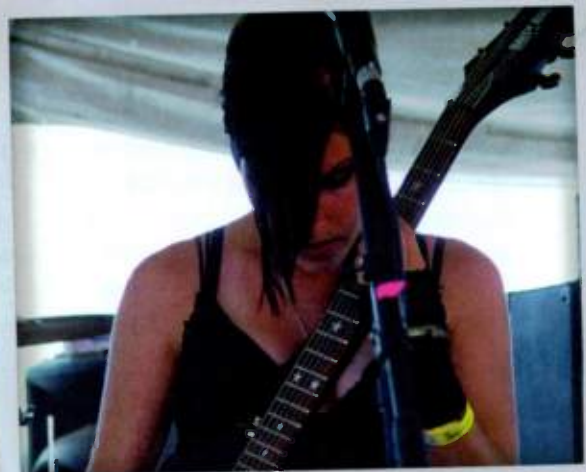
Toronto's Jane and Finch area. The Remix Project is a youth-led urban arts project in the GTA. Canadian industry figures like *Juno* director Jason Reitman and *Canadian Idol* judge Farley Flex dropped by the bus to help the students with their music and video production projects over the course of the Festival.

For more on the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, visit www.lennonbus.org.

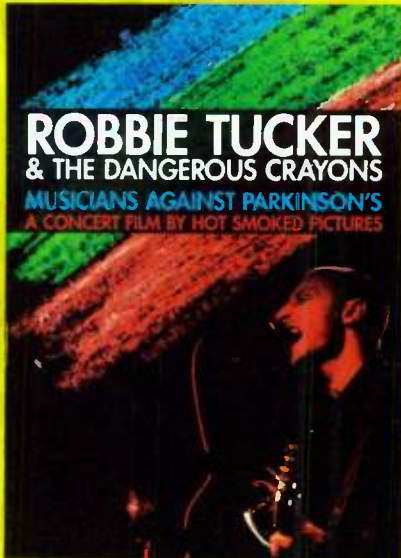
Anti-Hero Frontwoman Backs MindYourMind.ca

Rose Cora Perry, frontwoman for Canadian punk rock act Anti-Hero, is currently participating in a national non-for-profit mental health campaign directed at Canadian high-school students and hosted by MindYourMind.ca.

Perry originally met the team behind MindYourMind.ca a few years ago while Anti-Hero was promoting its debut album, *Unpretty*. After participating in an interview discussing not only her music, but also her personal struggles with mental health, Perry was asked to head the organization's latest campaign. This is yet another example of how you can use your music to support worthwhile causes while increasing your exposure. Visit www.mindyourmind.ca for more information on the campaign and cause.



Rose Cora Perry of Anti-Hero.



New Concert DVD To Benefit Musicians Against Parkinson's

Musicians Against Parkinson's Founder Robbie Tucker and The Dangerous Crayons have released a concert DVD, with a portion of the proceeds going to assist his non-profit organization.

"The MapMusic DVD is something we will continue to do with other upcoming, new, and hopefully well-known bands," says Tucker. "The idea is to get people who come to see their favourite bands perform to learn a little bit more about Parkinson's by having the bands say but a few words. Pretty simple, right?"

The 40-minute glimpse into the life of Robbie Tucker, his music, his band, and his organization was filmed and produced by Hot Smoked Pictures, which has been filming a feature-length documentary on Tucker living with Parkinson's, being a musician, starting MapMusic, and trying to raise \$1 million for the cause.

The DVD is for sale directly from the MapMusic website, with a percentage of sales going to MapMusic to assist in funding things like scholarships, public service announcements, and 2009's Getting The Youth Involved Campaign. For more information on the organization, visit www.mapmusic.org.

Busking For Change Rocks Toronto

With fall arriving in Toronto, over 50 musicians took to the streets of the city to busk in aid of War Child.

The event was inspired by Raine Maida's solo busk for War Child last year. This year he was back with his band, Our Lady Peace. His wife, Chantal Kreviazuk, also braved the wind to perform alongside members of Finger Eleven, Tomi Swick, Die Mannequin, Great Lake Swimmers, and a host of other artists that all put in long hours to raise as much as possible for the War Child cause. Students from campuses across the country were also out in force in a massive national student busk-a-thon.

War Child thanks all the bands and artists, the venues, and the city of Toronto. While the day was a success, people are still invited to donate to the cause through the War Child Canada website. Visit www.warchild.ca for more information or instructions on how to donate.



The Artist Life performs as part of Busking For Change.



Simple Plan.

Simple Plan Releases Worldwide Single For Cancer Charities

Canadian group Simple Plan has announced details surrounding its upcoming iTunes single, "Save You." Net proceeds from each download sale will be distributed to cancer charities around the world, through the Montreal-based band's own Simple Plan Foundation.

The song was penned in tribute to lead singer Pierre Bouvier's brother Jay, who was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma cancer at the age of 28. Thankfully now in remission, Bouvier's illness inspired the band to include cancer awareness as one of the initiatives of the Foundation. Thus far, the Foundation has donated over \$100,000 to various charitable organizations around Canada and has raised over another \$200,000 at various benefit events. For full details on the charity organization, visit www.simpleplanfoundation.org. The donation period began in October and continues through January 31, 2009.

Get Educated During Nova Scotia Music Week

Nova Scotia Music Week, happening November 6-9, 2008, offers a variety of educational workshops for the budding songwriter, touring artist, digitally-savvy musician, and those looking for new markets for their music.

Educational workshops at Nova Scotia Music Week are open to everyone, but in some cases, an RSVP is required. Visit www.musicnovascotia.ca/nsmw for more on seminar times and details. Workshops include: Music and Image: Music and the Gaming Industry; S.A.C. Presents: Monetizing Music File Sharing; and Publicizing Your Product: Cyberspace + Traditional.

In order to attend Nova Scotia Music Week workshops, you must have a delegate pass. Delegate passes can be purchased through www.ticketpro.ca, by calling 888-311-9090, or in person at any Ticketpro outlet. They will also be available for purchase during the conference.



The Tom Fun Orchestra is a NSMW performer and award nominee.



Hop Online With PunkRadioCast & Online Radio

• Brampton, ON-based PunkRadioCast and other online radio stations like it are offering independent artists the chance to play on an even field with signed acts in terms of artist exposure.

Currently drawing over 20 million unique listeners monthly, this Canadian operation has an average of 4,500 simultaneous listeners. The station will play any genre under the punk umbrella, including hardcore, noise, indie, ska, and others. Completely independent artists are more than welcome to submit tracks for airplay, and actually make up a large portion of the station's content.

"We encourage independent artists to snail-mail us their CD along with their press kit," says PunkRadioCast's Danny Keyes. "Our programmers will then review it for play, and a lot of the time we end up playing it – as long as it's something we like." Use your online prowess to search for likeminded streaming stations to give your music exposure to a very focused market, or if you're interested in getting involved and helping the station itself.

Visit www.punkradiocast.com and have a listen.

Canadian Radio Star Offers Shot At \$10,000

Self-published and non-published songwriters from across Canada are invited to enter Canadian Radio Star – the 16th annual national songwriting competition, supported by Astral Media and Canadian Music Week.

Songwriters will compete for prizes and the chance to have their material heard by Canadian radio personnel, industry executives, and other songwriters, with the potential of earning new fans. Entry forms are available at leading musical instrument dealers or online at www.radiostar.ca. A combination of public voting and a panel of industry judges will determine regional and Grand Prize winners.


All entries must be received by December 12, 2008. Regional winners will be announced in January by participating stations and posted on the contest website, while the Grand Prize winner will be announced during CMW. The national Grand Prize winner takes \$10,000 cash, along with a slew of gear from the likes of TASCAM and Neumann, recording time at Metalworks Studios, and web and radio promotion packages. Regional winners will take gear packages with offerings from Garrison Guitars, D'Addario, Sennheiser, and Levy's Leathers, along with weekend accommodations and delegate passes for CMW.

"What it boils down to is that songwriting is the basis of the music industry and so it is important that the songwriter's role be recognized," says Neill Dixon, President of CMW. "This competition not only provides a platform for Canadian songwriters, but also opens doors to new opportunities."

For more information on the competition, visit www.radiostar.ca. For more on Canadian Music Week, visit www.cmw.net.

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World Radio History

Nominees Announced For 2008 Aboriginal Music Awards



Tracy Bones accepts an award onstage.

Donny Parenteau with his award at last year's CAMAs.

• Marking its 10th Anniversary in 2008, the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards has announced nominees in 26 categories honouring the top recording artists and music industry professionals working in Canada's Aboriginal music scene.

Leading the way with five nominations are Crystal Shawanda and Eagle & Hawk, with Tanya Tagaq following

closely with four nods. All three artists are nominees for Best Album of the Year. The awards will be handed out at the live event, taking place November 28, 2008 at the Rogers Centre in Toronto in conjunction with the 15th annual Canadian Aboriginal Festival.

New for 2008 is the addition of awards in the following categories: Best Original Score in an Aboriginal/

Indigenous Theatre, Dance or Film/Video Production, and Best Hip Hop Music Video. The live show will also highlight the traditions and symbolism of the western coastal Aboriginal people.

For more information, contact the Canadian Aboriginal Festival & Awards: 519-751-0040, FAX 519-751-2790, info@canab.com, www.canab.com.



Left: Carly Manley (Artist)
Middle: Jim Norris
(Norris-Whitney Communications)
Above: Alex Andronache
(Metalworks Institute)

Niagara Music Forum Offers Meeting Of Minds

The recent Niagara Music Forum, hosted October 18, 2008 by CM publisher Norris-Whitney Communications, brought together delegates from the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton, Buffalo, NY, and as far away as Erie, PA to connect with the Niagara region's music community for a day of education, discussion, and networking.

Speakers Rodney Murphy (SOCAN), Sharilyn Ingram (St. Catharines and area Council for the Arts), Paul Sharpe (AFM), Jennifer Anderson (S.C.E.N.E. Music Festival), Paul Morris (HTZ FM), Alex Andronache (Metalworks Institute), and Mark Rogers (musician, LMT Connection and NEW-

WORLDSON) offered attendees a wealth of knowledge on several different aspects of the music industry, from licensing music to breaking into international markets. Several networking opportunities were offered throughout the day, including the closing reception, which featured a performance by artist Carly Manley.

The event was a success from the standpoint of organizers, speakers, and attendees alike. Next year's edition of the Niagara Music Forum will return to the Four Points Sheraton in Thorold, ON for Saturday, October 17, 2009.

For more information, visit www.niagamusicforum.com.

Stage & Screen Travel Services Opens In Canada



With established offices in Los Angeles, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Auckland, Stage & Screen Travel Services has opened for business in Toronto. The company plans travel logistics for touring artists embarking on lengthier runs on the road.

"The potential for our type of service is clearly huge in North America, particularly in cities like Toronto and New York, which are synonymous with the music, film, and entertainment business," explains Justine Liddelow, Director of Sales for Stage & Screen North America. "Our global reach definitely gives us a position of strength, but we have also worked hard at creating a flexible and innovative boutique service approach to suit the often very individual and diverse requirements of the entertainment industry."

The company has already handled touring logistics for acts such as U2, Pearl Jam, Pink, Cher, and Celine Dion, among many others. "We also cater to many other entertainment related businesses," adds Liddelow. Stage & Screen Travel Services Toronto will be located at 1 Dundas Street West, Suite 200. For more information, visit www.stageandscreen.travel.

Heads-Up On Next Year's NXNE Festival

Toronto's North By Northeast (NXNE) music festival rolls out June 18-21, 2009, a week later than in past years. NXNE believes the change will allow the festival to continue expanding, especially in parks and public spaces outdoors and new spots across Toronto. The 2009 event marks the 15th anniversary of the festival, and several celebrations and special events are being put into place to celebrate the milestone.

Check www.nxne.com for frequent updates on fall NXNE events, as well as info on band submissions, which are just around the corner. You can also check out video and photos from NXNE 2008, as well as visit the NXNE blog.

Caribou Takes The Polaris Prize

Caribou was announced as the winner of the 2008 Polaris Music Prize during a gala held September 29 at the Phoenix Concert Theatre in Toronto. CBC Radio's Grant Lawrence presented the award to Caribou, who edged out nominated artists such as Shad, Plants and Animals, Stars, and The Weakerthans for the \$20,000 prize.

The Polaris Prize annually honours, celebrates, and rewards creativity and diversity in Canadian recorded music by recognizing, and then marketing the albums of "the highest artistic integrity, without regard to musical genre, professional affiliation, or sales history." The jury is a panel of selected Canadian critics and experts, including *CM's* Showcase writer Doug Gallant. Visit www.polarismusicprize.com for more information.

Canadian Talent Streaming From Rose Theatre



Suzie Vinnick's live webcast.

Orchard Studio Owner Dave Ferri has initiated the Orchard Studio Webcast from the Rose Theatre in Brampton, ON, offering Canadian artists the chance to be showcased over the Internet from the facility.

Originally starting as the Orchard Studio Webcast Weekend with the help of Brad Marshall of Popular Minority Productions and Mark Fortuna of TunaLoops Entertainment, the studio has embarked on a new venture with the Rose Theatre being aired Monday nights at 8 p.m. EST until December 15, 2008. "Once again, I am thrilled at the

ability to show off our great Canadian artists to the world," says Ferri about the initiative. "No other country is doing this at this time. Canada will be the world-leader."

The shows are currently booked for this run, but Ferri plans to pick up again in January 2009. If you'd like to get a spot during the second series, contact Ferri at dave@orchard-studio.com with all available information, including a taste of your music. In the meantime, support your fellow artists Monday nights by visiting www.myrosetheatre.ca and watching the live streams.

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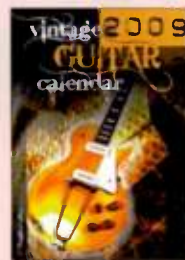
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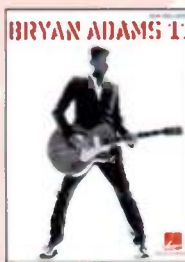
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Changes

Zune Offers New Tools For Music Discovery

Microsoft has announced that its Zune all-in-one digital entertainment brand is introducing new software-powered features for the device, PC, and the web that make it easier for

people to discover and listen to music they enjoy.

"Feedback since the recent launch of Zune in Canada has been tremendous; now we're excited to add to our launch by offering Canadians even more ways to enjoy their music and entertainment wherever they go," says Craig Tullett, Group Manager, Zune Canada.

The Zune 3.0 software update uses recommendations from the Zune Social online music community combined with an owner's play data to help create a dynamic, digital music experience that makes discovering music easy and seamless. The increasing number of independent acts getting their music available from digital retailers could benefit from this technology. For more information on the Zune player and peripherals, visit www.zune.net.

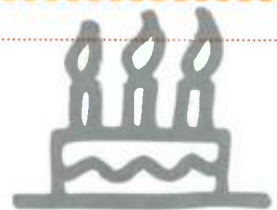


MUSIXTREME FOR INDEPENDENT BANDS & MUSICIANS

MusiXtreme enables musicians, bands, signers, songwriters, DJs, and MCs to sign up for one of three types of accounts to help promote their music.

A free artist account gives musicians the opportunity to upload their music, write blogs, post upcoming gigs, and become part of the site's review and rating system. A standard account gives them the opportunity to sell digital multimedia content and receive 70 per cent of all sales. A professional account offers all the features of the standard account and a payment gateway for merchandise like CDs, DVDs, and shirts and retain 100 per cent of all sales.

MusiXtreme does the marketing, advertising, and promotion for its hosted acts, and listeners can stream MP3s and video from their favourite indie musicians, as well as discover new bands. Visitors can search the site by artist name, influences, and blog entries, as well as by genre. Visit www.musixtreme.com to explore the site.



IndieCan Celebrates 100th Broadcast

Starting out as a Canadian independent music podcast, the IndieCan podcast is now heard on XM Satellite Radio, several Canadian college and community radio stations, and at www.indiecan.com. The broadcast, which reaches listeners in 120 countries and enjoys 100,000 downloads per month, has produced its 100th episode.

IndieCan is assembled by a team of volunteers – artists and music fans who travel around the country uncovering emerging music and exploring the indie scene. The 100th episode features an hour-long look at the recent Canadian Music Café, featuring content with The Midway State, City and Colour, Two Hours Traffic, and Martha Wainwright. Of course, the show also accepts CDs for airplay consideration from unsigned Canadian talent. Visit www.indiecan.com for submission information or to hear the latest podcast.

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580-353-1455, FAX 580-353-1456
percarts@pas.org, www.pasic.org

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Los Angeles, CA
November 13-14, 2008
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **CINARS 2008**

Montreal, QC
November 17-23, 2008
514-842-5866, FAX 514-843-3168
www.cinars.org

■ **Touring '08: The Billboard Touring Conference & Awards**

New York, NY
November 19-20, 2008
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **Yamaha Tyros 3 Clinic & Demonstration at Long & McQuade (Steeles Ave.)**

North York, ON
November 22, 2008
416-663-8612
bharrison@yamaha.ca
www.music-tyros.com

■ **Yamaha Tyros 3 Clinic & Demonstration at Long & McQuade (Bloor St.)**

Toronto, ON
November 27, 2008
416-588-7886
bharrison@yamaha.ca
www.music-tyros.com

■ **Yamaha Tyros 3 Clinic & Demonstration at Cosmo Music**

Richmond Hill, ON
December 4, 2008
905-770-5222
bharrison@yamaha.ca
www.music-tyros.com

■ **Midwest Clinic 62nd Annual Conference**

Chicago, IL
December 16-20, 2008
847-424-4163, FAX 847-424-5185
info@midwestclinic.org,
www.midwestclinic.org

■ **Billboard Digital Music Live!**

Las Vegas, NV
January 7, 2009
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **MIDEM Annual Music Market 2009**

Cannes, France
January 18-21, 2009
514-660-9724, FAX 514-764-0149
apowell@mutek.org, www.midem.com

■ **Hillside Inside 2009**

Guelph, ON
February 7, 2009
519-763-6396, FAX 519-763-9514
hillside@hillsidefestival.ca,
www.hillsidefestival.ca

■ **Mobile Beat Las Vegas 2009**

Las Vegas, NV
February 17-19, 2009
515-986-3300, FAX 515-986-4433
custserv@mobilebeat.com,
www.mobilebeat.com

■ **2009 International Folk Alliance Conference**

Memphis, TN
February 18-22, 2009
901-522-1170, FAX 901-522-1172
fa@folk.org, www.folk.org

■ **East Coast Music Week 2009**

Corner Brook, NL
February 26-March 1, 2009
902-892-9040, FAX 902-892-9041
ecma@ecma.ca, www.ecma.ca

■ **8th Annual Billboard Music & Money Symposium**

New York, NY
March 5, 2009
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **Canadian Music Week 2009**

Toronto, ON
March 11-14, 2009
905-858-4747, FAX 905-858-4848
info@cmw.net, www.cmw.net

■ **SXSW 2009 Festival & Conference**

Austin, TX
Interactive & Film: March 13-17, 2009
Music: March 18-22, 2009
512-467-7979, FAX 512-451-0754
sxsw@sxsw.com, www.sxsw.com

■ **2009 Juno Awards**

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March 29, 2009
416-485-3135, FAX 416-485-4978
info@carasonline.ca, www.juno-awards.ca

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March 31, 2009
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
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■ **GMA Music Week 2009**

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615-242-0303, FAX 615-254-9755
info@gospelmusic.org, www.gospelmusic.org

■ **ASCAP "I Create Music" Expo 2009**

Los Angeles, CA
April 23-25, 2009
800-278-1287, FAX 212-595-3276
www.ascap.com/eventsawards

■ **Montreal International Musical Competition (MIMC) Voice 2009**

Montreal, QC
May 18-28, 2009
877-377-7951, FAX 514-845-8241
info@concoursmontreal.ca,
www.concoursmontreal.ca

■ **NXNE 2009**

Toronto, ON
June 11-14, 2009
416-863-6963, FAX 416-863-0828
info@nxne.com, www.nxne.com

■ **2009 COCA National Conference**

St. John's, NL
June 17-21, 2009
519-690-0207, FAX 519-681-4328
www.coca.org

■ **5th Montreal Music Instrument Show (MMIS)**

Montreal, QC
July 9-12, 2009
514-525-7732, FAX 514-525-8033
info_simm@equipespectra.ca,
www.mmmis.ca

■ **2009 Canmore Folk Music Festival**

Canmore, AB
August 1-3, 2009
403-678-2524, FAX 403-678-2524
info@canmorefolkfestival.com,
www.canmorefolkfestival.com

■ **National Flute Association Convention 2009**

New York, NY
August 13-16, 2009
661-299-6680, FAX 661-299-6681
conventionservices@nfaonline.org,
www.nfaonline.org

■ **Country Music Week 2009**

Vancouver, BC
September 11-14, 2009
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country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

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Swampdonkey M50

by Rob Tardik



On Road Test this issue is the Swampdonkey (love the name!!) M50 guitar amp, the debut product designed by amp builder Chris Czech who proudly builds these beauties right here in Canada. (It even says that on the back of the amp!)

The M50 is a pure tube, all handmade, boutique-class guitar amp built for the discriminating guitarist. It's the kind of amp that just exudes an aura upon first glance that nothing has been compromised in its build quality – and I can assure you, NOTHING HAS. Basically, this head is built to last forever, and even comes with one serious ATA flight case included to protect your musical investment. (Great touch, Chris!)

The single-channel class AB head is rated at 50 watts and comes with two 12AX7 preamp tubes, a 12AT7 phase inverter, and two 6LGC6 power output tubes in adjustable fixed bias, all well-spaced with good ventilation. The power section uses a solid state rectifier for loud, punchy, responsive output. The amp is extremely flexible tube-wise, and can be ramped up easily to Class A operation with a simple bias adjustment.

The front panel features recessed vintage-style knobs that feel really solid to the touch and are moulded plastic with solid brass inserts. The control shafts are all solid metal. The amp starts with the standard Drive knob for gain control but then features a unique and very versatile Voice six-position rotary-type dial that gives you more EQ/tonal options. It ranges from Crisp, Bright, Full, Natural, Warm, and Fat. I enjoyed all the settings but really dug the Natural, Warm, and Fat settings the best to my musical tastes – fat and real punchy! Great for clean Carlton-esque funky jazz lines.

Moving on, the amp features the classic Blackface-inspired styled tone stack that has your familiar Treble, Mid, Bass,

and Volume controls, with a Master volume. All EQ controls are very smooth and ultra-responsive to even marginal tonal tweaking, shifting well through their respective tonal frequencies. This is an area where I find more budget-conscious amps feel very vague at times.

Taking a look at the just-as-important backside of the amp, you'll find an auxiliary send level control and send/return jacks for your non-signal boosting effects like reverbs and delay, the Boost function footswitch (included) 4-pin DIN jack, two speaker output jacks, a 3-way selector knob for choosing various speaker cabs (4-ohm, 8-ohm, 16-ohm), and finally the main power switch, fuse holder, and AC cord socket.

The sound? Well, being a Fender guitar guy, I used my old modded Stratocaster with high-output humbucking pickups, my new '52 custom shop Telecaster, and my 50th Anniversary Stratocaster with noiseless single-coil pickups through a closed-back Mesa Boogie 2 x 12" cab with two Vintage 30 Celestions. The overriding impression this amp left with me was one of power, body, and massive volume, even with my single-coils. This is one loud, classic-sounding amp! But is it ever quiet (wow, silence in an amp – what a concept). This is due, I'm sure, to those high-grade metal film resistors Czech is using, and again, those monster transformers bring on massive, clean headroom. I can also imagine what a thrilling and gut-moving experience I would have had running a 4 x 12" cab from the Swampdonkey!

My '52 Telecaster and 50th Anniversary guitars went over best with this amp, exhibiting stunning clarity and sensitivity by responding well to my playing dynamics, with me using my volume knob to vary its voice during higher settings of the Drive control. Its strength is in delivering clear, wide, blooming-type sound with tight, punchy lows (never

boomy), a thumping, articulate mid-range, and glittery, yet nicely-recessed highs. Note that separation is clear, very articulate, and will keep your playing humble – so get practicing those picking exercises, folks.

In short, you get broad, spanking, in-your-face dynamics across a frequency spectrum that's very flattering to rock, country, and funk/blues-type guitar. With that in mind, the amp also handles gain boosting/distortion pedals in front like a charm, so there's not much in these fields that this amp can't do. High-gain players please note, though, that I could not squeeze out the compressed tone I was after with the Stratocaster-plus high-output pickups, but that was not what this amp was intended for. My one wish for this amp would be a power dampening-type control, as the trend these days is toward downsizing and a control like this would be nice for dialing down the volume controls to retain headroom at lower volumes.

For more info on this and other upcoming amps Czech is working on, please visit www.swampdonkeyamps.com.

Rob Tardik is a guitarist, contemporary artist, teacher, and clinician who performs regularly throughout the Greater Toronto Area and was voted 2007 Established Performing Artist of the Year in Mississauga, ON. Rob is currently working on his second follow-up CD to his debut Without Words and is also the inventor of the Music Stamp Series: a series of educational accessories for teachers/students and working musicians. For more information, visit www.robtdardik.com or e-mail Rob at rt@robtdardik.com.

Manufacturer's Comment

We've changed the speaker outputs to three (one each: 4-, 8-, and 16-ohm) and eliminated the speaker impedance switch. Regarding Rob's desire for power dampening and the trend toward lower output amps: we had been considering building essentially an "M25" specifically for the reasons Rob mentions, but the M50 accepts 6V6 output tubes for a lower output around 22 watts with noticeably greater sustain when opened up. EL34 and KT66 output tubes may also be used. In addition to your choice of output tubes (KT66 at a slight premium), we also will perform minor mods and tweaks as desired by new owners at no additional charge.

Chris Czech
Swampdonkey Amplifiers
(a division of Moose Meadow Enterprises Ltd.)
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Ableton Live 7

by Kevin Young

Live 7's improvements, many made in response to user suggestions, ramp up its power substantially – improving MIDI and audio handling, enhancing effects, offering powerful new instruments, and enhancing functionality to both its recording and arrangement capabilities. Ableton has done some serious navel-gazing here – as evidenced by exhaustive performance tests detailed in Live 7's audio and MIDI fact sheets. Rather than stack its product up against other sequencers and screaming "BUY LIVE INSTEAD," Ableton's sell remains low-key and celebrates the fact that it's an evolving recording platform, an open-ended project, and a unique instrument in its own right. It's the kind of environment that's truly enjoyable to work in, and prompts dedicated users to hang out in small rooms, jamming with their laptops for hours at a time.

For this review, I installed Live on a MacBook 2 GHz Intel Core Duo running OS X 10.4.10. As I'm using Live as my sequencer and main onstage sampler, my initial concerns were backwards-compatibility with Live 6, and its handling of multiple layers of instruments and large samples in performance. In both respects, Live 7 delivers admirably; installation and authorization were painless and files created in Live 6 work perfectly. It's immediately clear that MIDI and audio handling has been enhanced, noticeably improving performance both when using the Essential Instrument Collection, and my own customized and heavily-layered performance sets.

A new tempo nudge function and the ability to insert multiple time signature changes and tempo changes in the Arrangement view are both transparent and highly useful. Time signature changes can also be inserted in Session view. Equally welcome: new export video capabilities and enhanced hardware integration via External Instrument and External Audio Effect, which, like other Live instruments, can be inserted into a track, sending MIDI out and routing audio in within a given track's device chain. Dealing with latency and volume issues with hardware is enhanced by means of a latency slider and re-settable peak meters.

Live's FX also get upgraded: the new Spectrum is introduced, for on-the-fly frequency analysis during mixing/mastering. Compressor, Gate, and Auto Filter also include a new sidechain input and EQ 8 gets a larger display and expanded frequency range for each band. EQ 8, Dynamic Tube, Saturator, and Operator may also be used in new 64-bit, anti-aliasing, high-quality modes. A powerful new function has also been added in the Arrangement view, whereby an individual track can be unfolded into multiple "lanes," allowing for simultaneous viewing, and easier editing, of automated parameters.

New instruments are also available. Designed in collaboration with Applied Acoustic Systems, Electric, Tension and Analog are Live-specific versions of AAS' Lounge Lizard, String Studio, and Ultra Analog, respectively. All perform exceptionally well, even heavily layered with multiple incidents of Sampler and EIC instruments.



An updated version of the Essential Instrument Collection, developed by Ableton with SONiVOX, Chocolate Audio, and PureMagnetik, is also available. Clocking in at approx 15 GB, it mirrors the original EIC's mix of orchestral patches, electro-acoustic instruments, bass, guitars, and others, but also includes one stereo acoustic drum kit and one drum machine from add-ons Session Drums and Drum Machines. All are optimized for better load times and sound quality and are installable as individual Live Packs, containing Full and Lite versions to choose from.

There's more: support for REX files, 64-bit summing, and other enhancements to the interface. For my money though, the MVP of this upgrade is Drum Racks. Included in the basic download, it's an intuitive and powerful tool for creating beats, custom kits, and for managing samples. Scroll through a total of 128 pads using the view immediately to the right of a familiar 16-pad square, onto which samples, FX, or racks can be dropped and automatically mapped to your controller. Creating custom drum kits and signature sample grouping is so automatic that those using Sampler in live performance may opt to use it in conjunction with Drum Racks, or switch over altogether.

Increasing the power of Drum Racks is the Slicing function, enabling you to treat audio files with similar fluency to MIDI with virtually one click. Slicing an audio file automatically creates a new MIDI track, and audio – loops or longer samples – can be sliced according to a variety of presets, or at user-designated warp markers. Each slice is then loaded into its own Sampler, provided with a chain in the rack and sensibly mapped to Drum Racks Macro controls. The rack's component chains can also be unfolded and mixed alongside one another in the Session view, a function also accessible in Instrument Racks – a fantastic addition for both recording and live performance applications.

Overall, Live 7 is a successful and comprehensive upgrade – a must for existing users, and as compelling a starting point for new users as any of Live's previous versions.

For more information, check out www.ableton.com.

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

Finale 2009

by Paul Lau

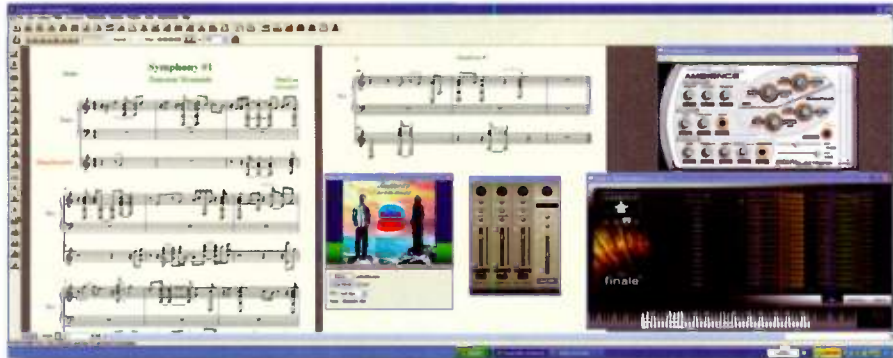
RoadTest

Finale 2009 is the flagship notation program from MakeMusic Inc. It may seem overwhelming at the onset, but with a 20-year history of being one of the leading notation software programs in the world, I wouldn't expect anything less. At first glance, the 200-page manual, which takes a number of hours to read (including the video tutorials) reveals how concentrated the program is – and it's not for the faint of heart! So, we ask, what can this intense program do with your composing and music notating, since it consists of unlimited staves and staff

the door to more colours for your sound palette. Finale 2009 has also incorporated the ability to record and import audio tracks, which lends to the more augmented and realistic playback of a composition. There is also the ability of inputting notes via a feature called MicNotator, which allows you to play a real instrument and have that pitch translated into notes onto the staff. Another method of input, similar to OCR, is music scanning with SmartScore Lite. After scanning the piece into the program, you are able to edit the notes, change keys, add and remove parts if

mentioning Finale 2009 Human Playback. This is how Finale 2009 can be programmed to interpret articulations and expressions, and emulate different styles of music such as classical, jazz, etc. This feature can also adjust from the recognition of expression text, such as "rit," and adjust tempo or dynamic levels – very "AI-ish." Now, for those of us who are creating YouTube videos or scoring the latest motion picture, Finale 2009 can synch to video. When synching Finale 2009 to video, you must have the video program you're using capable of receiving MIDI time code, which is the SMPTE medium or protocol that is sent from Finale 2009 for synchronization. If you are just using the integrated Movie Window included in Finale 2009, videos have to be in the QuickTime format or Windows Media Format for this application to run.

If you would like a sample of what Finale is all about, you can actually download Finale 2009 as a limited and non-savable demo version at www.finalemusic.com. Finale 2009 is an amazing tool and extension for your creativity and for the recording of your compositions. It's how future generations will be able to play and learn what we were creating and composing in 2009 – long after we're gone.



lines, and over 60 pre-designed templates, just for starters? I re-phrase: what can Finale 2009 not do?

I will mainly touch on the newer features and some of the basic notation functionality of Finale 2009 here. The software loaded within minutes. What took another 15-plus minutes was the installation of more than 300 amazing and authentic Garrigan sounds – which was worth the wait!

Having a download library and extensive support of updates and drivers, Finale 2009 is a multi-platformed notation program compatible with PC / Vista OS and the Mac / Leopard OS. In my experience with digital audio and sequencing, I do advise that this is one of the times having dual monitor screens would be advantageous or, actually, a necessity. With numerous tools and avenues of entering notation in this program, using the mouse and computer keyboard for me is the slowest, and is not my favourite way of composing. Step-Time allows you to play note-by-note if you are not an accomplished player. The Real-Time entry (Hyperscribe) records and notates your entire performance instantly as you play, which is my preference. Importing MIDI and/or MusicXML files, then editing or reassigning the new Garrigan sounds to the notes, makes drab-sounding files come alive.

Finale 2009 is now compatible with all VST/AU instruments, which opens

you wish, and play back the piece via MIDI or create an audio file.

Finale 2009 has surpassed previous editions by creating a more intuitive and easy workflow, with the familiar drag-and-drop ease of use. No longer do you have to select, delete, and re-insert – those days are gone. There is also automation of lyrical placement as well as repeats and codas. Finale 2009 can also create proper spacing, text, and symbols as well as controlling playback. Part of the new arsenal of production and sample playback is the Aria Player, which is very easy to set up and very intuitive to use. Adding to the producer's bag of tricks is the addition of more than 100 instrument sounds from Tapspace Virtual Drumline. This features the world-champion Santa Clara Vanguard percussion section at your fingertips! Even though previous versions allowed you to view multiple pages, you couldn't edit between them. With Finale 2009, one can edit any page, in any view, at any time.

A whole review could be dedicated to SmartMusic, MakeMusic's music learning software for band, orchestra, and choir students (www.smartmusic.com). While SmartMusic is sold separately, it is now very easy to create accompaniments for SmartMusic with Finale. Since I wrote the first article on DNA MIDI groove templates (*Humanization of Quantization*), I can not miss

Paul Lau B.Sc.

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Manufacturer's Comment

Thank you for your thoughtful review of Finale 2009. While I'm grateful of Paul's acknowledgement of the thoroughness of the Finale Installation and Tutorial Guide, I'd like to make it clear that you don't need to read the whole book to get started. Although Finale offers the power of being able to put ANY music on the printed page, everyday tasks like entering notes, hearing them play back, and printing them couldn't be more intuitive. Also, while we appreciate Paul's observations of what Human Playback does, less technically-minded readers might miss the bigger picture: Finale's Human Playback can automatically make every note, even those you entered with a mouse, play back with the nuance of a live musician.

Scott Yoho,
Product Specialist, MakeMusic Inc.



When you love the process,
the result takes care of itself

Jol Dantzig
Designer, Builder

Hamer Guitars
USA

www.hamergallery.com
B&J Music Ltd.



Adjusting The Truss Rod Part I

by Juan Coronado

A few days ago, I was at the repair department of a large musical instrument store waiting to buy some parts that I needed. In front of me, there was an irate man raising his voice about the guitar that he kept bringing back to fix because the neck was bent and the action on the guitar was horrible. This customer was demanding a new guitar, insisting that his was defective.

What he did not know was that when you live in a country with seasons that bring drastic changes in humidity, chances are that the necks of your guitars and bass guitars are going to bend just about every six months.

I'm surprised to see so many people afraid of tweaking and fixing their own instruments. If you are one of these people – have no fear. Hopefully, you won't need to surrender your guitar for weeks to the tech guys at your favourite music store because you'll learn how to do it yourself. Once you get good at this, it'll only take a few minutes to make the needed adjustments.

I teach guitar and one of the first things I like to share with my students when we talk about maintenance is to not be afraid of damaging your guitar. It is made of a big, strong piece of wood and it takes a lot to destroy it. You would

have to hit it very hard and more than once to crack it open.

In order to set up your guitar, you'll need to learn about the parts that make up the guitar, what they are for, and how they work. After that, all you need is a bit of common sense.

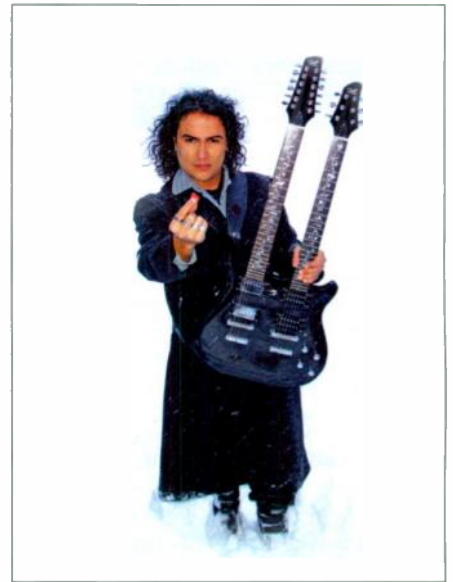
It is very important to check your guitar's neck, because just about every summer and winter your guitar might need a neck adjustment.

Why it's important to adjust your guitar's neck:

1. A straight neck will improve your guitar's intonation.
2. A well-adjusted neck will allow you to lower your action without getting a buzzing sound.
3. Your guitar will feel great, and it will be easier and more comfortable to play.

How to check your guitar's neck:

1. Hold the guitar in playing position.
2. To examine the neck's curvature, simultaneously press any one string on both the first and last fret of that string using both hands. (I usually check the 1st and 6th strings.)



Juan Coronado made *Guitar Player* magazine's "Top Ten Guitar Heroes" list in 2005 and 2007. He won the award for Best Instrumental Album from the Durham Region Music Society in 2005, Best World Music from the *Ontario Independent*



3. Look down towards the middle of your guitar's neck.

4. If the string is too far from the fretboard, it means the neck is bent in a concave way (also known as an underbow).

5. If the string is touching all the frets, then the neck could be bent in a convex way (also known as an overbow).

TTDC

by Ron Davis

The C major scale. What could be more simple? White keys only. Plain vanilla. No pesky black keys. Up. Down. Easy. Really?

That simple C major scale holds plenty of challenges. Easy to learn, but hard to master, the C major scale is a sometimes ignored pathway to keyboard control. It also illustrates a truism in music, and the arts in general: to do the fancy stuff, you need to have the basics nailed down.

Before I go on, maybe you're thinking, "Scales? Naah. Waste of time." Maybe you're thinking they're for playing Rachmaninoff, not Wilson Pickett, and you'd only play Wilson Pickett. Wrong. Scales are for anyone who sits down at a keyboard to make music. Perfect them and you have a greater playing palette at your fingertips.

And by the way, scales make great fills. Next time you're playing a song in C major, try running a scale from F to F or G to G. You might like it.

Let's begin at the beginning. Play a simple C scale. One octave up, one octave down. First the right hand alone, then the left. Slowly, at first, then more quickly. Quietly, at first, then more loudly. Here's the fingering I recommend (see Example 1). Reminder: thumb = 1, index = 2, middle = 3, ring finger = 4, pinky = 5):

Example 1



It's important to watch for what I'll call TTDC:

- **Touch** – consider every finger independently, keeping your arms and hands in a position that gives you the most freedom and control.
- **Time** – give every step an equal time value, taking care not to rush some notes, and drag others. Just as soft playing can be harder than loud, slow can be harder than fast.
- **Dynamics** – retain perfect control over the volume of your scale. Keep that volume at an even level. Remember that playing softly can be harder than playing loudly.
- **Clarity** – let each note ring out so that the scale sounds more like a string of pearls than a wash of notes.

In that little C scale lies any number of questions about overall technique. Do you put your weight into your arms, or your shoulders? When do you curve your fingers? How do you negotiate those pesky thumb and the third finger transitions? How do you support and engage the typically weak fourth and fifth fingers?

These are all good, important questions. They go to the fundamentals of producing sound from a keyboard. I can't get into the answers fully here, but it will help to pay attention to each element of TTDC. They're all connected to each other. They should all balance out. Often, focus on one element ruins focus on another. You may play in time, but the dynamics go screwy. You may play with clarity, but use a touch that is awkward and injury-inducing.

Stay aware of TTDC, and the answers of technique will become apparent to you.

How was your C scale – clear and even? Was your slow, quiet C scale as solid as your fast and loud one? In each hand? If you answered "yes" to these questions (with honesty!), then congratulations. You show a control that will serve you well in making keyboard music.

Let's go deeper. Keyboards – except for those little two-octave units – are two-handed instruments. You may never play a song that needs two-handed technique. But if you have that technique available, the music you make, even with one finger, will be the better for it. I promise. So let's do some two-handed stuff.

First, try the scale simply with both hands together, an octave apart (Example 1). Again, go up and down. Pay attention to TTDC. Start slowly and quietly. Then build the tempo and volume.

Your two hands should sound like one. A note in one hand shouldn't sound before its sibling note in the other. It shouldn't be louder. Once you get solid, steady two-handed scales, you should feel greater control over the keyboard.

Now, go up another notch. Having two truly independent hands expands your music-making capacity. It turns a two-wheel player to a four-wheeler. Starting with both thumbs on the same note, Middle C, head up and down in opposite directions (see Example 2):



Example 2



It's tricky, but if you take your time, and keep on repeating the exercise, you will soon execute it with ease. Your hand independence will emerge.

Now you're ready to move on and have some real fun (yes – this should be fun)! Have a go at playing the scale a 10th apart (Example 3). Then give it a try playing two notes with one hand for every single note in the other (Example 4).

Example 3



Example 4



You know the drill by now. Up, down. Slow, fast. Quiet, louder. TTDC.

So, that "simple" C scale isn't so simple after all. I hope you find, as I do, that it has a lot of value for the keyboard players looking to improve their musical and technical chops. "C" what I mean?

Ron Davis is a well-known pianist, composer, and recording artist. Find out more at www.rondavismusic.com. Ron welcomes comments, suggestions, and all feedback at ron@rondavismusic.com.

Fretted To Fretless Bass

by Mark Egan

I'm going to share with you my experiences transitioning from fretted to fretless bass. We'll also look at some concepts and exercises that will help you to become more comfortable playing a fretless bass.

My early experience as a bassist was first as an electric player, mostly playing rock and R&B music in the Boston area. I started studying seriously when I attended music school at the University of Miami in Florida after switching my major from trumpet to bass. During this time, I became very interested in jazz and all the great jazz bassists. These experiences inspired me to also start playing acoustic bass.

Playing acoustic bass established the foundation that later influenced my sensibilities on the fretless bass. The two instruments are similar in many ways. First, they are both fretless fingerboards and four- or five-string and second, the sound is created from the fingers on the strings directly on the fingerboard using vibrato and various articulations to create a groove.

A great guitarist, Stan Samole, who now lives in Canada, also played bass and played a Fender Precision fretless while at the U of M. This was my first introduction to a fretless bass, and I was very attracted to the sound and feel. I played that instrument from time to time, and I loved the fluidity of the sound and the groove and various articulations that you could create by not having frets. I also realized how difficult it was to play in tune since it was a blank neck with only fret markers on the side of the neck. It was especially difficult to play in tune when playing melodically in the upper register using all four fingers of the left hand since there were no markers on the fingerboard.

My next fretless encounter was with none other than the innovator of the instrument: Jaco Pastorius.

I was able to take a few lessons with Jaco while he was teaching during a summer session at the U of M in 1973. He taught me some diatonic groupings in major and minor. For example, in F major (1,5,10 = F,C,A/G,D,B/A,E,C/B,F/D/C,G,E/D,A,F/E,Bb,G/F,C,A). He played them in all keys at blistering speeds. We also worked on improvising and playing Charlie Parker songs.

The Transition

I realized that the fretless bass opened up a number of articulation possibilities. As I mentioned earlier, the sensibilities that I had acquired from acoustic bass playing with regard to the sound production and nuances that were available were very helpful. For example, if you are playing a G7 samba feel you can make use of slides and play a bass line as in Ex. 1. Sliding up to the 5th and 7th and giving strength to the chord tones creates a feel that utilizes the fretless slides.

As I mentioned earlier, it's always a challenge to play on a fretless in tune.

One of the best ways to work on your intonation is to practice with a keyboard or guitarist and to be aware of your pitch, constantly adjusting with your fingers. It's really helpful to have fret markers inlaid on the fingerboard. I'm always referring to the fret markers for intonation, especially in the upper register of the instrument.

Mark Egan, a charter member of the Pat Metheny Group, has played on multi platinum-selling recordings by Sting, Arcadia, and Joan Osbourne and has also recorded and toured with the likes of Roger Daltry, Gil Evans, Sophie b. Hawkins, Marianne Faithfull, David Sanborn, Bill Evans, and John McLaughlin. He has an instructional video entitled Mark Egan Bass Workshop as well as six solo recordings. His latest release is Beyond Words, and is released on his independent label Wavetone Records. For more information, please visit www.markegan.com.



Ex. 2 is for developing pitch and should be played with an open sustained A string.

Ex. 3 is an exercise for developing slides. Try to play them as smoothly as possible.

It's also very important to have your bass intonation set up properly. Sometimes you might play a note directly on a fret marker but it may sound out of tune relative to an open string. The reason for this is probably that the bass needs to be intonated. You can have an experienced technician set the intonation for you and hopefully you can learn how to do it yourself.

Changes in seasons also affect any instrument and especially a fretless bass if you use a very low action in order to get a growling, drone sound quality. It's helpful to learn how to adjust your neck from a trained technician so that you can tweak your instrument in order to get the maximum droning fretless sound.

I hope that this fretless information has been helpful, and I look forward to the next time.

Ex. 1 Sliding into Chord Tone.



Ex. 2 5ths for intonation



Ex. 3 Slides



Afro-Cuban Batá Rhythms Adapted to Drumkit

by Steve Mancuso

Santería, also known as La Regla de Ocha (the rule of the orisha), is a belief system that originated in Cuba from the interaction of the traditional religious practices among Yoruba slaves, other African religious practices in Cuba, and European Roman Catholicism. The orisha worship of the Yoruba – orisha being the name of their deities – made its way to the Americas via the transatlantic slave trade, which, in the case of the Yoruba, was most intensive in the first half of the 19th century.

In the religious ceremonies of Santería, music plays an important role in establishing its community’s relationships to the sacred and social aspects of its musical and religious tradition. Santería’s most respected ceremony is the *toque de santo*, a liturgical festivity for the orisha, or nature divinities, using the *batá de fundamento* (consecrated or baptized drums). This religious party, which features music, can also be referred to as a *toque, tambor, bembe, or güemilere*, depending upon the instrumental ensemble being used.

These sacred *batá* are double-headed, quasi-hourglass-shaped drums, with one cone larger than the other, both in length and diameter. The drums are generally believed to be “owned” by the orisha Shango (the *batá* contour is said to symbolize Shango’s thunder axe). The Cuban *batá* ensemble is made up of three drums: *iyá* (mother drum), *itótele* (or *omelé enkó*, “the one who follows”), and *okónkolo* (or simply *omelé*, “the strong child”). The sacred *batá* are believed to be an emissarial connection between the earth and heaven, the human and the divine, the physical and the spiritual. More specifically, these consecrated drums are believed to communicate with the noumenal realm and facilitate the possession of devotees by the orisha.

The *batá* rhythm we will be examining and adapting to the drum-set, *iyesá*, is derived from an ethnic group known as the *Iyesá* people, who maintain their unique religious and musical traditions predominantly in the port province of Matanzas, located on the northern shores of the island of Cuba. The *Iyesá*, who are of African descent – a Yoruba ethnic subgroup from southwestern Nigeria – over time synchronized their traditions with the *Lucumí* (in Cuba the Yoruba came to be known collectively as *Lucumí*), and the *batá* drummers appropriated this 4/4-meter *toque* (rhythm) known as *Iyesá*. This generic *toque Iyesá*, which accompanies the songs of many orisha, is commonly played during the third phase of the *toque de santo*, known as the *güemilere* or *iban balo*, and may last several hours. Below is a transcription of the *Iyesá* rhythm showing the basic pattern played by each *batá* drum. The syllables written below each note are spoken to represent the sounds produced on the *batá*.



Iyesá

$\text{♩} = 100$

2-bar entrance: Iyesá main rhythm:

Clave

Shekere

Okónkolo

Itótele

Iyá

ki kling ki kling ki kling kling ki la la kip la la kling ki la la

ki la ki la ki la ki la

la kling ki la la ki la kling ki

Practice Suggestions

Step 1: Clap the clave while singing aloud the basic pattern played by each batá drum. One of the keys to understanding Afro-Cuban music is to hear, feel, and phrase rhythms against the clave. This exercise will help develop clave independence.

Step 2: Adapt each part to the drumkit, allocating the low tones to the bass drum and high tones to the snare drum. The clave will be played on the hi-hat with the corresponding foot, and the shekere pattern is played on the ride cymbal. Notice the press tone played on the floor tom.

Okónkolo adapted to Drumset:

1.

Itótele adapted to Drumset:

2.

Iyá adapted to Drumset:

3.

Step 3: This example adapts and orchestrates all five voices of the Iyesá rhythm on to the drum-set, which gives the impression that the complete batá ensemble is playing. The hi, mid, and floor toms are utilized to represent the batá trio, while the ride cymbal and hi-hat are employed for the shekere and clave. Be patient and practice this pattern very slowly at first. The coordination involved is quite advanced, but with proper practice you will feel yourself gaining technical command of your limbs, and in due course you will be able to execute the rhythm comfortably. Also, notice the 2-bar entrance, which is the standard intro and fill utilized when playing the Iyesá rhythm.

2-bar entrance

4.

Steve Mancuso has been active as an educator, performer, and recording artist on the Canadian music scene since 1990. Steve is a member of the percussion faculty at The Humber College School of Performing Arts where he instructs drumset, global percussion, and various ensembles. He endorses Ayotte Drums, Bosphorus Cymbals, Moperc Percussion, Vic Firth Sticks & Mallets, and Evans Drumheads as a clinician and independent artist. For more information, visit www.stevemancuso.com.

Reconnecting With Your Voice

by Jane Bunnett

Over the last five years I have had the great opportunity to be the bandleader and artistic director for *Global Divas*, a fundraiser show for St. Stephen's Community House in Toronto. This annual show has allowed me to work with some of the emerging and established voices on the global music scene.

Tanya Tagquet from Nunavut, Maryem Toller from Egypt, and Brenda Macrimmo from Turkey (just to name a few) have shifted my approach in how I can more effectively interact with the colours and nuances these unique artists deliver.

By really tapping into "their thing," it's made me think not just about notes and scales but, more importantly, about connecting to their sound and building on that to hopefully make a stronger musical statement altogether.

When I first started to play music, my first choice was the piano, later, the clarinet, and in my teenage years I even tried my hand at the guitar (that sure wasn't me!). Much later, as I began to mature, I began listening to many of the jazz greats (and that includes the great jazz vocalists). At this time, I found the saxophone and flute to be my musical voice.

Some of those musical greats (and I know I'm going to miss a few) were Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Helen Humes, Bessie Smith, Maxine Sullivan, Helen Merrill, Nina Simone, Jo Stafford, Rosemary Clooney, Shirley Horn, Sheila Jordan, and Jeanne Lee.

Strangely enough, they are all women, and these were the voices that had early impact on me – later, of course, I heard Jon Hendricks, Eddie Jefferson, Chet Baker, etc.

The human voice is our truest expression. After many months of listening to the drumming of the heartbeat in our mother's body, the cry and the human voices responding to it are perhaps our first musical interactions.

While working on my new recording for EMI called *Embracing Voices*, I had the great fortune of working with the 10-piece accappella group Grupo Vocal

Desandann. Upon hearing this group for the first time, the vibrations I felt from their voices had a huge impact on me, hence the title of the new recording. This is why, for my 16th recording, I decided to return full circle and focus on the human voice.

While writing the music for 10 voices, it was important that it still remained a jazz recording and that the horn and lead voice really worked together to become extensions of one another.

I invited the great vocalist Molly Johnson to interpret Jacques Brel's "Ne Me Quitte Pas" but with Rod McKuen's English lyrics "If You Go Away." Molly has the most beautiful smoky voice – a voice that tells a story and really resonates with the mood of these tragic lyrics. It was important to keep in synch with the mood created. I often think of the combination of Lester Young and Billie Holiday as two artists who worked in the same linear manner. What an incredible pairing! Also, who could forget the stunning work that Shirley Horn and Miles Davis did together on "You Won't Forget Me"?

What a great opportunity it was to hear the live performances of Dexter Gordon in the '80s. Boy, was I fortunate! Often, Gordon would recite the verse or chorus of a well-known standard before proceeding with the melody and, later, his improvisations. Luckily, many of these were recorded: "More than you know, more than you know, man o' my heart love you so. Lately I find, you're on my mind more than you know" (first verse to "More Than You Know").

This truly set up the meaning of the piece. The lyrics were important. A great composition is the combination of the two. I think it's true that many of the great jazz improvisers (Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Joe Lovano, etc.) know the lyrics and are capable of singing the song. I've found that many of the young and advanced horn players that are out there can play their butts off but are not really able to simply sing a standard! Revisiting this concept is a great idea and a practical learning tool.



photo: Richard Martin

On a final note, the chance to work with two very diverse vocalists on *Embracing Voices* allowed me to also work with the various timbres of the horns I play.

Kellylee Evans (who wrote the lyrics for four of my compositions) has a clear and silvery voice – very honest and open. Her voice reflects her lyrics. This again dictated the mood for how I would blend so as not to take away from her sound. Again, Molly Johnson's voice is unique – calling upon my sound to adjust just a little.

I have always wanted to sing – and I have tried. Playing with many great singers has brought me back to what initially "turned me on" to the melodies and rhythm of jazz.

Jane Bunnett, the Toronto-based soprano saxophonist, flutist, and bandleader, has built her career at the crossroads between world music and jazz. Twice nominated for Grammy awards and a fixture of the nominations for Canada's Juno awards, she has turned her bands into showcases for the finest musical talent from Canada, the US, Cuba, and elsewhere. Embracing Voices is available from EMI Records. You can contact Jane Bunnett at janeb@janebunnett.com.

Passion For Performing (Love It or Lose It!)

by Al Kay

The start of the fall season at Humber College is always frenetic, with the new first-year crop of students practicing hard, eagerly awaiting for their ensemble placements and for who their private lesson teachers will be. For most, it's the first time they've dedicated themselves to serious thought about what it takes to be a great player. This fresh, new personal motivation for learning applies to all levels of musicians, whether it's their first year playing or professionals who have been out of school for awhile.

I've been part of many conversations with parents and younger students about what it takes to get into the local arts school, to a college such as Humber, and what it takes to excel as a "pro." I've put together some thoughts and ideas that will hopefully guide you in the right direction. Just remember, learning is never completed on your instrument, so don't fall into the trap of complacency and laziness – keep pushing yourself to greatness!



Grades 6 to 8 If you're in your first two years of playing, get some private lessons to help develop your sound and technique. Those who don't have access to a good brass teacher nearby might have to take a trip into a larger town once a month, but DO IT! Start building a library of great players on your instrument by buying CDs and downloading (legally) great jazz and classical recordings. Emulate the sound, phrasing, and articulation of those players when practicing. Don't just practice to the level of the music you are playing in band – practice higher, faster, slower, louder, softer, etc. If you are progressing well, ask your band teacher if you could be featured as a soloist in an upcoming concert. Go and listen to live music that features your instrument to witness how great players can make it sound so easy!

Grades 9 to 12 If you think you love playing more than any other subject at school, then maybe you have the "passion" to pursue music. I know I did even in grade seven – taking lessons, buying every trombone LP (vinyl) that I could, and attending every concert that featured a trombonist. You should be doing the same: finding a good brass teacher, falling in love with a great player's sound, technique, or improvisational ability, and wanting to play just like him or her. Start soloing more in jazz band, trying some of the licks you've learned from your favourite players. If you love jazz but don't have a school jazz band or combo, make your own group from friends at school or in the area. I had to do that in my high school, playing with a superb 18-piece all-star big band made up of players from about six local schools. Don't forget that almost every community has a good concert band or orchestra that you and your friends can join. They're great for reading, learning other styles, and consistency.

In grade 11 or 12, access the websites of potential music departments and find out about audition expectations, so there will be no last-minute surprises when you get the official invite to audition. In addition to preparing classical etudes and studies, you should buy quite a few jazz play-along CDs to practice with (the Jamey Aebersold series is very good). It is a great way to learn tunes, work on time feel and endurance, and practice your improvisation. Since most

jazz school auditions ask for two or three jazz tunes, you can show up well-prepared and less nervous!

College and University This is when you have to get serious about practicing. There are no "magic bullets" that will take the place of hours and hours on the horn. When I see students hanging around the student lounge all day when they could be practicing, it makes my blood boil (especially when they still can't play their ensemble music)! You should frequently get together with like-minded students, book a room, and jam. Over the next few years you will make (musical) friendships that will last you a lifetime. Attend live concerts, clinics, and support your fellow students when they have a gig! Take a few lessons outside of college with some local or visiting brass artists. Many times they won't even charge you, so if you have a limited budget, at least ask! Most importantly, go to concerts, clinics, and gigs – and be seen, so your face and name stay fresh in the more established musicians' minds.

Finally, set some goals over the three or four years you are studying there – if you are not being worked hard enough by your teachers, push yourself!

Pros Many musicians who have been out of school for awhile lose the "passion" for their art. Maybe they're too tired to practice after working their day job, or a little down as to why no one is phoning them for gigs. When they do get called for a nice gig they usually sound mediocre due to a lack of chops! Start practicing hard and re-discover the feeling of being in great shape. If nobody is calling you, make your own gigs. Go to jams, concerts, and clinics – get your face around. Take some lessons. Ask a local band or orchestra about performing the Haydn or David concerti with them next season. Have weekly rehearsals with friends, write new charts, and record a demo that may get you a gig somewhere. Above all, remember why you are doing this in the first place – **because you love it!**

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.

Why Still MIDI?

by Paul Lau

With the advent of digital audio, is Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) obsolete? Not by a long shot. Let's review MIDI and see how the technology of yesterday still remains current and effective in modern music production.

It's been over 20 years since the beginnings of MIDI, but has it changed that much? In the beginning, all keyboards were self-contained, and playing two separate keyboards at one time with two hands was just rock n' roll! MIDI changed all of that. What MIDI allowed you to do was to play two keyboards simultaneously with just one hand – it was called “stacking” the sound. A favourite combination for many was the piano patch plus underlying strings, or the acoustic piano plus electric piano combo. From the start, the technology evolved from a uni-timbral keyboard (one keyboard transmitting one sound at a time) to a multi-timbral keyboard (one keyboard transmitting multiple sounds at one time), but there were limitations such as the number of notes that could be played at the same time. Hence, the “polyphony race” for which manufacturer could get the most notes playing simultaneously with the maxed 16 MIDI channels or sounds started shortly thereafter. Well, with keyboards currently at 128-note polyphony, one doesn't really have to think about running out of simultaneously-playing notes.

With that said, sequencing software has always been ahead of the game and capable of leading these MIDI devices to higher levels. So, here we have keyboards or sound modules with 16 parts or 16 sounds, but please note: without the sequencing software, you can't tap into this nirvana of personal music production. Music software products are the backbone of music production and all current studios. Sequencing software, in lay terms, clones your play-

ing multiple times and plays back the notes simultaneously. This sequencing software has so many advantages for the musician in that it allows one to record note-by-note and to auto-correct time performances by quantization so they are perfect. Now this a little odd, in that being perfect actually doesn't sound that great (it actually sounds kind of robotic), hence humanization of this perfected quantization via groove templates (natural pushes and pulls of beats and notes) were created to remedy this perfection.

I remember when Ray Williams of



Music Marketing asked me to review and present the first article in the world about the DNA groove templates for quantization (published in *CM*); this ground-breaking technology allowed you to take the “human feel factor” of a captured MIDI performance and place it on another performance of a completely different piece of music via MIDI. This was a tremendous milestone for the evolution of MIDI: the humanization of quantization. MIDI is still a great tool for any musician who wants to effectively change

and manipulate time signatures and multiple tones without committing to digital format. Originally, “folding back the MIDI” was a term used to take the MIDI performance and create a .WAV or .AIFF file. The concept took a bit of going over, but once you had your 4-bus mixer hooked up and the cables routed back into the mixer, then into the interface, then into the computer – presto! – MIDI performance converted into digital audio file. Hence, the second milestone in the evolution of MIDI happened when software could export a MIDI track to audio instantaneously.

This meant no more folding back; just let the software do it! And, of course, this developed into being able to export to multiple audio formats, especially MP3. In the last couple of years, the 5-pin protocol has begun to disappear from the back of a number of keyboards and USB connections for keyboards began to appear. But, no fear! MIDI is still being used via the USB connect.

Are you still wondering, “Why MIDI?” MIDI allows you to create a band sound without a band, correct and quantize your measures to perfection, easily arrange and re-arrange your orchestrations, and, at the same time, print out every single note. For me, it is these capabilities and more that are attractive, but there is one element in all of MIDI that answers

the question in point: the inspiration it can create for composing music. In the end, it is a tool like the hammer – it'll always just be here!

Paul Lau B.Sc.

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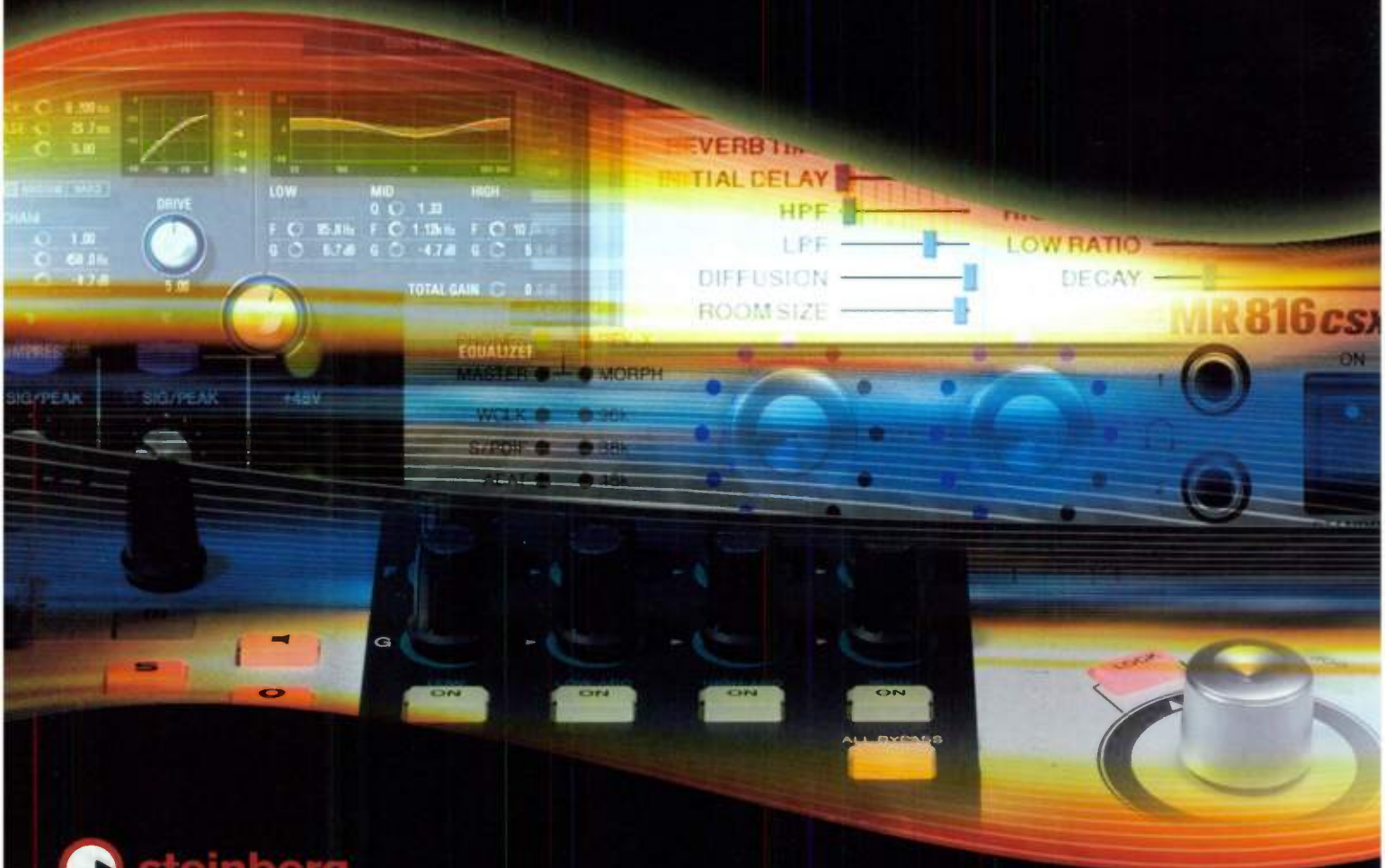
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KARDINAL OFFISHALL

BY LUTHER MALLORY

Sometime in the very late '80s, when kids were rocking Hypercolor t-shirts and listening to Milli Vanilli, hip hop was finally breaking in Canada after finding its way across the border from New York City at the beginning of the decade. New York City MCs like Grand Master Flash and The Furious Five and Kurtis Blow had inspired any kid with a tape deck to start rapping, and finally, nearly a decade later, Canadian hip hop was getting some national recognition.

It was, and still is, a very slow and arduous climb to the top for hip hop artists in Canada. Hip hop is about rebellion, and it's an expression of what's going on in the community – like punk rock in a sense. And like punk rock, hip hop ideals weren't relatable enough to the majority of Canadians to be reason enough for the music industry to put money behind it like it does pop or rock music.

Despite those hardships, Canadian MCs were finally getting some respect, and some industry attention: "Let Your Backbone Slide" by Maestro Fresh Wes was the first hip hop song to chart on the national top 40; Michie Mee had signed an American record deal which was previously unheard of; and Dream Warriors was charting in the UK.

Thinking that would be enough to convince the industry of hip hop's legitimacy and presence in Canada, an application went out to the CRTC requesting a spot on the Toronto FM radio band for Canada's first urban radio station. The CRTC denied it, and instead opted for a second country music station – making it crystal clear that the industry was not taking Canadian hip hop artists seriously, even though American MCs like LL Cool J and The Beastie Boys were blowing up in Canada. The denial sparked a major lull in the Toronto and Canadian hip hop scenes and, for the most part, forced hip hop artists back underground. The CRTC would deny them again in 1996 – this time for CBC Radio 2, which was looking to move from the AM to the FM radio band. It wasn't until 2000 that the Canadian music industry, which had all along supported hip hop (just not our own hip hop), would award Toronto the frequency for an urban radio station, finally acknowledging hip hop music in this country. The station was FLOW 93.5.

In 1996, the middle of that lull, Jason Harrow, a.k.a Kardinal Offishal, was getting his start in the business after signing his first publishing



& Canadian Hip Hop

deal with Warner/Chappell Music Canada. Kardinal was 20 years old, and had started rapping when he was only eight. There's a quintessential story about an older cousin playing him a mixed tape with UTFO and The Fat Boys, which redirected everything young Harrow knew about what he wanted to grow up to be. Up until 1993, Kardinal had been calling himself KoolAid, and cultivating his style of dance hall- and reggae-influenced hip hop. His parents had immigrated to Canada from Jamaica before Kardinal was born and eventually settled in Toronto's west end in the neighborhood of Oakwood and Vaughan. His dad was a DJ when he was a younger man, so Kardinal was exposed to a lot of different music from a young age. He cites mentors from the community centre, his mom, and of course, examples set by Michie Mee and Maestro Fresh Wes as major forces that pushed him toward music. Kardinal's first single under Warner/Chappell, "Naughty Dread," earned him a Juno award nomination — a pretty decent way to debut.

Still, the hip hop scene remained relatively dormant until '98, when a serious leap was made in the form of a song by Vancouver hip hop group The Rascalz called "Northern Touch." The Rascalz collaborated with Kardinal Offishall, Thrust, Choclaire, and Checkmate to bring Canada's best MCs together in an effort to try and make a bigger point. "Northern Touch" earned a Juno award and much media attention. The exposure was enough to make Canadian music fans start to realize that we had our own world-class hip hop.

That, combined with the inception of FLOW 93.5 in 2000, opened a floodgate for Canadian hip hop. Artists emerged from all corners of the country, and since then hip hop in Canada has been perpetually gaining recognition within, and even outside of, our borders.

Kardinal Offishall, since his debut in 1996, has released four albums, featuring several national top 40 singles. He has been proclaimed



KARDINAL OFFISHALL & Canadian Hip Hop

the ambassador of Canadian hip hop, and most recently has broken into the American market, collaborating on a track from his 2008 release, *Not 4 Sale*, with Akon called "Dangerous," which reached #5 on the American Billboard charts.

Kardinal, if nothing else, is a networking maniac. He has collaborated throughout his career with Rihanna, Akon, Method Man, Lil' Wayne, Sean Paul, Busta Rhymes, and like 50 more huge artists. Most recently, Kardinal has signed the ever-elusive American record deal with Akon's Kon Live Records under Geffen.

I was scheduled to meet Kardinal somewhere in downtown Toronto for an interview, and was trading texts with his manager Mayday at 2 a.m. prior to figure out where. Due to a last-minute complication, the sit-down interview turned into a phoner – less than ideal, but such is the business. I was forced to trade in great writing fodder like body language and venue atmosphere for a speakerphone conversation in my living room while my neighbor played the trumpet.

In conversation, Kardinal isn't without his "ums" and "likes," and he occasionally makes points that trail off into other points, but he is well thought-out and consistent in his ideas. He has all the coolness, but none of the bravado, of a stereotypical rapper. When we first speak, he opens with "What up, Luther?" and I think, "Crap, he's already friggin' cooler than me." This is mostly because he says things like "what up," and I say things like "crap" and "friggin'." We get to chatting about hip hop ideals, business, collaboration, and America's influence on Canadian music...

WHAT WAS THE STATE OF CANADIAN HIP HOP WHEN YOU WERE STARTING OUT?

I really have no idea because at those times all that stuff was way over my head. I wasn't concerned with the industry, or who was

doing what, or anything else. I was in a group back then, and we weren't concerned with any of that. I remember hearing about the Dream Warriors doing well in Europe and Michie Mee doing stuff in the US, but we were just into whatever we were doing, and we were too young to have a grip on all that stuff. That came later.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE STATE OF CANADIAN HIP HOP RIGHT NOW?

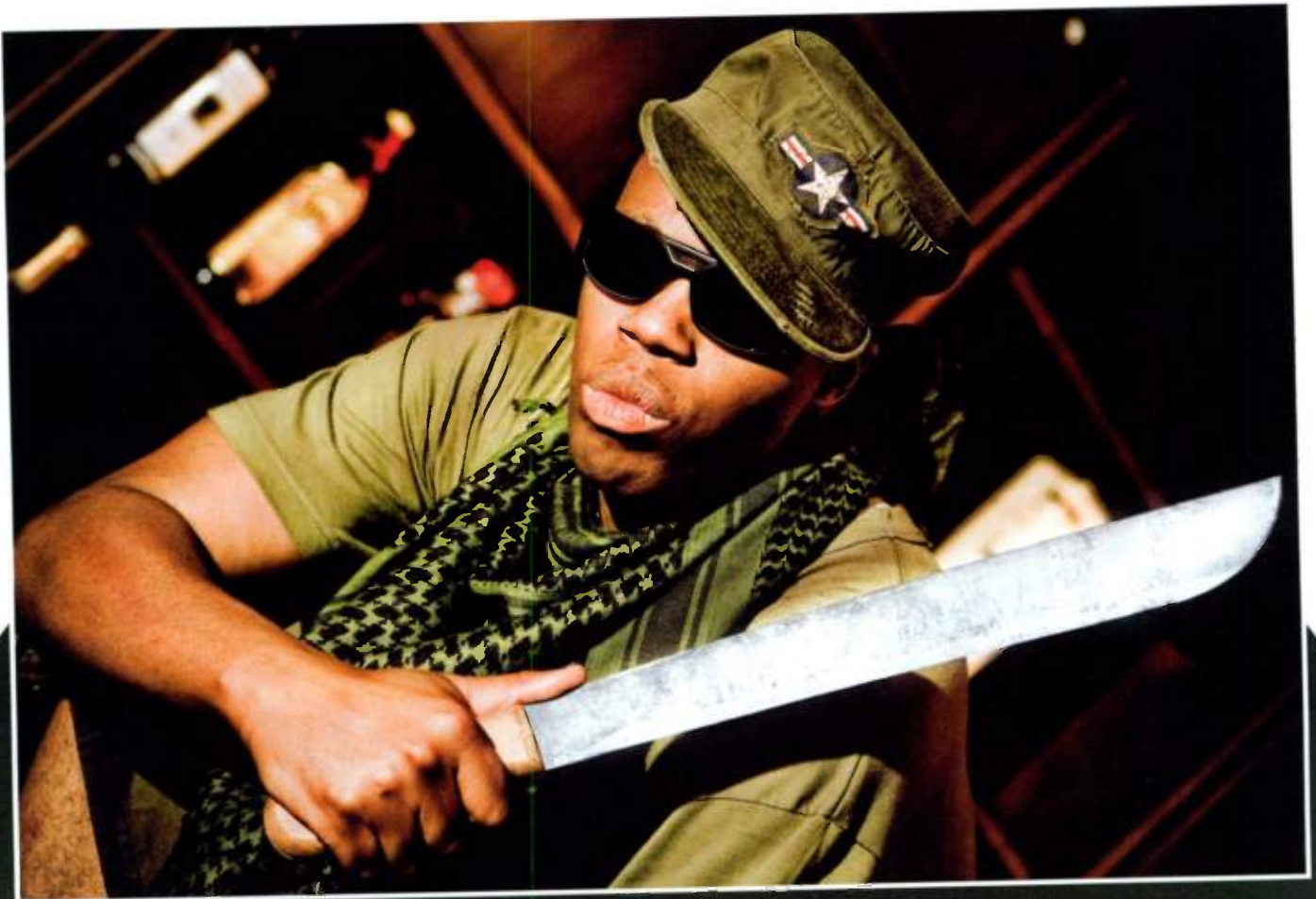
Hip hop in Canada isn't well-supported by the industry, and now, with music sales on a down slope, the industry is trying new things to catch up. Hip hop has always been playing catch-up with the industry, from way before music sales switched to digital. That means we're really behind.

WHY DO YOU THINK IT ISN'T WELL-SUPPORTED BY THE INDUSTRY?

In Canada, we look at American hip hop as this big shiny thing, and we put it on a pedestal, no matter what the quality is, just because it comes from south of the border. We're just not behind our artists the way the French or UK hip hop industries are behind theirs. The perception of Canadian hip hop has gotten a little bit better because of collaborations with American artists and people like me getting American deals, but for whatever reason, it always takes going south of the border to make people in Canada feel like our music is legit.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT AMERICAN HIP HOP THAT MAKES IT SO MUCH MORE INFLUENTIAL?

It's just one of those things where we live next door to a very powerful country, so there is always going to be an image of this big powerhouse where everything is bigger and better. In the US, they



paint the picture with a higher-grade brush so they can make things look a lot better. It's unfortunate because even if you look at Canadian TV, you can usually tell when it's a Canadian show because the quality isn't as good as the American shows. Unfortunately, sometimes it's the same with Canadian music. They have more money and better resources.

HOW IS THE INDUSTRY DEALING WITH THE MOVE TO DIGITAL MUSIC?

Unfortunately, the real focus nowadays is on singles. Labels are finding it harder to push the album as a whole because consumers don't have to buy the whole album anymore; they can just buy five or six of their favourite songs online. With that coming into play, record labels are starting to have to rethink and restructure what their focuses are, and the almighty single is the thing that is going to sell a million or two million units, so they have to think in terms of that. Before, singles used to be used as a tool to sell the album, and now you have to use the single as a tool to sell the artist, so labels aren't worried about money coming from album sales. Instead, now they're starting to take money from artists' touring, and their merchandise, and their different corporate affiliations and endorsements. It's called a 360 deal: where they make money off of a lot of different parts of the artist. That's the biggest shift.

WITH CD SALES DROPPING, DID YOU CONSIDER JUST RELEASING NOT 4 SALE ONLINE, AND NOT PRESSING CDS?

I think it's true that Wal-Mart is still one of the biggest retailers of music in North America, so for now you definitely need to get those hard copies into the stores – but the same won't be true in five years. It's definitely a tough time for artists because the labels are using a whole lot of power with the 360 deal, but with the Internet, it's becoming less necessary for an artist to have a sustainable career by just simply signing. It's very important as an artist to identify what your goals are and figure out what you're trying to accomplish. Then, if you market yourself correctly, you can have as much success as anybody, so signing is not as integral as it used to be.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO COLLABORATE WITH SO MANY ARTISTS?

My story is unique. Most of it was just done through relationships. The Timbaland thing came about because Missy (Elliot) had seen some of my videos and was telling him about me, so when I said I'd love to work with Timbaland, he was cool with it because he was familiar with my music. With The Neptunes, I had met Pharell in Toronto and we were fans of each other's music, so we took it from there. For the most part, it's about meeting different people and sharing a mutual desire to try and make music together. There's the odd time when I get a request – like in Rihanna's case. When I first linked up with her and did what I did on her first album, it was before she got signed, and that was just because they had reached out and wanted me to be a part of her project. For the most part, I just try and do collaborations with people that I have built relationships with.

SO NETWORKING IS IMPORTANT?

Networking is one of the most important things you can do – period. The more people you meet, the more opportunities there are for new things to come about. You never know who you meet that will be like, "That dude's really cool, and I have a project that he'd be good for." You never know who you meet out there that might be in a position to help you, and that might turn into something.

WHY DO YOU THINK FASHION, MONEY, AND MATERIAL THINGS ARE SO IMPORTANT TO THE CULTURE?

Back in the day, fashion was important because it was how you could identify who was down with the culture by the clothes they wore, or how they wore them. As far as money, hip hop was born out of making due – the concept of MCs speaking over a DJ playing music. It was music that was born out of not having and making the

best of it, so economy always played a big part in what hip hop was about. Now, it's often blown out of proportion where people will be like, "Well we came from nothing, so now that we have things we have to celebrate it and blah, blah, blah." To a certain point that is true, but that image is overblown and artists are selling that image more than the music.

DO YOU THINK HIP HOP THAT SPEAKS ABOUT TOPICS LIKE VIOLENCE AND DRUG USE IS IMPORTANT OR JUST DANGEROUS?

You know, whether it be hip hop, or death metal, or Johnny Cash singing about shooting somebody, it's not up to the artist to worry about that. Some people look at that as irresponsible, but I think what's irresponsible is parents not speaking to their kids about what it is they're listening to. For me, I listened to all kinds of crazy hip hop: people talking about anything from afrocentricity, to selling crack, to F the police. I grew up with all of that from an early age, but the thing is, for me, I had parents that let me know what was what so I never had issues. I think it's unfortunately just a sign of what our society is dealing with. A lot of times we have other influences raising our kids.

These days, hip hop is as omnipresent as pop or rock music. You can't turn on the radio or the TV without hearing or seeing Kanye West or 50 Cent. Considering the roots of hip hop, it's hard to be convinced that the reason for that acceptance is people feeling more inspired to get involved in their communities. Surely, it's a different kind of hip hop hitting pop radio than the stuff that was coming out of New York City in the early '80s, but it begs the question: did hip hop have to take a hit in content to really solidify a place in the mainstream market?

In the end, the community-centric hip hop that labels wouldn't fully back because it wasn't relatable enough is still suffering from that, and the pop-fused stuff with a less political theme gets most of the radio attention – with some exceptions of course. Kardinal compares the two types of hip hop to action movies versus art films: "You go to see the new Schwarzenegger movie because it's got explosions, and CGI, and all that crazy stuff, and you don't have to think too hard about it; or you go and see one of those movies that wins all the awards and doesn't gross as much, but it may be the best movie you've ever seen. I think what's going on with hip hop is not that there is a lack of artists doing one type of hip hop. It's just that some artists don't get as much exposure."

Kardinal insists that although Canadian hip hop is better perceived now than ever before, the Canadian music-listening public still isn't really behind our artists. The American affiliation is still often the selling point, when we should be self-sustaining like the hip hop scenes in France or the UK. Kardinal is a proud Torontonian and Canadian, and seems pleased to be helping put Canadian MCs on the map, even if it has to be on the shoulders of our southern big brother.

I ask a stupid question: is Canadian hip hop booming right now in Canada? Kardinal responds: "Booming? No, I don't know if Canadian hip hop has ever been booming, per se. Hopefully, one day it will be – but right now, we're still looking outside of the country for good music before we look inside."

On the other end of the phone, nearing the end of our conversation, Kardinal seems to be just arriving at some sort of a family function. He asks me to hold on a second so he can greet someone, which he does with one of those exaggerated "mwah" kisses, and then sends her off to "go play with Auntie and Uncle" while he finishes with me on the phone. I tell him thanks, and have a good one (lame), and Kardinal politely thanks me back and says, "Later boss, be cool." I'm trying. ■



Luther Mallory sings and writes songs for Crush Luther and is the Director of A&R for High 4 Records.

CORB LUND WRITING

■ BY KEVIN YOUNG ■ PHOTO BY COLIN SMITH

Corb Lund makes it clear, a number of times, that he is a very lucky man. Since moving to Edmonton in the early '90s from his home in Taber, AB, he's made a career in music doing pretty much exactly what he's wanted to. For a guy who once questioned whether his voice as a songwriter would resonate with audiences outside his home province, that's not too shabby. Neither is the hardware accumulating on his mantle: gold records, Canadian Country Music Awards, Western Canadian Music Awards, and a Juno. Though unable to be in Winnipeg for this year's CCMAs, he added another award to that list, for Roots Artist or Group of the Year. Truthfully, he never expected to be embraced by that side of the industry — ever. "It's all a bonus," he says.

If so, it's a bonus well-earned by a songwriter who found that sticking to your guns as an artist can sometimes pay big dividends in terms of career longevity...

Mainstream, Lund is not. His songs don't dwell on cookie-cutter sentiments or love gone right, wrong, and right again. Instead, he tells stories heavily-rooted in his and his family's history and the southern Albertan landscape they hail from. "Coming from five generations of cowboys," he says, by way of explanation, "playing that kind of music kind of makes sense." Though Lund first made his mark with '90s indie outfit The Smalls, it was more a departure from his roots than his particular brand of country is. Departure, however, isn't really the appropriate word, as Lund gave rein to both the country side of his writing and the rock side during The Smalls' lifespan.

In 2001, after The Smalls called it a day, he refocused, taking himself off to Austin to road test the songs he wasn't yet sure would travel that well. "I deliberately went down there on my own and played every open mic I could find." That gave him a sense of how his music worked in front of a discerning audience. Not only was the response encouraging, the five weeks he spent there had a direct impact on his songwriting. "Texans," he says, "are extremely proud of being from Texas. It got me thinking about where I was from and made me more self-aware about my own heritage, which is actually pretty rich."

Not only did folks in Austin get his music, people across Canada, the US, and as far as Australia and the UK got it, too. At a time when record sales aren't what they were, Lund's records are going gold in Canada and winning him spots on some pretty diverse gigs — like Glastonbury's main stage, slotted just prior to The Waterboys and The Who.

There's a lesson in songwriting to be learned from Lund's revelation. "If you write honestly about your own background, people will pick up on it, no matter what the details are." Lund's heroes, Willie Nelson and Marty Robbins among them, sing about where they're from. "That tends to be America, because America's the big dog on the block culturally at this point in history," Lund says. And there are plenty of Canadian country singers who sing about Nashville, too, he adds.

Writing what you know, however, imbues your work with an authenticity that's increasingly rare in the mainstream. Though rooted in his subject matter, that authenticity is augmented by his continuing collaboration with producer Harry Stinson and Lund's own band The Hurtin' Albertans on stage and in the studio. Stinson's arrangement sense, the sonic signature they've developed together, and Stinson's "taste for the underbelly of country music," as Lund puts it, add depth. So does the band. Even if you pick up the most fantastic collection of sidemen, Lund says, "you can't recreate five years of touring together."

You also can't recreate the experiences Lund brings to the table without living them. His musical experience runs the gamut: from rock, to jazz, through country, roots, and metal. When he first moved from Taber to Edmonton, he did so to attend music school at Grant MacEwen College. He knew he wasn't going to be a jazz player, but the experience gave him the opportunity to focus on playing guitar and bass for two years and added substantially to his songwriting palette. That, as well as touring across the US, Canada, and Europe with The Smalls, and his connection to his own part of the world, make for an even richer heritage to draw on as a songwriter.

"If I started doing stuff that's no fun, there's no point anymore — might as well go and get a job," he says. "My whole background comes from the underground. There's a whole world of music that encourages uniqueness. In The Smalls you were expected to be weird and different. That was the order of the day."

Still, the success he's found doing essentially what he wants, he says, is something of an anomaly. "It could end at any moment." But, he adds, the base he's grown over his five country records will likely stick with him, regardless of his mainstream profile. "There's a certain segment of people that only cares what's on the radio now, but there's also a segment that likes the artist because it likes the artist."

That likely has something to do with Lund's ability to tell stories that can speak to a fairly wide audience without constraining himself to mainstream country topics and form. Though he's heard others complain about the narrow bounds they get to express themselves within as songwriters — particularly in terms of what's offered up on mainstream country radio — Lund doesn't feel at all constrained by the genre in his writing or listening. He doesn't tend to follow the country industry terribly closely, he explains.

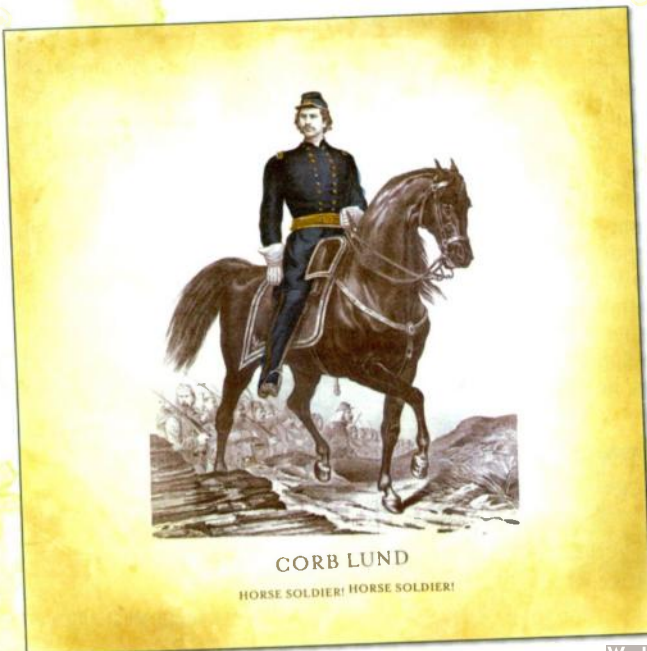
His tastes are all over the map — currently, he says, "There's this band called Entombed that I'm really into." Right. Scandinavian death metal may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you hear Lund's music, but clearly he has an appetite for music that fits his life at the moment. "I kind of went through a divorce recently and metal's got me through it," he laughs.

He'd also like to share some more personal tastes with his listener at some point, on an album he'd call *Songs My Friends Wrote*. If he's lucky, he clearly wants to spread that luck around, if possible. "My stuff is kind of different and it got on the radio. So, I'm thinking, if they heard this other stuff, they might like it, too."

Good point — the vast majority of humanity may not know about a given artist or underground band, but that doesn't mean there isn't a market for them. Increasingly, they just have to find it. Correspondingly, his advice to aspiring songwriters, regardless of genre, is essentially, stick to your guns. "Find a unique songwriting voice and work on it and find somewhere where it fits, rather than trying to take a genre and fit into it. I think the key to a long, interesting career is to find your own voice as a writer. If it's good stuff it will always find an outlet. If it fits in the country world, fine. If it fits in another world, fine."

When it comes to advice for people looking specifically to break into the country market, Lund is blunt: "You're asking the wrong guy. I just got lucky." Maybe, but it's a question that comes up regularly. "Whenever I run into a kid, like a 15-year-old with a guitar who honestly asks for advice, I tell him, right away, to start writing his own songs, right? You have way more power and it's way more fun."

Fair enough — mainstream country is notorious for depending heavily on the songwriting equivalent of a puppy mill. Now, there's no question that without songwriters sitting in small rooms writing songs for other people to sing, our musical culture — across the board — would be far less rich. For Lund's part, he's not making a judgment: "It's just totally different to what I do."



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S HIS OWN STORY

What Lund does is tell a mean story, largely focusing on his own past and roots in Alberta. For his most recent effort, however, 2007's *Horse Soldier! Horse Soldier!*, he cast a wider net. Dedicated to the memory and sacrifice of Cpl. Nathan Hornburg, a friend of the family who was killed in Afghanistan last year, the album focuses heavily on horses and the men who've ridden them into battle past and present — from the time of Genghis Khan to the Crimea to the dirty little wars of the last century like Nicaragua, and right on through to the present day.

Lund wears a variety of hats on the record, which allows us to see his characters without judging them, so much as sharing their point of view. Clearly Lund's views on war and warfare are complicated, but he makes a point of not confusing the question of whether a particular conflict is just, or noble, with the motivations of the people sent to do all the hard work. "I figure any 20-year-old who signs up to serve the country and gets shot at is pretty heroic, regardless of whatever your politics are, whether you think the mission is worthwhile or not worthwhile."

The interesting thing about *Horse Soldier!* is the multiple points of view Lund adopts — some songs dwell on the glory and bravery of war. Others are potently anti-war, but without ever telling you how to feel. That's the appeal. *Horse Soldier!* draws listeners in, taking them on a journey, but not giving them specific commands about how they should feel about it. "I think there's a place for political songwriting. I've never done a whole lot of it," he says. Still, overall, it's fairly sombre. Nowhere more so than on "Student Visas," drawn from Lund's conversation with a wounded US veteran of Nicaragua — the subject viewpoint illustrates that complicated views on conflict and sacrifice aren't just the purview of songwriters and protesters.

Regardless of what you take from the stories on *Horse Soldier!*, ultimately you have to come to terms with your own view of right and wrong. "It seems it's a bit of a mirror for whatever you want to pull out of it. From song to song, it's different viewpoints," he says.

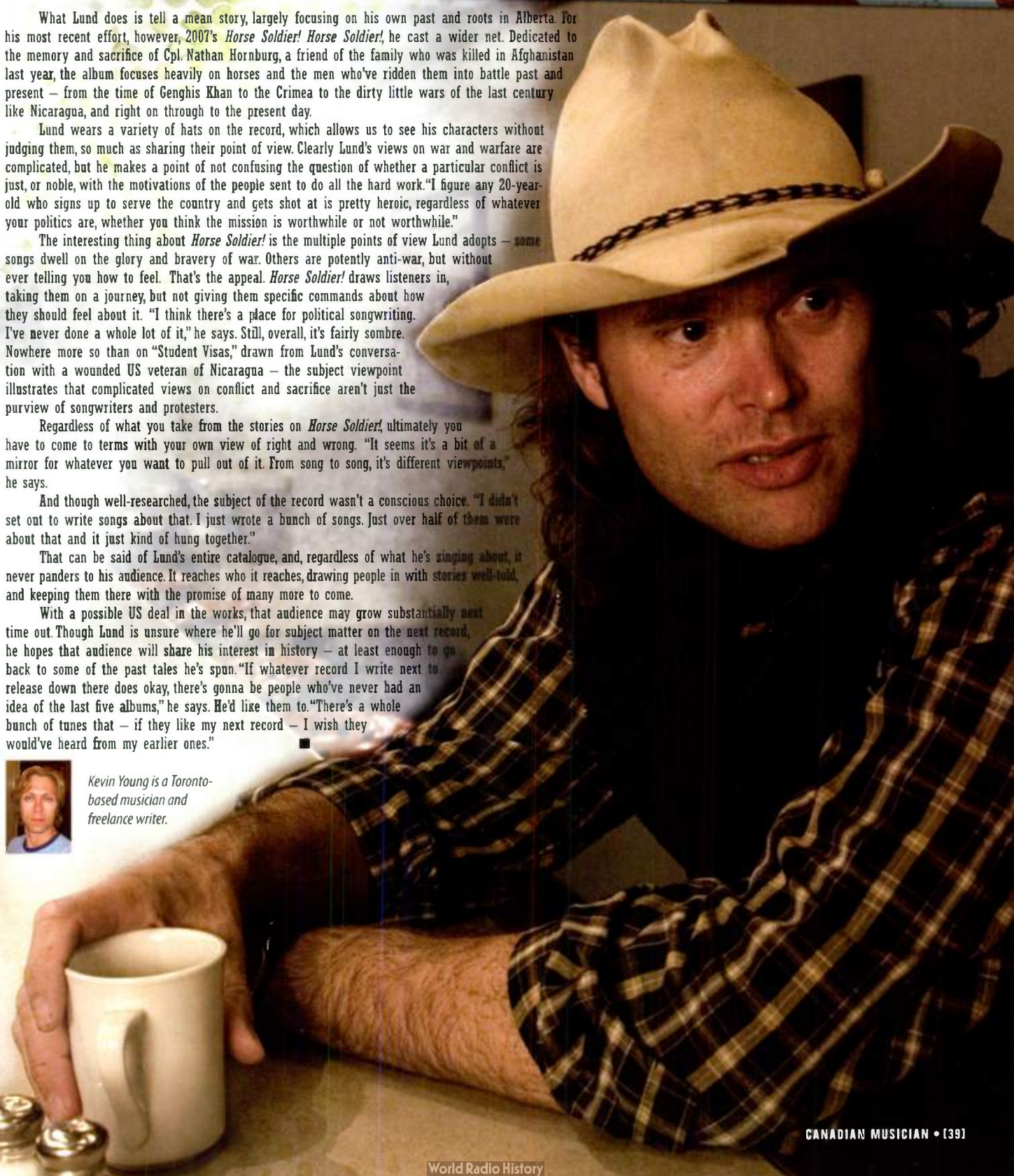
And though well-researched, the subject of the record wasn't a conscious choice. "I didn't set out to write songs about that. I just wrote a bunch of songs. Just over half of them were about that and it just kind of hung together."

That can be said of Lund's entire catalogue, and, regardless of what he's singing about, it never panders to his audience. It reaches who it reaches, drawing people in with stories well-told, and keeping them there with the promise of many more to come.

With a possible US deal in the works, that audience may grow substantially next time out. Though Lund is unsure where he'll go for subject matter on the next record, he hopes that audience will share his interest in history — at least enough to go back to some of the past tales he's spun. "If whatever record I write next to release down there does okay, there's gonna be people who've never had an idea of the last five albums," he says. He'd like them to. "There's a whole bunch of tunes that — if they like my next record — I wish they would've heard from my earlier ones." ■



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



Cormier Bats

■ BY ANDREW KING

"I guess the whole 'family' idea of punk rock in general is that nobody outside of the scene is going to help you out — finding venues, putting on shows, setting up tours, etc. It's always been everyone inside the circle helping each other out and making things work."

This is the second time in as many tries that I've sat down for an interview with Liam Cormier, vocalist of Toronto's Cancer Bats, and had him kick things off. And that's just fine with me. He knows what we're here to talk about, and his enthusiasm is immediately evident. And why shouldn't it be? Since releasing their second LP, *Hell Destroyer*, earlier in 2008, Cormier and the Bats have been enjoying some welcome success. While it was hard work and dedication that ultimately paved the path to this plateau, Cormier, drummer Mike Peters, bassist Jaye Schwarzer, and guitarist Scott Middleton acknowledge the support of their friends and the community aspect of the punk rock scene for helping them along the way.

DIY Till They're DDA

Regardless of the musical community to which you belong, one thing is for certain: everybody has to start somewhere. In punk rock, that "somewhere" usually involves an abundance of piss and vinegar and an absence of financial resources. This band is no exception. "You don't have any money. You have to do it yourself. You play where you can, and just try to get by," explains Peters, looking back on the band's beginnings. Of course, getting involved in a tightly-knit scene — be it punk, hip hop, or even country — means you won't have to do things on your own. There are plenty of other artists, grassroots industry folk, and fans ready to strengthen that community into something greater than the sum of its proverbial parts. Everyone is really there for the same reason — to strengthen the scene out of a love for the music.

"That's the reason the whole thing works — because people are passionate about it and really care," Cormier offers. "That, in turn, also spills into bands helping out bands." There's a kinship between musicians in the punx community: everyone is

striving for the same thing. Grandstanding and chat-talking aren't welcome here. "It's all about bros helping bros," says Cormier.

The Cancer Bats' evolution as a band is a prime example of how this collaborative model works. Initially forming in 2004, the band could be found shortly thereafter playing any dive that would have it, bleeding passion onstage. People eventually took note. "We've been helped out by bands that were stoked on what we were doing, and they were in a position to help out," says Cormier. "People would listen to what they were saying."

Death Bros.

Among the folks backing the Cancer Bats off the bat were Billy Talent and fellow Distort Records act Alexisonfire, along with a number of bands in the same scene south of the border like Rise Against and Every Time I Die. While these bands will certainly share the stage whenever the opportunity presents itself, there are plenty of other ways to help out your community of 'ellow artists.

"It would be the smallest thing — just wearing our shirts," explains Cormier. "Alexisonfire made a point of wearing one of our shirts in, like, every single photo or whenever they were on TV." Cormier also recalls Billy Talent vocalist Ben Kowalewicz calling him up prior to a US tour with emo giants My Chemical Romance asking for tees, planning to wear a Cancer Bats or Alexisonfire shirt on every stop. "That rules," says Cormier about the gesture. "Kids see that, and will be like, 'What's a Cancer Bat? What's Alex-is-on-fire?' and might go home and Google it, you know?"

As the Bats/Alexisonfire/Billy Talent trio can attest, bands in a co-op don't need to sound musically alike to back each other or team up for shows. Cormier remembers a time where the Cancer Bats had the chance to support another band in You Say Party! We Say Die!, inviting the Vancouver-based dance-rockers to join a mostly-metal bill in Sudbury, ON. "Kids were super into it," recalls Cormier. Like an ideal society, a music scene isn't about aesthetics or superficial elements — it's about passion, cooperation, and ultimately, fun.



...WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM

"This Is Our Song"

Hail Destroyer (like *Birthing The Giant* before it) features guest vocals from several of the aforementioned bands. Alexis' George Petrit and Wade MacNeil can be heard belting on some *Birthing* tracks, and this time out, MacNeil returns alongside Tim McIlrath of Rise Against and Billy Talent's Kowalewicz to add their talents to the record.

"There are parts of songs where we'd just get these ideas of having one of our friends come in and do their thing, and they were all stoked on the idea," recalls Peters. "That was the best part. We called Ben, and he was ready to go the next day. He was waiting at the studio that morning, busting our balls for being late."

Though these contributors are of notable stature, Cormier insists it wasn't their "star power" that made their appearances appealing. "When we had to get approvals from the record labels, one of the big things was we weren't allowed to market the record based on the fact these guys were a part of it," he says with a smirk. "It was funny, because to us, that was the funnest thing from our minds. It really boils down to the fun involved with having friends participate in what you're doing."

No Gap To Fall Into

Middleton arrives with a van full of backstage gear ready to unload, meaning our 15-minute 35-minute interview is over. Currently touring Europe after a cross-Canada headlining jaunt, it would seem the band is now in a position to reciprocate some support, and that's exactly the plan. "As we're starting to draw more kids, we can then bring out these bands for kids to get into," says Cormier excitedly. It seems very important to him to pay some of that kindness forward. "Wade's new band The Black Lungs is constantly on tour with us, and we try to bring out friends like [Montreal's] Barn Burner whenever we can. We think they're both wicked."

You don't need to be in punk rock to understand the importance of camaraderie among members of a musical community. Get some artists together and put on shows, wear each others' shirts, record songs or videos together — anything. It adds credibility to the music, and spreads like wildfire among the music's supporters.

"There's no gap between anybody in this community — the bands or the kids," says Cormier. "Everybody subscribes to the same idea, and that's how we stay strong."



PHOTO BY JESS BALKMAN



CANCEROUS CRUNCH

Exactly how does the band recreate the monstrous tones heard on *Hail Destroyer* for its live shows? We thought you'd never ask...

■ SCOTT MIDDLETON (GUITAR)

Guitars

- First Act custom-made Sheena (x 2) with EMG 81s and GHS Progressive strings (011-052)
- Gibson 1987 Les Paul Custom Lite with EMG 81s and GHS Progressive strings (011-052)

Amp

- Diezel Healer 180-watt tube head with 6L6 Svetlana Tubes
- Diezel front-loaded 4 x 12" cabinets (one with Celestion vintage 16s and one with Custom Diezel Eminence speakers)

Pedals, Effects, Cables

- Rocktron Hush pedal (in the serial FX loop to quiet any ground hum/hiss)
- Rocktron Cyborg Digital Delay pedal
- Blackstar Amps HT-DistX pedal
- Morley Steve Vai Bac Horse Wah pedal
- Ibanez TS-7 Tube Screamer pedal
- Boss TU-2 tuner pedal
- Boss NS-2 noise suppressor (to kill guitar feedback)
- Korg DTR 2000 rack tuner
- DMC Ground Control Pro
- Furman Power Conditioner
- Evidential George L's Cables

■ JAYE SCHWARZER (BASS)

Basses

- First Act Limited Edition Delgado Bass with GHS 050-115 Bass Boomers

• Fender 70s Passive Jazz Bass with GHS 050-115 Bass Boomers

Amps

- Morris Amps Custom "MORR - BATS" tube distortion/preamp
- Mesa Boogie 1986 295 Simul-class stereo tube power amp
- Tech21 Sansamp RBI
- Ampeg 8 x 10" cabinets (x 2)

Pedals, Effects, Cables

- Boss TU-2 tuner pedal

■ MIKE PETERS (DRUMS)

Drums & Hardware

- Tama Starclassic Performer kit (birch)
- 13" x 10" rack tom
- 16" x 16" floor tom
- 22" x 18" kick drum
- Truth custom 14" x 8" snare (maple)

Cymbals

- Tama hardware
- Tama Iron Cobra single kick pedal
- SABIAN 15" Metal X hi-hats
- SABIAN 20" APX crash
- SABIAN 20" Metal X crash
- SABIAN 22" HH Rock riot

Skins

- Evans G2 coated (toms)
- Evans EMAD (bass)
- Evans EC Reverse Dot (snare)

Sticks

- Vater 2B

■ LIAM CORMIER (VOCALS)

Mic

- Shure SM58

FROM THEIR FRIENDS



Andrew King is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician.



ONLINE

BY KEVIN YOUNG

Initially, I was amazed by the effect of the web on the communication between artists and their audiences – even more so by its effect on the dialogue between audience members themselves. At that time, in the mid-'90s, many of the bands with which I'd crossed paths had what was considered an enviable online presence. A multitude of fan sites, multiple forums, and what seemed a fairly liberal exchange of ideas between audience and band.

It was still, however, a largely one-sided conversation – partly because grasping the diminishing gap between audience and artist took some getting your head around, but primarily because little, as yet, had really seemed to have changed. We released records on the same long-haul timeline, we really didn't think too much about keeping our fans' interest between album cycles, and we were extremely guarded – ridiculous though it may seem now – about the use of "unofficial" video, recordings, and images of the band.

When P2P hit, the debate ramped up considerably and, though it's now more nuanced than it was,

MARKETING 101

MITCH JOEL



we're still going over much of the same ground. Change is rarely entirely destructive, and this wasn't the first time the industry has been rocked by new technological trends that damaged the bottom line. In this case – tanking sales aside – change does give the artist a level of control and freedom that would have been deeply envied by many less than a decade ago.

If P2P let the genie out of the bottle, Web 2.0 and the fluidity of the exchange between artist and audience shattered the bottle completely. No longer one-sided, the conversation is many-faceted and constant. How to best utilize it to your advantage and where you make a living in the mix is something the entire music industry continues to struggle with. Whatever the resolution, it's not just about selling little plastic disks in a dirty big heap every couple of years. It's about defining and promoting yourself as a brand, and connecting individuals willing to invest in that brand on an ongoing and relentless basis.

This is something Mitch Joel, President of Montreal-based digital marketing and communications agency Twist Image has put a lot of thought and effort into. Joel started out as a music journalist, working for a variety of national publications and publishing his own hard music magazines, *Arena Rock* and *Enrage*. Early on, he saw the power of the web. "Even then my magazines were online," he says. At the time, there was no ISP in Montreal and he was forced to call in long distance to an out-of-town provider. The sites were very basic: "... the text of the magazine with a logo beside it. And I thought that was a website."

He continued to write, but branched out, starting Distort Entertainment with Greg Belows, which signed Alexisonfire and others, and working at one of the first online search engines. After landing at Twist Image, Joel and his partners there undertook the task of creating a truly modern marketing agency that would fully embrace digital channels. Since, they've grown the company from one employee to 60, maintain offices in Montreal and Toronto, and serve a diverse clientele that includes major telecommunications and retail giants.

If you're wondering why we're talking to Mitch Joel as opposed to someone more entrenched in the music industry, it's because he and every musician I know share something absolutely fundamental: an overarching passion for what they do and a desire to communicate that passion that will not be denied. In Joel's case, it's a passion for the digital space and the transformative possibilities it offers us. It's a desire that's landed him speaking engagements at events featuring Bill Clinton and Tony Robbins, as well as an international book deal based on his blog and podcast *Six Pixels of Separation*.

Do people even care about music as much as they once did?

Many people feel the amount of media, information, and technology we consume and use to entertain ourselves and stay connected has simply knocked music off the top of the pile. Still, when I put that question to Joel, I fully expect the answer to be yes.

I'm wrong...

"The answer is no. That's probably the biggest secret in the industry. The iPod is the fastest-selling electronic device of all time. What are down are CD sales." The traditional gatekeepers who largely directed music at us, he explains, were heavily invested in not only the physical product, but the surrounding manufacturing and distribution systems. It has been far more expedient, over the past decade, to gradually cut back in an effort to serve the bottom line than invest in an immediate, comprehensive overhaul of the way the industry worked.

"We have never had this much access to this much music," he says, citing an e-mail he's just received from a contact at MySpace US. "There are 2.5 mil-

lion new, unique users just this month on MySpace US. Engagement is through the roof. If you like Italian folk speed metal, you now have access to it. You're no longer blocked off by the labels and, if you're an artist creating this music, stop complaining." Most traditional artist income streams still exist, he says: licensing, merch, and concerts, and brand new streams are being created constantly. Better yet, many of the tools to exploit them come at a compelling price. "MySpace, Facebook, whatever – someone's giving it to you for free and, on top of that, a community of millions of people. You have one job at that point: create amazing music." Joel later references www.ning.com, which allows you to set up your own social network. "This is the tool Radiohead and 50 Cent have been using," he says. Again, it's free. Even if you don't have the base yet to populate that network, "the tool Ning is providing – there's normally a six-figure cost to that. The core spirit is very cool."

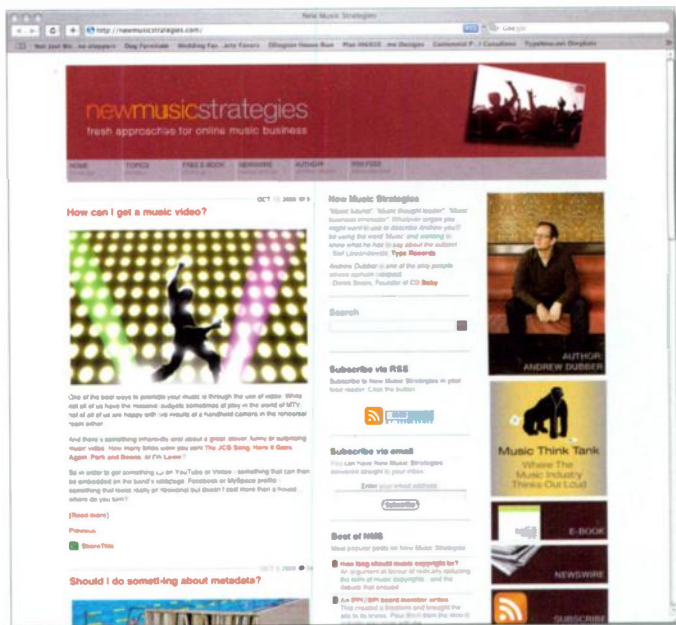
Now, you may fail online. The odds are against you: your music may get slammed for being sloppily recorded, derivative crap; you may never make a dime; and your community might consist of you, your mom, and the guy who did your web design. Then again you might succeed beyond all expectation. It's a couple of years old, but the Lily Allen/MySpace story still resonates: a signed artist whose label – so the story goes – didn't have any idea of the traffic her MySpace was generating in 2005-2006, with current estimates putting the number of tracks downloaded from her MySpace at 19 million plus.

"Never before has a musician had more opportunity and channels to spread his or her art," says Joel. "The question is: are you awesome at it? Are you using those channels to connect with fans?"

If you're not, he has some words for you...

Be Part Of The Conversation

Conversation isn't necessarily the appropriate word. It's an evolution of how people express themselves, a fundamental societal shift. "The web is a new platform of group expressions," says Joel. "I think, as an artist, it's incumbent upon you to acknowledge that the one- or two-way conversation you were used to is



ONLINE MARKETING 101

now a group conversation. If you can't embrace that, you're going to struggle."

Even if your music is being stolen, an appetite exists for concert tickets, merch, and more. "You can't even compare it to when I was growing up – I had a choice between three magazines that came out once a month ... fingers crossed that the band would come through Montreal! Even if your stuff fails online, it's a free focus group. You can say 'I'm listening to you,' or 'I'm not,' but you can't deny the volume of that voice."

Target Your Audience

The problem is cutting through the noise. The upside is that there is undoubtedly a community that's actively looking for great music and the sense of belonging you may offer them. If there's a niche for you, you can find it, and be found in it. "Who cares about how many? We can find out who," says Joel. "Everybody, as a musician, should be interested in the who. People are not only available to you, they're raising their hands and identifying themselves."

That some of those people are also actively scarfing your music back for free isn't the point. "People seem to think that 'free' means nobody's going to pay for anything," he says, referencing an upcoming book by Chris Anderson, author of *The Long Tail*. Entitled *Free*, Joel hopes the new book will validate the theory that giving something away for free causes people to become more willing to invest themselves, and their money, long-term, in a given brand. "There's a million ways free activates things. Forget the web. Go back to the music industry. Why do we do radio/stickering/postering?"

The tools may evolve, but working hard and doing more is still an integral part of the success quotient.

Show No Fear

"This isn't a VCR – where you touch something and it starts flashing 12:00. You can't break the Internet. The only reason not to do it is to say 'I'm a musician. I don't care about marketing.' Fine, but most artists' true passion is to get their message to as many people as possible." As for lacking resources – time, money, skills? Joel doesn't buy it. "Get help. If you can't pay for it, barter. If you create a Facebook Fan Page and say 'I don't get this,' I bet your fans come forward to say 'let me help you.'"

Payback doesn't have to be monetary. It can be concert tickets, playing in a fan's basement – never mind that you're giving someone else opportunity to hone and promote their own skills and passion. "Musicians were notorious for giving blood to buy food. This isn't even that big an ask."

True. The cost for much of this is time. Of course, if you have the money or access to people with money, that doesn't necessarily hurt, but in approaching this on your own, there's romance to it comparable to slugging it out in the clubs ten years ago. "I'm not saying going ghetto is the solution. Money, access, and power enable you to have next generation and higher-level talent, but in floating around, being a part of your community you might find the next, hot-



test video producer willing to do some YouTube stuff for you, and you might befriend someone who'll do PHP coding for a couple of hours a week for beer money or concert tickets.

If your potential and the potential of another talented artist working in another discipline complement each other, and serve you both, that alone is worth the effort. "The game here isn't about getting stuff for free. The game here is about building your community by providing value that's reciprocated." Joel credits his own success to building community. "I'm not great at a whole bunch of things, so I tend to surround myself with people who are great at what I'm weak at." Not everyone is cut out to create, build, and manage his or her own web presence. Artists should be focused on making music. If they have a passion for the web and social media, they should feed that as well. If not, they should find people who do.

Creating an online relationship with your audience is imperative. Admittedly, it's easier for an established artist than for our fictional Italian folk speed metal band. Either way, similar strategies apply...

Mitch Joel's Basic Strategies

SEARCH "The real traffic and power you're going to build on the web is by search. Search engines love the fact you've got one link and you've got another site linking to each other – this is called a reciprocal link or digital handshake. Google and other search engines put more weight on sites that are properly linked to each other – if you've tagged your content appropriately."

LOSS OF DATA Not being able to break the Internet yourself doesn't guarantee that your little corner of it won't get unspeakably messed up occasionally. "Get the domain of your band and the members of the band. If they're taken, figure out a version that will work for you. Secure the .com, the .net, and the .ca. As you're posting video on YouTube, blogging on Facebook, and uploading pictures to Flickr, I'd put them in your own – reasonably budgeted – site. Then feed it into social networks so you're creating reciprocated links. At the same time, you're protecting all your information in a location you physically own. These are basic things, but I see musicians every week getting killed on this."

FOCUS Capitalize on your strengths when providing content. Experiment widely, but settle on several areas that work best for you and your project. "Be a hard-ass on yourself. Create a schedule. You need to stay fresh in people's minds. It's a 24-hour cycle of connecting to fans." Don't just update when you have big news. "You want to talk about a huge area? Mobile. You've got 20, 500, or 1,000 fans in a club. Connect them. Send them SMS messages: 'We're at the venue. We're sound checking this song. Want to join us for drinks after? Here's where the after party is.'"

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE Now, to an extent, the average voice carries potentially similar weight to that of the music industry veteran – more, perhaps, in your fans' eyes. As the tools for making music and content change, so too naturally has the content you generate, the frequency with which you generate it, and its value. "What has value to your community could be anything. Premium packaging for live shows, or a web-exclusive event – jam in the studio, broadcast it live





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Check out the *Six Pixels of Separation* Recent Blog Posts and Recent Podcast Episodes at www.twistimags.com/blog for more. The book *Six Pixels of Separation* will be available in Fall 2009.

Mitch Joel also recommends: *The Long Tail* by Chris Anderson, *Here Comes Everybody* by Clay Shirky, *Life After The 30 Second Spot* & *Join the Conversation* by Joseph Jaffe, Seth Godin's blog at <http://sethgodin.typepad.com>, and Godin's books, among them *Purple Cow* and *Meatball Sundae*.

On the subject of more – there's an avalanche of information available about the evolution of the music industry and the power of the web. Few people communicate that with the immediacy of Mitch Joel and those he recommended elsewhere. Here are a few additional articles and posts in a similar vein that I found particularly engaging while preparing this piece. Enjoy

http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2008/03/the-live-music.html
http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2008/01/the-first-thing.html
<http://www.elance.com/p/node/3062?rid=1BNQ1>
<http://lelsetz.com/wordpress/index.php/archives/2008/05/17/doing-business>
<http://lelsetz.com/wordpress/index.php/archives/2008/05/12/the-window/>
<http://lelsetz.com/wordpress/index.php/archives/2008/05/12/marketing-yourself/>
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www.kk.org/thetechnium/archives/2008/08/people_want_to.php
www.kk.org/thetechnium/archives/2008/01/better_than_fire.php
www.ted.com/index.php/talks/malcolm_gladwell_on_spaghetti_sauce.html

Suggested Reading

Web Marketing for the Music Business, Tom Hutchison, ISBN: 9780240810447
Websites for Musicians, Gary Hustwit, ISBN: 079359832X
MySpace For Dummies, Ryan Hupfer, Mitch Maxson, Ryan Williams, ISBN: 978-0-470-09529-4
MySpace Music Marketing, Bob Baker, ISBN: 978-0971483842
MySpace for Musicians, Fran Vincent, ISBN: 1-59863-359-7
The Professional Musician's Internet Guide, Ron Simpson, ISBN: 978-0-872-88738-1
Net, Blogs and Rock 'n' Roll, David Jennings, ISBN: 978-1-857-88398-5
The Musician's Internet, Peter Spellman, ISBN: 063403586X
Sell Your Music, Mark W. Curran, 0970677359
The Self Promoting Musician, Peter Spellman
Guerrilla Music Marketing Handbook, Bob Baker, ISBN: 978-0-971-48385-9
Record Label Marketing, Tom Hutchison, Amy Macy, Paul Allen, ISBN: 0240807871

Available from Music Books Plus, www.musicbooksplus.com, 800-265-8431

Recommended Websites

Inside Facebook, www.insidefacebook.com
Online Music Marketing, www.onlinemusicmarketing.com
New Music Strategies, www.newmusicstrategies.com
Submit Express, www.submitexpress.com
International Internet Marketing Association, www.iimaonline.org
MySpace, Facebook and YouTube Marketing, www.nickjag.com
A Promotion Guide, www.apromotionguide.com
Alexa, www.alexa.com
Web Traffic Strategies, www.webtrafficstrategies.com
Music Biz Academy, www.musicbizacademy.com

on a password-protected URL, and charge five bucks." Even small partnerships offer dividends. Joel mentions the Montreal-based Yellow Bird Project as an example. "The project ties into artists and has them design shirts. These shirts are related to a charity – of the artists' choice – and they sell them." See www.yellowbirdproject.com for info.

This is key, particularly when something comes with a price tag. "You have to figure out the appetite of your audience and understand it. The minute you charge, there needs to be tremendous value on the backend." The question isn't: "how do I sell them my junk?" "The real question is: 'how can I empower my fans to connect to one another?' Nothing is more powerful. Why do we go to shows? It's not just music. It's a social activity."

BE PROACTIVE Everyone is still trying to figure out how to best utilize these new resources. There's room for you. There's opportunity. You can't grow a brand by being a recluse. "How many sites are there artists can go to and say: can I do some online PR? Would you like to interview me? Can I write a guest thing? Can I give you guys a free, exclusive track?" Virtually everyone is underutilizing digital channels, he says. "We get very excited about the web. I'm glad we're past the 'it's the future' and we all realize it's the now, but from a commercialization standpoint, it's still very young."

"Mobile is so young – they've got something new called mood call. You choose the song, and while you're having a conversation it's playing in the background. You'd think that sounds annoying, but it's the hottest thing in Asia and Europe." The more we inhabit the digital space, the more uses for music there will be.

INHABIT YOUR COMMUNITY "They once asked Jesse James: why do you rob banks? He said, 'Because that's where the money is.' You've gotta be like Jesse James. You need to go where your potential fans are." Growing a dedicated community has always been fundamental to a musician's success. But don't push yourself on people by dogging them to pay attention to you. Spark their curiosity and build a relationship, Joel advises. "You need to be a fan, too. Connect and provide value, content, and information, and speak to your passions. You've got to date. You've got to be giving abundantly." This goes to Joel's core philosophy and belief, that without a strong community, he wouldn't have a strong business. "It's not manipulative," he explains. "I do it because I'm passionate about it. The trick is to do it authentically, realistically, at your comfort level, and you'll be surprised."

OPTIMIZE YOUR EFFORTS "There are two sides to optimization: retention, which is keeping the people there; and acquisition, how to get new people."

Grow your database, and put aside some money for advertising if you can. "On the retention side, you constantly have to be feeding value to the community." Value can be innocuous, he says. As simple as keeping people in the loop using Twitter, or building loyalty by polling your community about what they want to see/hear/listen to. "But don't just take that information and say 'see you later,'" he cautions. Act on it.

The hungrier you are for success, the more likely you'll achieve it. "Being hungry makes you creative. Most companies that are successful – whether it's Google, or whatever – started out in a garage with people saying, 'I think there's a better way.'" That's the spirit that feeds innovation, and artists now have the means, Joel believes, to innovate and affect change in the world on a hitherto unprecedented level. You may not, but you can try, in a way that's more far-reaching and more inclusive than ever before.

The balance of power has shifted to you, Joel says. But as delightful as that sounds, my inner pessimist wonders if somebody will find a way to grab the genie again and wedge it into a new bottle.

The faster and louder Joel talks, he tells me, the more obviously passionate he is about what he's saying. And here he's quick to answer and already moving at an extremely good clip a couple of words in: "No. We're just getting started. We're only at a billion people online. We still have the great digital divide. We still have third-world country issues, electricity, and connectivity issues. As these get resolved – as we see the integration of the web into other platforms – if you think you're drinking from the fire hose now, just wait." ■



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

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- Northwest Guitar Works, Langley
- Tempo Trend, Victoria
- Guitars 'N' Stuff, Dawson Creek
- Bonerattle, Vancouver

ALBERTA

- RKM, Edmonton
- RKM, Sherwood Park
- Turner Guitar Studio, Leduc

SASKATCHEWAN

- Underdog Music, Saskatoon
- Fuzztone Music, Yorkton
- One on One Guitars, Regina

MANITOBA

- Marshall's Music, Winnipeg
- The Fiddle Store, Dauphin

ONTARIO

- Classical Guitars & Accessories, Cambridge
- Acoustic Traditions, Orangeville
- Jeff Landry Music, Sudbury
- Acclaim Music, North Bay
- Coran's Music, Thunder Bay
- Cardinal Music, Windsor
- Sight & Sound, Fort Frances

QUEBEC

- Musique St. Patrick, St. Nicolas
- Honolulu Magi, Sherbrooke
- Centre de Piano Mauricien, Trois Rivières

MARITIMES

- Noble Music, Enfield



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PERCUSSION 2008



Drummers are often the butt of the jokes with the attached stigma that we're not really musicians. We've all heard the one about the drummer who locked his keys in the car; it took him an hour to get the bass player out! Ba'Dump Smash! Or how can you tell if the drum riser is level? The drool spills out of both sides of the drummer's mouth. Ba'Dump Bump! Good one indeed. But seriously folks, drummers are the engine driving the band, the groovemakers, and the glue that shapes and makes the music stick together and gets people up dancing – or toe-tapping at the very least. Being a drummer gives us a sonic vantage point, literally and figuratively, of our own – after all, we do sit centre stage most of the time. And once we've established a basic rhythm, we can pick out phrasing that complements other instruments, accents hooks, controls the dynamics, etc. It only makes sense that some drummers get out from behind the kit, take charge of the musical direction, share their creative vision, and put their thumbprint on the music as a whole. This year's percussion feature focuses on drummers who have done just that: transcended the notion that we're nothing more than timekeepers and evolved into world-class producers.

Drumming Producers

BY CHRIS TAYLOR-MUNRO

CANADIAN MUSICIAN • (49)

PERCUSSION 2008



Our first contributor is Grammy Award-winning New York-based drummer/writer/producer/musical director

Steve Jordan. Jordan's credits as a producer

include Keith Richards, Robert Cray's *Take Your Shoes Off* (Grammy winner), Buddy Guy's *Bring 'Em In* (Grammy-nominated), John Mayer's *Try and Continuum*, Herbie Hancock's *Possibilities*, and John Scofield's *That's What I Say* – to name a few. His work as both a session and touring drummer is jaw-droppingly impressive with such artists as Bob Dylan, James Taylor, BB King, Sheryl Crow, Alicia Keys, Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton, The Rolling Stones – and the list continues to grow. As a musical director, Jordan has worked on high profile projects such as *Superbowl XXXX* and the Martin Scorsese/Antoine Fuqua film *Lightning In A Bottle*. A multi-instrumentalist and heck of a nice guy, Jordan is one of the busiest and most influential musicians in the industry today, and my guess is that will be true for decades to come.

Next up, originally hailing from Chicago and now calling Los Angeles his home, is a man who's making inroads very quickly in today's music industry. **Keith Harris** has toured the world executing pop-rockin' beats as the drummer with the Grammy Award-winning band The Black Eyed Peas since 2003. His talent as a writer and multi-instrumentalist with artists such as Macy Gray, Busta Rhymes, Mariah Carey, Chris Brown, Mary J. Blige, and others quickly expanded into the roll of producer for Fergie, executive producer on Jully Black's *Revival*, and co-producer on two tracks for *Thriller 25*, the reissue by none other than the king of pop himself, Michael Jackson. Keith Harris is no doubt destined for greatness.

As a founding member and drummer of Vancouver's Default since 1999 with 1.5 million albums sold and four releases to date, **Danny Craig** is spending his time in between tours working as a producer and songwriter with up-and-coming bands and artists such as *Canadian Idol* finalist Chad Doucette, Rake, Sick Logic, and The Travezty. He is digging his new role out from behind the drumkit and gives us his perspective on this ever-growing labour of love and leadership.

WHAT DOES A DRUMMER BRING TO A PROJECT AS A PRODUCER, AND IS IT A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING?

Steve Jordan: I think the first thing you want to do is break down a barrier between drummers and other musicians. That's a big misnomer. The standard or educated guess would be, "Well, the drummer would know where the groove is or how to build within the rhythm," but that's not necessarily it because there are a lot of drummers that don't play in the groove at all. There are bass players, guitar players, and keyboardists that have a better

sense of groove, so that theory is out the window. It's not what a drummer brings to the chair as a producer; it's what type of musician and/or songwriter he or she is."

Keith Harris: Yeah, I think drummers come from a different perspective rhythmically and melodically. Because I'm a keyboardist as well, it goes hand-in-hand for me because I can either start production from a drum loop or start something with melody, but the thing that makes people buy music is the drums. Drummers have an advantage in putting the beat together and making the kit its own instrument as well as a vocal/piano track and all of those good things ... so there is a slight advantage.

Danny Craig: Well, I think drummers like being produced by drummers. I had played on several recordings prior to being in Default where the producer wouldn't change a thing about my parts. Then on the first Default record, we worked on a few songs with Rick Parashar and he totally revamped what I was playing. I loved it! Aside from that, the more records I produce, the more I try and approach them from a global perspective and not necessarily from a percussive one. I never ignore the drummer, however!

MAKING THE SWITCH FROM DRUM THRONE TO PRODUCER'S CHAIR IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN OVERNIGHT, BUT YOU HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE. WHETHER IT BE THROUGH FORMAL TRAINING OR JUST JUMPING IN AND BEING A SELF-STARTER – IT WILL TAKE TIME AND EFFORT. HERE'S HOW EACH OF THESE ARTISTS GOT INTO PRODUCTION...

Steve Jordan: I knew my production career was able to take hold because I trusted myself as a songwriter, and I knew in my mind and heart what I thought a good song might be and what made a good recording since I love recording. When I started playing other instruments, it helped me become a better drummer, which in turn led to being able to make better recordings. I think if you play one instrument, sometimes you get locked into the view from that chair. When I started to play the bass, I realized what the bass player needed from the drummer and vice versa. When I started writing music, I stopped thinking about what beat I was going to play on a song as opposed to just playing the song. It first hit home when I was working on this album with a disco group called Oddity; it had a big record called *Native New Yorker* during the disco era. It was a real honour to be called for this session because at that time in New York, and everywhere, there was the 'A' team and the 'B' team – and this was definitely an 'A' team. We worked really hard on these rhythm tracks, and I used to actually take them home. A lot of people didn't do that, but I was very per-

When I started playing other instruments, it helped me become a better drummer, which in turn led to being able to make better recordings. — Steve Jordan



DANNY CRAIG

sistent. If I could leave with the rhythm track, I would. They would make me a cassette ... that wasn't common practice, but I would push for it. These tracks were just fantastic. There was a lot of care taken coming up with these parts. And then, when the record came out, the rhythm tracks felt very small and compressed, almost non-existent – the balance wasn't right – the horns, vocals, everything. It was terrible! I said, 'Well, I could do that!' Charlie Conrad was the engineer on that session, and he taught me about getting sounds and miking instruments, and I was always fascinated by the sound he got on me because he got the best drum sound that I'd ever had up until that point.

Keith Harris: I attended Berklee (College of Music, Massachusetts) from '94 to '98 and graduated with a degree in music production and engineering. I started out in high school messing around programming on keyboards, but once I got to Berklee it took off from there.

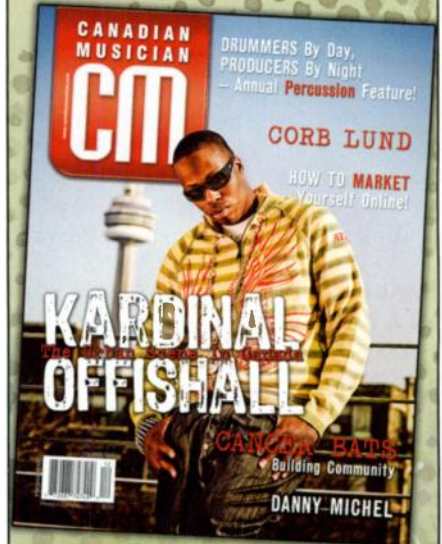
Danny Craig: I began producing in 2001 when a friend asked me to help out his band with its songwriting and recording. I've always been a 'take-charge' kind of guy, so the role fit perfectly and I had a blast doing it! I then began learning as much as I could about the craft, hiring pro engineers for my projects, sponging off top producers whom I've had the fortune of working with through Default, and learning Pro Tools and the science behind engineering. I even built my own studio after months of researching the topic – thank you, Internet!

THE BIG QUESTION IS: HOW OFTEN DO YOU AS A PRODUCER DECIDE TO LAY DOWN THE DRUM TRACKS YOURSELF VERSUS BRINGING ANOTHER DRUMMER IN, AND WHAT FACTORS ARE INVOLVED WHEN MAKING THAT DECISION?

Steve Jordan: I usually hire myself because I'm the cheapest drummer I can get for the project [laughing]. When I hear a certain thing about the way a track should be approached, I just feel that I might be the best person available to convey that for the budget that I have. There may be times when I would love to have Jim Keltner play on something, but I look at the bottom line and I may not be able to afford it. When I do have the opportunity to hire another drummer, I don't hesitate to – but most of the time, I feel like I have the best understanding of what I'm trying to achieve.

Keith Harris: I'm playing the drums on the majority of the stuff that I produce, or pro-

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gramming the drums and then going back and recording live drums. It depends on what the situation is and who the artist is, then we take from there.

Danny Craig: More often than I'd like to! Being a recording musician is a lot more difficult than most musicians think. In the studio, the name of the game is consistency and meter. Without those, I'm afraid you're useless in recording. These days, I prefer to use session players if I need to pinch-hit the drums; it's hard to focus on the producing role when I'm sitting behind the kit listening through headphones. I need to be in the control room making sure the overall sound is the way I want it.

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT THAT YOU'RE THE DRUMMER IN A BAND THAT IS ABOUT TO GO INTO THE STUDIO, PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND YOU JUST FOUND OUT THE PRODUCER IS ONE OF THIS FEATURE'S CONTRIBUTORS. HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL? NERVOUS? OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY WAY MORE NERVOUS, AS MOST OF US TEND TO FEEL LIKE WE'RE UNDER A MICROSCOPE WHEN TRACKING IN A STUDIO ENVIRONMENT. IS THIS A COMMON OCCURRENCE, AND HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THIS SCENARIO?

Steve Jordan: I've had that effect on people, but I try to minimize that immediately. First of all, it's funny to me that that would actually happen, so I make light of that and say, 'This isn't necessary.' And not only that, I usually really like the way they play so it's always fun.

Keith Harris: No, not really, because they're all my friends [laugh-

ing]. We're all cool, man, and everybody likes to hang out and have fun. That's how we take it. If I did encounter that, I would say, 'Hey man, we all started at one point. You just do what you do and I'll do the rest.'

Danny Craig: I haven't encountered that so much from session players – definitely from some of the bands' drummers at first, though. By the time we hit the studio, however, we've normally spent enough time together that the vibe is easygoing and everyone is comfortable. I'm pretty easy to get along with.

WORKING AS A PRODUCER MEANS TAKING ON A ROLE THAT IS NOT UNLIKE THAT OF A PROJECT MANAGER. YOU HAVE TO GET THE BEST FROM A TEAM WHEN WORKING WITH A BAND OR BRING INDIVIDUALS TOGETHER TO CONVEY YOUR OVERALL CREATIVE VISION WHEN WORKING WITH A SOLO ARTIST. A BOND HAS TO BE MADE BETWEEN THE PRODUCER AND THE ARTIST(S). HOW DO YOU FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF, IF GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, WITH THE ARTIST(S) YOU'RE WORKING WITH, AND DO YOU FEEL IT'S IMPORTANT?

Steve Jordan: Absolutely! On this new Los Lonely Boys record, I went to Texas. Well, first I went to San Francisco and saw the band play live. When I saw the members play live, I realized that they really could groove more than was depicted on their previous two albums, and I thought, 'This is going to be a lot of fun,' because I knew they were really good songwriters and they could sing great and play very well. I wasn't sure about the heavy groove factor, but they played a great gig at the Fillmore West and I thought, 'Great! Now I know what I can get out of them.' We had to hang out and get to know each other a little so that they



KEITH HARRIS

in the
studio,
the name
of the
game is
consis-
tency and
meter.
— danny
Craig

trusted me. When I produce bands, there's something about the interplay in a band that makes it special, and you don't want to take that individuality away. You want to help by getting the best sound, and you want to help the person follow the song, but you don't want to change what makes them them.

Keith Harris: In the case of Jully Black, we had toured on the road for a year and a half and then we got to know one another. Then we started to work. It definitely helps to know what the artist is about – her vibe, what she's trying to achieve, and not just go into the studio and bust things together. It's very important to key-in on the spirit and the attitude of the artist that you're working with.

Danny Craig: By hanging out for the most part. I do get heavily involved in the pre-production process and often the songwriting, too. I always need to make sure I'm happy with what we're going in with before we even book studio time. Of course, during that time, there are always a few meals and a few beers to loosen everyone up and take our minds off the pressure at hand.



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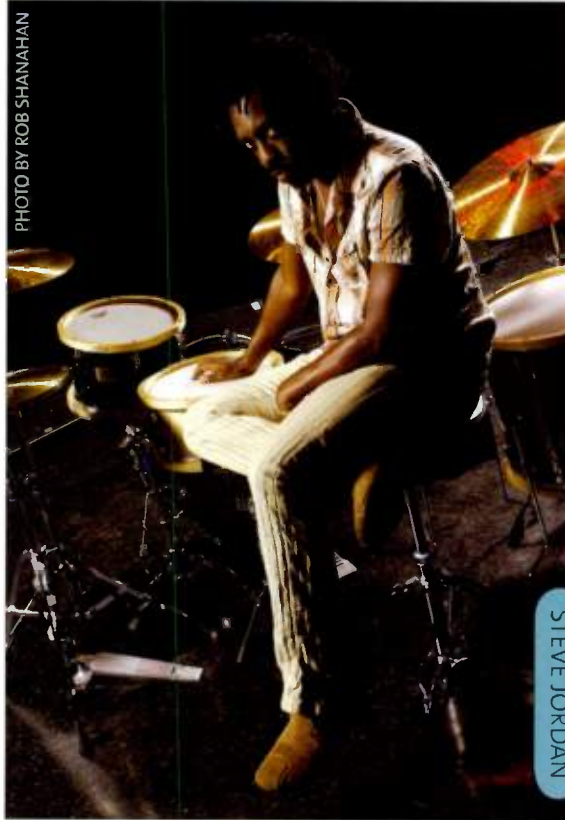


Creativity comes a lot easier when everyone is relaxed.

DRUMMERS DO GET QUITE PARTICULAR WITH THEIR OWN SOUND. AS A PRODUCER, WOULD YOU BE AS OBSESSIVE WITH THE DRUM SOUNDS MORE THAN A PRODUCER COMING FROM A DIFFERENT BACKGROUND?

Steve Jordan: Absolutely. I don't think that should be different when you play live unless the sound of the band is a certain way, and you want it to sound that way through the whole night. If you're going out and depicting the sound of a record, why change the snare sound? Most recordings are built around certain sounds that become trademarks of a recording, so why wouldn't you want to depict that sound when you're playing live?

PHOTO BY ROB SHANAHAN



STEVE JORDAN

MAINTAINING A BALANCE BETWEEN LIFE AS A PRODUCER AND KEEPING YOUR DRUMMING CHOPS UP TO SPEED HAS GOT TO BE DEMANDING. HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO KEEP BOTH IN CHECK, AND WHAT SORT OF PREPARATION DO YOU TAKE BEFORE HEADING OUT ON TOUR?

Steve Jordan: I've been doing it long enough that certain things are just in me. Now, that doesn't mean I don't practice. I stay warm and I stay active in that way. The main thing for me when I'm playing is to be in physical shape. Before and during the Eric Clapton tour, I worked out everyday. It was a very physical show, so I made sure. If I didn't work out, I didn't feel confident that I could go through the whole show with the kind of dominant approach that I wanted to take. I wanted to be really powerful. Any cardiovascular thing works: elliptical runner, treadmill, or some weights, not necessarily to bulk up, just to maintain some kind of strength and

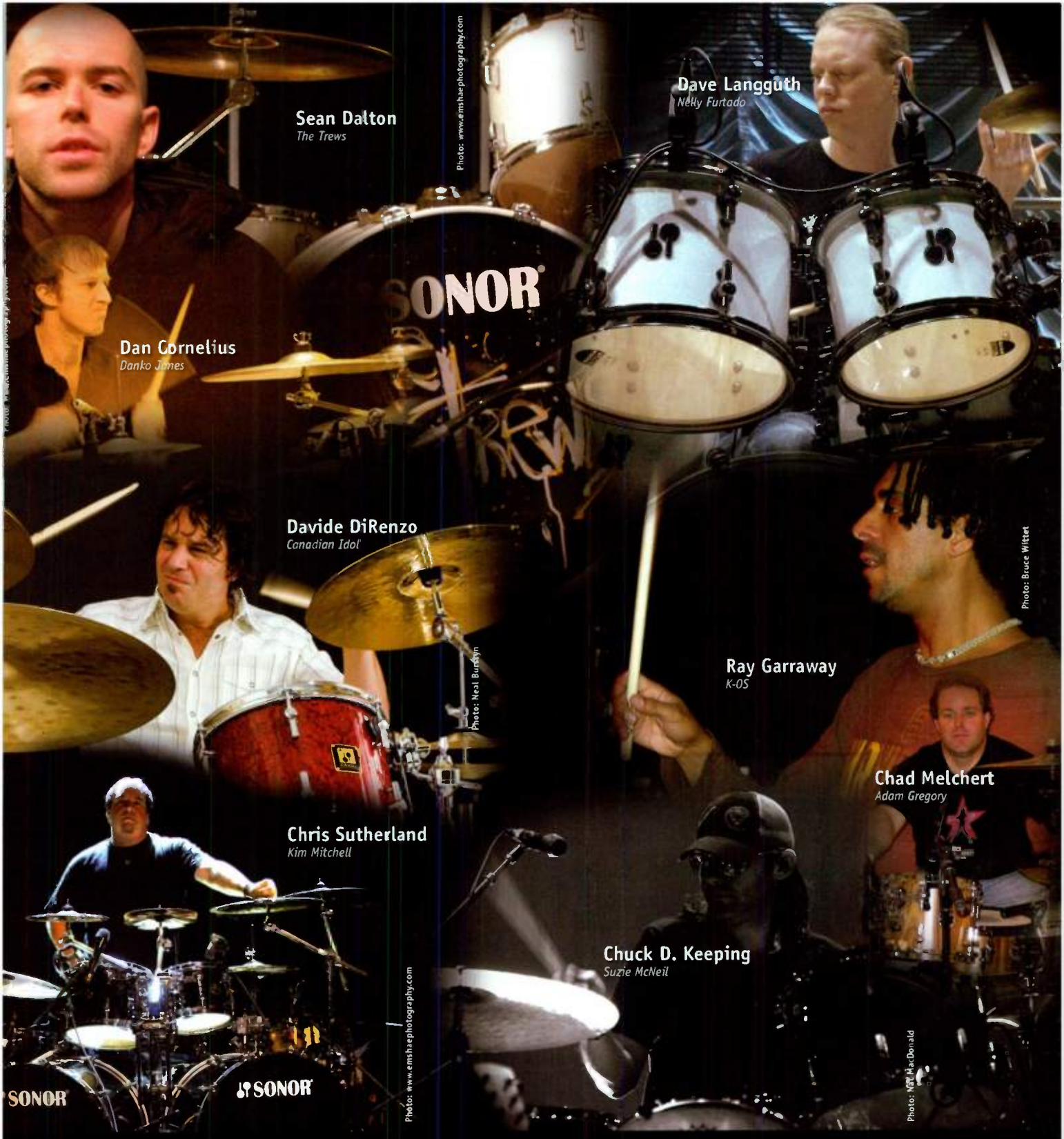
it's very important to key-in on the spirit and the attitude of the artist that you're working with.
— keith harris

Keith Harris: I think that I am. It all depends on the project. Sometimes, I want it to sound 'horrible,' if that's the right way to say it, because it depends on what kind of effect or sonic sound you're trying to bring. You don't always want the best-sounding kit or mic; it sounds too clean. If you're doing a hip hop track, you kind of want it dirty and a little distorted. When I have the proper budget, yes, I'll get very picky, but if it's a scenario where money is not as available and the project has to get done, I'll do what I have to do to make it sound the way it needs to in that amount of time.

Danny Craig: Than other new producers? Definitely. The big, established guys know what they want and pay attention to every detail. But the 'newbies' don't, necessarily. The main thing, however, beyond the tones is the song. If the song is a hit, then it doesn't really matter what the drums sound like.

definition. Also, I didn't want to look like some overweight kind of weirdo on stage [laughing]. I wanted to be tight, together, and happening. I did yoga as well and a lot of ab work.

Keith Harris: It's the greater of two evils, you know? Which do you want to be, a great drummer or a great producer? Both require a lot of time, but for me right now it's really about getting the production thing together. Once The Black Eyed Peas gets back on the road, then I'll be playing for another five years straight. To keep my drumming chops up, I'll play on stuff just to make sure I keep my technique fine so it will sound good on tape. When we start rehearsing the new songs, I'll start listening to some different things to get some new influences to play over the songs. That's pretty much when I'll go into drum mode.



Sean Dalton
The Trews

Dave Langguth
Nelly Furtado

Dan Cornelius
Danko Jones

Davide DiRenzo
Canadian Idol

Ray Garraway
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Danny Craig: When we're preparing to tour, we get on a five-day-a-week rehearsal schedule for at least a couple of weeks where we spend equal time rehearsing the set as we do jamming. When we jam, we totally wank, and that definitely helps the chops! When a band rehearses, it needs to do more than just go through the motions of the set. I am constantly analyzing my groove, my technique, and my consistency while I play. You need to be aware of what you sound like overall, and not just play your parts.

IF YOU'VE GOT THE ITCH TO BECOME A PRODUCER, YOU MIGHT WANT TO TAKE SOME LAST WORDS OF ADVICE ON HOW TO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF MAKING THAT HAPPEN...

Steve Harris: I always urge all musicians, especially drummers, to learn how to get a drum sound: learn about recording, mic placement, and what mics work well with different parts of the kit. It's very important that you empower yourself so you're not dependent on somebody else. I don't feel I can't learn from a younger player. I'm always listening to new stuff. I don't try to be 'contemporary' I just try and be honest, you know? That will ALWAYS keep you contemporary.

Keith Harris: For me, I follow the three 'P's: Prayer, Practice, and Patience. I come from a not-so-wealthy family on the south side of Chicago, man. No silver spoon in my mouth. Everything I've got I've earned through prayer, practicing, and just being patient and waiting for my opportunity to come. I think if anybody follows those things, man, they'll succeed. You have to have the right attitude. Don't pass any opportunity up. If you really love what you do, you'll do it no matter how much it costs. You go in with a positive attitude and the three 'P's, and you can't help but to be on top.

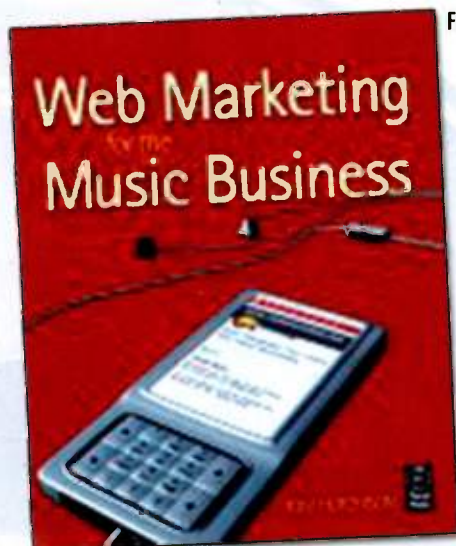
Danny Craig: Yeah, learn how to sing and play guitar!

Jordan, Harris, and Craig have many of the same attributes that make them successful producers. The first is not only having the credentials as fine drummers, but being multi-instrumentalists, thereby giving them perspective from each bandmember's role within a song. Second, they've had to gain the confidence and skill set of operating in a studio and knowing how to obtain or capture the sounds they're looking for. Probably the most important factor is being a good listener when it comes to music. They have become songwriters themselves, and knowing what makes a good song become a great song, maybe even a hit song, is the best quality a producer can have. ■



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

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Harmonizing Part I: Creating Harmony

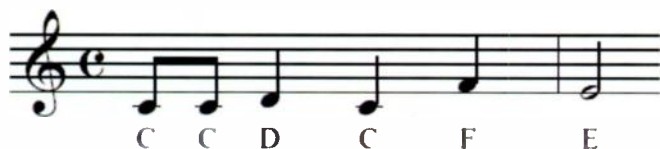
by Tammy Frederick

For some, harmonizing comes very naturally. You may have some naturally-harmonizing friends or colleagues, or you may be one of these people yourself.

For example: you are at a birthday party and the cake comes out; everybody starts singing "Happy Birthday" and then you hear a voice singing different notes than the rest of the group, but it is not a terrible sound – it is a blending of the sound. That person has the ability to harmonize with the melody line of "Happy Birthday." Although it may seem unattainable if it doesn't come naturally, have no fear. Harmonizing is actually a very simple process that will just require some time and practice on your part. It is a skill that can definitely be learned.

Melody Line

To get started, it is necessary to establish what the melody line is for the part of the song for which you wish to create harmonies. Often harmonies are created through the chorus or bridge; however, you can put them wherever you want. The melody line is the sequence of notes that the vocalist sings. You will need to use a piano or guitar and write out the notes. You do not need to be able to write music to do this, just simply write out the letter names of the notes. Here is an example using the song "Happy Birthday":



Once you have established the notes for the melody line, you can now begin to build harmonies. This part is fun and experimental. You will need a piano or guitar to play with this. The following diagram can assist you with locating notes on the keyboard:



Building Harmonies

Basic harmonies are built from the chord structure in a given key – that is the first, third, and fifth note. The first note played up or down the octave is also a common harmony. This is a great place to start when starting to incorporate harmonies into your songs, so play around in any key to get a feel for creating harmonies, then move onto your song. From here it is simply a matter of playing with different combinations and seeing what sound you like best. Play the first note in your melody line and then choose another note and play them together. Do you like the way it sounds? Keep experimenting with different notes. When you find a combination you like,



write it down. Then move onto the next melody line note you wish to harmonize. Now string the notes together by playing through the phrase with the melody and harmonies at the same time. Here is an example with the song "Happy Birthday":



Don't look for perfection; just keep experimenting. The more time you spend experimenting with building harmonies, the more you will start to see how easy and straightforward the process is. Don't be overwhelmed when you sit down at the keyboard or pick up the guitar and think, "There are 100 different choices I could make with each note!" Really, there is only a handful of notes that will sound good with each other, so just start deciding which ones you like.

In part two, I will discuss how to vocalize your harmonies and simple ways to improve the way you blend your voice with that of another singer.

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Putting It All Together

by Danny Michel

Tools Of The Trade

I kick it old school with an acoustic guitar and record ideas on anything I can. If you phone my answering machine, you have to skip through 14 messages of me going “da, da, da” using the answering machine as a dictaphone to record an idea. I don’t really write the melody on the guitar – I’m getting better at just belting it out in my head. I’m after a vocal melody first. Sometimes I get just little licks – little lines stuck in my head and they become the hook or the riff. After that, I go into Pro Tools and lay down a drum track, building the foundation of a song and seeing how it feels.

other tunes where I play everything on, I just start multi-tracking and just go crazy. The biggest thing I’ve learned about recording music is just that – this is the time to record, not write. I used to record and then at the end I would sing the vocals when I was all done. I’d get everything sounding great, and then I’d sing it. I now work the opposite way. I sing the vocal, and I’ll accompany myself on the acoustic guitar to just a drum machine, and when the vocal is killer I’ll put everything else on and I’ll work around the voice.

That just comes from me learning that the voice is the most important thing in a

Lyrics & Melody

I usually fuss over lyrics. I get a melody and chords, and then I pick at the lyrics, fine-tuning and tweaking them until I’m happy. I’ve always said, and I’ve heard other people say this, too, that the best songs, my favourite songs, the songs that get the best reaction from people, are songs that I write in 10 minutes. That happens maybe once an album. I don’t know how it happens or what makes that magic moment, but I live constantly hoping that it’s coming. And other times you have to work on it more, and go back and fix stuff and slave over it.

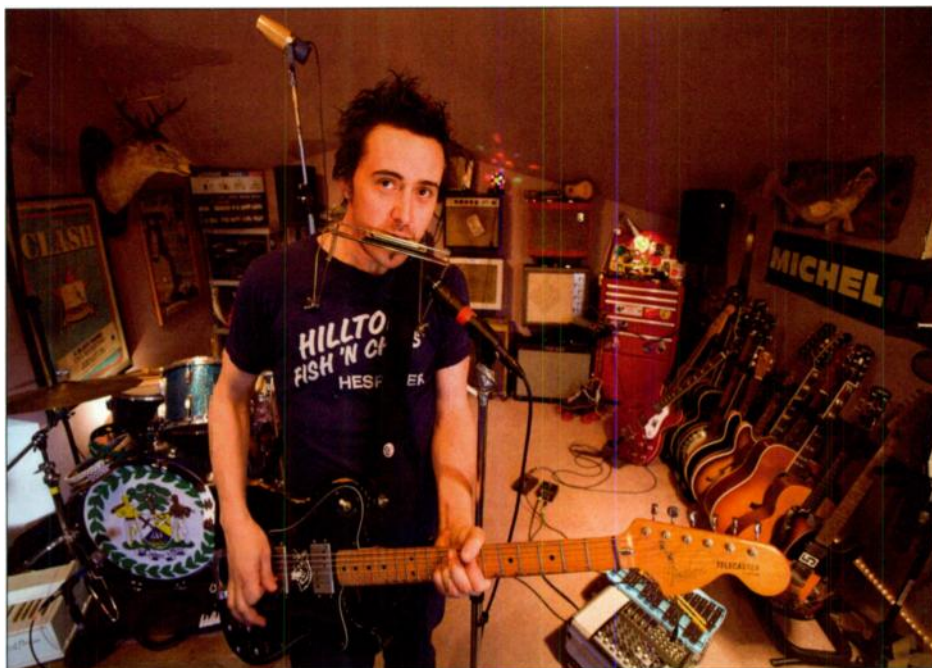
A Change Of Scenery...

I don’t have a recipe for inspiration. I don’t say, “Okay it’s songwriting time, and I’ve got to get inspired. I’m going to rent some movies.” Just being in life, and – if you’re writing those type of songs – reading the paper and keeping aware of what’s going on is key. Other songs are just about the heart. I think a lot of that stuff comes from me when I’m keeping busy and keeping adventures happening in life and travelling. When you’re not at your house, you see the world, and you’re seeing things in a different way.

I think it’s actually really bad when people say, “This is my writing room; it’s where I hang out and work on music.” For some people, I’m sure it works great. Personally, if I sit in a room and I’m writing a song, and all the things are there that are in front of me all the time, my mind starts seeing all those things subliminally – my mind is not as active as it could be. If you get in your car, go park in the middle of a grocery store parking lot, and sit there and work on the song, things are different all of a sudden. Your mind is working in a different spot. Be aware of what’s in front of you and you might see things differently.

I also try to go away every year – down to the Caribbean or somewhere nice. I’ll take a guitar and I’ll go on a writing vacation. If you go and sit in some beautiful places in the world, it’s a lot better for your songwriting than sitting in your apartment.

Danny Michel is an Ottawa-based singer/songwriter/producer and has recently released his latest record, Feather, Fur & Fin. For more information, check out www.dannymichel.com.



I may lay down a drum track with a software-based virtual instrument or a drum machine – sometimes both. I start with an acoustic guitar and then get into laying down a beat. I think that’s where the rhythm really comes in.

I make my own solo records and I’ve produced them in my own studio for years, and I play a lot of instruments on them. On the last record, I called in some players and we tracked a bunch of tunes. And

song. The second I hear the voice is when I decide whether or not I like the song. I can hear someone’s voice and decide, “I don’t like that person’s voice,” and then no matter what I just can’t like it. If I like the person’s voice right away, then I’m open and I’m willing to go wherever it’s going to go. So, I’ve just learned that getting the killer vocal sound, take, and energy is paramount.

Recording Drums

by Murray Daigle

Find A Great Drummer

The drummer is the single most important part of the entire process. There is no mic, no kit, no room, nor processor that can fix bad drumming. Drums are an acoustic instrument, and in relationship to rock, pop, and most mainstream music, they are considered just that – a single instrument. If they don't sound balanced and pleasing when you hear them in the room with the drummer, chances are they won't sound any better in the final mix.

Tuning, Schmooning

Head selection and tuning seem to be the most overlooked, understudied, and misunderstood skills in the entire recording process. I could write an entire article on this alone. Drummers all seem to have the same answers about this: "Well, I kinda just put my heads on and turn the things till they don't buzz and stuff." Could you imagine if a guitar player came in the studio with absolutely no idea how to tune his instrument? It seems ridiculous to me, too. Bottom line – learn to tune drums.

Use Your Heads

Always start a recording with new drum heads! Which ones?

Put simply, the thinner and more basic the drum head, the longer the resonance, the more overtones you'll hear, and the more natural the sound. Thinner heads without damping devices in their design are easier to tune. Heavier and more complex heads dry up the sound, which can be a very desirable effect depending on the sound you are after. Coated heads have more "crack" in the attack and a smoother decay while clear heads give a clean articulate attack, lots of resonance, and bigger low end response, especially on toms. Learning to mix these attributes with good tuning and drum choices can make very powerful sonic differences. A note to the drumming world: Your bottom heads do wear out. Really!

The Snare

Snare drums go a long way to defining the sound and vibe of a recording. This is one of my starting points when coming up with the overall sonic picture of a project. There are a million and one options; learn what they all sound like: steel, wood, brass, copper, size (12", 13", 14", 15"), depth (1 1/2" all the way to 16"), cast rims, wood rims, plus hundreds of top head and bottom head choices. Learn how to mix and

match to get the desired tone and attitude you want.

Ease The Strain

My HUGE pet peeve is the strainer or snares. YES, these definitely wear out and much faster than you think. Also, drummers seem to have some compulsion to tighten them until they almost completely stop buzzing and totally dampen and detune the bottom head. DON'T! It's supposed to buzz. If you want less, use a smaller strainer. Remember, once you stretch it out, that's it. If you are getting a strange or uneven buzz, it's probably because your strainer is over-stretched and ruined or your snare is tuned poorly. When you put a new one on, stretch it out slowly – just enough to make it buzz evenly.



Mic 'Em Up

Mic position is something that is tough to get your head around. It seems that the closer you put the mic to the drum, the more isolation you should get. This isn't necessarily true, due to the laws of physics and the way sound travels, and isolation isn't really the goal. Getting extremely close to drums with mics usually doesn't result in a very big or natural sound.

I will mic a kick drum anywhere from 3" off of the beater head inside the drum, to just outside the resonant (outside) head. Sometimes, I add a second mic up to 3 ft. away if I want more outside tone. Go in the control room and use your ears to make the decision.

For the snare, place the mic on a 15-degree angle (almost horizontally) pointed toward the centre of the skin about an inch in from the rim. In this case, getting the mic a little closer can give you some proximity effect (or low end boost), but still experiment and don't be afraid to get two or three inches away from the drum.

With toms, I am usually between two and six inches away from the top head. Drummers who keep their toms closer to a flat position (most good drummers do) will make your life a lot easier. This generally produces much better tone for two reasons: the stick has room at the drummer's fully-extended arm position to hit the drum near the centre, with a lot of power; it also lets you get the mic angled facing straight at the centre of the top head, which is the main sound source.

For overhead mics, I generally use stereo pairs: always two of the same mics. I prefer large-diaphragm condensers, but most engineers favour small diaphragms. I have had incredible success with both. There are, however, a lot more reasonably-priced high-quality small diaphragms on the market these days. So, if budget is an issue, I would go that route. Experiment with position until you like what you hear. I normally like to start about 48" over the top of the snare drum, using it as the centre point for my stereo image.

Now with a "close" or "spot" mic on every drum and stereo overheads, you are pretty much ready to go. Most engineers and producers add "room" or "ambient" mics as well. I have mixed sessions with as many as six or eight of these in different positions, capturing different nuances of the room. If you are new at this, I suggest starting with one. Place it as far away from the kit as you can get it at about waist height. Keep it a foot away from any wall. One common trick with this mic is to compress the crap out of it during mix down. Then add it to the mix sparingly until it gives you the amount of "attitude" you are looking for.

If you have a rack full of Neves or Focusrite Reds, use them on everything. If not, use the best quality preamps you can get your hands on for the kick, snare, and overheads – don't sweat the toms and room mics as much.

Check each line at the preamp stage and make sure nothing is clicking or distorting. Get good solid levels going into your recorder or computer, but leave about 4dB of head room. I promise, the drummer will play louder when the music starts. It also leaves a little room for the occasional transient or peak that pops up.

Murray Daigle is an 18-year veteran of the Canadian and international music scenes with a reputation spanning the globe for his work as a producer and sometimes artist.

Murray also owns and operates MDS Recording, one of Canada's premier recording facilities.

Festival Mixing: Be Fast & Efficient

by Terry Neudorf

One stage, multiple bands, no sound checks, four monitor mixes ... mixed from FOH. Sound like fun to you? Festivals, battles of the bands, or corporate gigs with no prep time – not ideal situations, BUT situations that can pay off big for your mixing career. So, how do you make it work?

For starters, make sure you're set up for a "festival patch" with the standard "band inputs" on stage. Double up on guitar mics and DIs and add extra XLR cable length to them. Label all those cables on the female XLR connector itself. Sources plugged into that cable may change, but the cable will stay the same all day.

Make sure you spend time on your monitor mixes. Assume somebody is going to want it loud on stage – you will be right. Once you're done your ringing-out-the-monitors phase, take the channel that you were using (with the channel gain already set up – strong input but not clipping), and set your auxiliary monitor sends on that channel to 12 o'clock, then set your auxiliary masters to an output level that verges on loud stage vocals. This will be your monitor mix "master level" reference point for the event.

Monitor Mixing

If possible, have an assistant get to the bands waiting backstage and ask them what each musician needs in his or her mix – the top three things needed to survive – and **write it down**. If this is not possible, you need to think like a musician now. If there are three vocalists, what do you think they want to hear in their monitor mixes? Vocals of course, but they need a vocal mix where all vocals are basically the same volume, so that they can all hear themselves. Makes sense, right? So, on the vocalists' channels, set the vocal monitor mix send dials all to 12 o'clock. Yes, all the same output level (I'll explain why in just a bit). Do the vocalists need to hear an instrument? If so, which one? They will hear the drums for tempo, so give them an instrument that gives them the pitch, like the keyboard. They now have what they need. The keyboard player naturally needs keys in his or her mix, and maybe the lead vocal, but that's probably it. Set these keyboard monitor mix sends to 12 o'clock as well. Think about



each mix – what would you need if it was you? Dial it in and go with it. Set all needed monitor mix sends to 12 o'clock. This process is very important to being able to actively stay in touch with what is happening on stage during the show, as you will see shortly.

Now For Your Main FOH Mix: What Do You Want To Hear From This Band?

Hopefully a nice even mix, so that everything can be heard. Take all the used channel faders for this band and set them to 0 (unity position), active subgroups included. Start with your mains at -10.

Here's the key, and the promised explanation: musicians want the same thing you want – an even mix where everything is heard. The **variable** is how those things come into the sound system. Sarah sings soft, Joe sings loud, and Fred is right down the middle. We need to blend them, and now you can create the FOH mix and the monitor mixes **simultaneously** using one dial per channel ... the input gain control. You see, what comes in to a channel determines what goes out of that channel. We set the vocal monitor levels all the same, we set the keys' monitor levels the same, all used mix auxiliary sends to 12 o'clock, and we set the channel faders all the same. Now we'll use the channel

input gain controls to set the mix balance, adjusting up or down as needed to get the mix blend. Turn Sarah's gain up and Joe's gain down to blend with Fred, and work across the gain controls for all used channels until you have a FOH mix blend. This can be done quite quickly during their first tune. You see, because of our prep work done above, when you dial in your FOH mix using the **input gain controls**, you're also simultaneously dialing in the monitor mixes, as **the input level affects all of the output levels!** The blend you have out front now for vocals is the blend they also have on stage, and band monitor mixes are now set too!

The key to festival mixing is speed, efficiency, and multitasking. Using this method keeps the mix relationship between FOH and the stage, and you won't lose control of either! Good sound techs stay on top of what's going on at all times; this "festival" mixing plan will help you do that. Meeting the bands' needs before they even ask also goes over well.

Enjoy your next mix!

Terry Neudorf is a Senior Technician with Audio Image Canada based in Vancouver. Being involved in live sound mixing since 1982, Terry has worked with many label artists and travels to many parts of the world mixing and conducting sound operator training seminars. He can be reached at terryn@audioimage.ca.

Your Band's Bio Is Horrible

by Luther Mallory

You want your band's bio to be a representation of your band's music. The music is the point; the bio is to drum up interest about the music while giving the reader a sense of your band's personality. You want them to go "Oh, that's interesting. I'll check this out," and not "Oh, that's obnoxious. I want to fight this band." Let's not concern ourselves with how to

every single instrument than anyone, like, ever. That seems crazy, but that's what he said, so I'm sure he's on top of it. I put on his demo; it was rap-rock or something – drums, bass, guitars, keys, and vocals, all performed by the bar code guy like he said. I made the discouraging realization half-way through the second song that the bar code guy was in fact full of unbelievable bullshit,

- The Golden rule is: Your band needs to be exactly as good as your bio says you are.

- Please don't use the term "brainchild" in your bio. You're describing your ska band; it probably wasn't THAT conceptual. There is no reasonable use for this term. It's only stupid and a little bit gross.

- Consider what is actually interesting, and what is just interesting to you. Nobody in the world will ever care where and when Mitchell met Terry, or how Becky was a fry cook at Burger King when she "fell in love with music." You know how outside people don't get inside jokes? Becky's position at Burger King is only interesting to people that know Becky, or possibly really love Burger King.

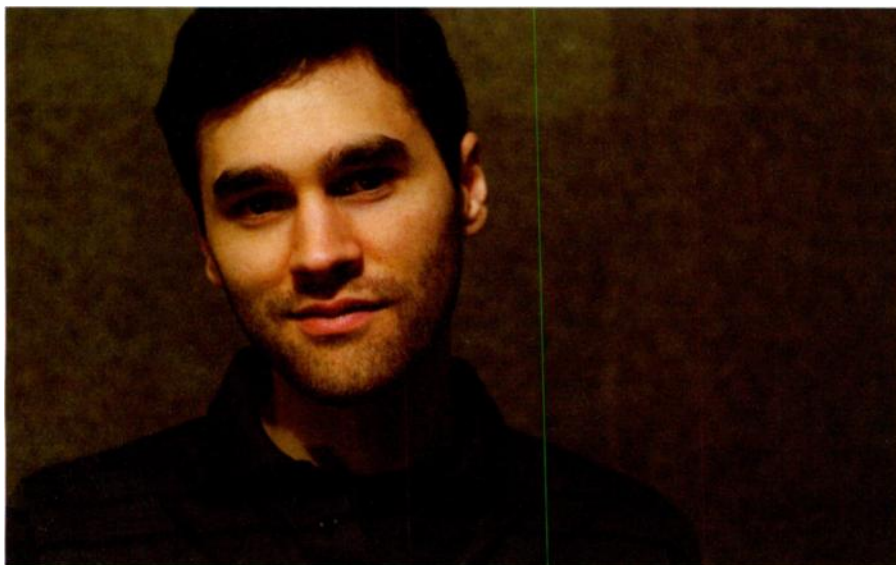
- Keep it short and use structure. People don't have an attention span for anything that they have to work to care about, so if it's long, doesn't flow well, or is poorly put together, they'll usually just pass.

- Spell check. MSN has been battling the education system for years taking a hard stance against proper spelling, or "speling!!!.FTW ;)" as it usually reads on MSN. Spelling mistakes are really unprofessional and very easy to fix, so make sure you take the time.

- Be creative. You're not applying for Governor General; creativity is your job so don't be afraid to be a little bit funny or even strange if it suits your band's style, because people won't read it if it's boring or dry.

- Only list "notable" achievements. Your third-place victory at the Campbellford Battle of the Bands doesn't count. Plus, two other bands other than yours also covered "Faith" by Limp Bizkit so that's nothing to be proud of. If you've opened for somebody cool or had some radio play, that's worth a mention.

There's no need to be "wretched." You can be sitting comfortably at "passable" if you just consider your audience and tame that ego. If you write something better than "passable," then you're a legend – and I'd like you to please write a "non-wretched" bio for my band. We'll talk.



write a "great" bio, because in 50-some years of rock n' roll, there hasn't yet been a "great" bio. Currently, the scale goes from "wretched," to "still very poor," to "passable" (which unfortunately scores 10/10 because it's the best anyone has ever done). We'll just concentrate on how to write a bio that isn't "wretched" and won't make your fans quit typing <3 <3 <3 on your MySpace wall. If we can agree on this then we can move on: my band's bio sucks and your band's bio sucks, so let's at least figure out why.

I went to college for a few minutes a few years ago, and on the first day of class I got chatting with this dude with a bar code tattoo on the back of his neck about music. I asked him if he had a band and he said, "Bands are far too incompetent for me, so I just play every instrument myself." I thought, wow, this guy must be some kind of a genius. We swapped demos and on my way home I silently wrote my Juno acceptance speech for the "Best Everything Ever in Music" award that I would be winning in my future band with the bar code guy. Bands are too incompetent for him, so that would mean he has to be better at

and was actually the worst musician in the world. It made me furious; I mean come on, you can't tell a guy you're Led Zeppelin, when you're actually Insane Clown Posse. That's not fair and for God's sake have some self-awareness.

If bar code guy would have simply said, "Here's some stuff I'm working on, let me know what you think," I would have thought it was alright, but my brain was set up for awesome, so when it turned out to be far from awesome, it really sucked extra hard.

Bands seem to think that a bravado-riddled bio chock-full of completely absurd self-proclamations is the best way to drum up that interest. What that style of bio actually does is creates an unattainable reference point in the reader's mind that they are expecting to attain because you said they would. So when they put on your music, the things that aren't great about your songs or the quality of your demo are HUGELY magnified relative to The Beatles and The Velvet Underground comparisons you made in your bio.

Let's make up a few rules in hopes that we can move up from "wretched":

Luther Mallory sings and writes songs for Crush Luther and is the Director of A&R for High 4 Records.



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World Radio History

Planet Waves DIY Cable Kit & Unbalanced Mic Cable

Planet Waves has added new offerings to its cable line, including a 25 ft. Unbalanced Microphone Cable and DIY Instrument Cable Kit.

Planet Waves' new 25 ft. Unbalanced Microphone Cable is an XLR female to 1/4" unbalanced (mono) plug allowing users to plug microphones into unbalanced sound sources such as standard amplifiers, older mixing boards, and recording devices. Its low capacitance cable design with dense copper shield and nickel-plated contacts is corrosion-resistant for long life.

The company's new DIY Instrument Cable Kit – comprised of six right-angled 1/4" plugs, four straight 1/4" plugs, and 50' of cable – is ideal for custom-designing cabling from instrument to pedals to amplifier. The connectors feature gold-plated contacts and a solderless connection design for easy construction. The cable features a 24-gauge OFC conductor in a low capacitance design with two layers of impenetrable shielding utilizing Planet Waves' In=Out technology. The company's lower cable capacitance allows an instrument's presence and character to be transmitted to the amp, ensuring that the signal going into the cable comes out of the cable with transparency.

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



Peavey SP Series Loudspeakers



Peavey has introduced its new SP Series loudspeaker systems, featuring the company's new Hammertex covering and newly-redesigned exterior with full-front metal grilles.

Peavey SP enclosures feature patented asymmetrical Quadratic Throat Waveguide technology that helps deliver precise sound. Black Widow loudspeakers with Kevlar-impregnated cones; 4" ribbon-wire voice coils; field-replaceable baskets; the Radialinear Planar Phase Correction System; and titanium compression drivers with ferrofluid cooling round out the package.

The SP Series includes two-way SP 5 and SP 2 models; three-way SP 3 and quasi-three-way SP 4 models; the quasi-four-way SP 6; SP 118 and SP 218 subwoofers; and SP 12M and SP 15M stage monitors. Each model in the series comes loaded with full-range Neutrik Speakon and 1/4" inputs. The SP 3 and SP 4 feature three-way, full-range, bi-ampable systems, with bi-amp inputs via 4-pin Neutrik connectors. The SP 6 features a four-way, full-range, bi-ampable system via a 4-pin Neutrik connector and 4,000 watts peak power handling. The SP 118 and

SP 218 subwoofers feature 2,400 watts and 4,800 watts of peak power handling, respectively. The SP 12M and 15M monitors feature Neutrik Speakon and 1/4" inputs, with 2,000 watts peak power handling and stand-mount adapters.

For more information, contact Peavey: 601-483-5365, FAX 601-486-1278, domestic-sales@peavey.com, www.peavey.com.

Steinberg Sequel 2 Music Creation & Live Performance Software

Steinberg North America has started shipping Sequel 2, a new version of the company's music creation and live performance software.

Sequel 2 introduces new features, including a hardware Controller Learn mode, Track Freeze, a virtual keyboard, Track Icons, and more.

The new Controller Learn Mode allows easy set-up for almost any hardware controller to offer control over most Sequel 2 functions, instruments, and parameters. Track Freeze enhances CPU efficiency, while the new Track Icons visually label tracks, making them easy to find and adding a new element to the Sequel user interface. The Sequel MediaBay sound management system has also been improved, while the new Audio Reverse effect and the Audio Warp features offer additional options to users.

Steinberg has also released three new Sequel Content Sets for the genres of Rock, Industrial, and Hip Hop. Each content set adds 200-300 loops in the respective style. Sequel 2 is available as both an individual package, and as an upgrade from the previous version, available at a reduced cost from Steinberg's website (www.steinberg.net).

For more information, contact Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.: 416-298-1311, FAX 416-292-0732, www.yamaha.ca, www.steinberg.net.



Line 6 BackTrack & BackTrack + Mic

Line 6 has released BackTrack and BackTrack + Mic, a pair of easy-to-use recording devices that guitarists can rely on to capture their musical ideas.

Small enough to be clipped to a belt or guitar strap and featuring plug-and-play designs, BackTrack and BackTrack + Mic power on and begin capturing high-quality audio as soon as a signal is detected. While the unit is always recording, pressing the Mark button designates what was just played as special and separates it for easy review. The Forward and Reverse buttons provide instant recall of marked and non-marked ideas.

BackTrack + Mic captures up to 24 hours of audio and, ideal for vocals or acoustic guitar, features a mic with automatic gain control. The ins and outs include a quiet 1/4" input and output and a 1/8" headphone jack. BackTrack captures up to 12 hours of audio and features a 1/4" input and output. Both store audio as WAV files to flash memories. The audio can be easily transferred to a computer via USB 2.0 for further recording, editing, mixing, or storage. The USB connection also recharges the internal battery, which offers over eight hours of battery life.

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

BackTrack + Mic



Roland JUNO-Stage Synthesizer

Roland has recently introduced its new JUNO-Stage synthesizer. As the latest addition to the company's JUNO Series, JUNO-Stage is created for live performance applications.

The 76-key synthesizer ships with a quality sound set, including an 88-key stereo multisampled piano derived from the company's Fantom-G. Two slots for SRX expansion boards add further options. The JUNO-Stage also features a newly-redesigned keyboard.

The keyboard includes features needed for a streamlined live performance, such as simple split and layer functions, separate reverb and EQ knobs, an intuitive top panel and LED display, and the FAVORITE function.

This function allows for the quick recall of up to 100 unique sounds and keyboard set-ups. The synthesizer includes a dedicated XLR microphone input with reverb and a vocoder, adding another possibility for live performance integration.

The JUNO-Stage translates to the studio as well. It transforms into a MIDI master keyboard, enabling integration with external sound sources and software recording applications. A USB memory port enables playback of MP3, WAV, AIFF, or SMF files from standard USB flash memory.

For more information, contact Roland Canada Ltd.: 604-270-6626, FAX 604-270-6552, www.roland.ca.

Zildjian A Custom ReZo Crashes

HotGear

Combining modern technology with old-world crafting techniques, Zildjian has introduced six new crashes to its A Custom cymbal series. A Custom ReZo Crashes are now available in 15", 16", 17", 18", 19", and 20" sizes, all featuring medium-thin weights, a new bell size, and a new Brilliant/Traditional Finish combination.

Named for their resonating qualities, the A Custom ReZo Crashes feature a new look that displays alternating bands of spiral and full lathing techniques while using both Traditional and Brilliant finishes. The traditionally-lathed area of each crash helps to offer an array of bright overtones that blend with the response achieved by the Brilliant finished sections of each cymbal. In addition, a new bell design for the cymbals was created to attain more projection. The total design of the new cymbals produces a crash effect that is high-pitched and musical within the A Custom range of cymbals.

The A Custom cymbal series was developed with the assistance of drummer Vinnie Colaiuta. The range utilizes unique hammering techniques, thin weights, and Zildjian's Brilliant finish for a crisp sound, ideal for modern music.

For more information, contact B&J Music Ltd.: 905-896-3001, FAX 905-896-4554, bjmusic@kaman.com.



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GRAPH TECH BLACK TUSQ XL SELF-LUBRICATING NUT

■ Guitarists can now upgrade their instruments with the new Black TUSQ XL nuts made by Graph Tech Guitar Labs.

Each precision-engineered self-lubricating nut is designed to constantly provide lubrication between the nut and the strings to improve tuning performance and provide tone. One of the key causes of tuning frustration is string binding at the nut. Black TUSQ XL nuts alleviate the binding grip of the nut on the string by reducing friction between the nut material and the string. As strings move across a Black TUSQ XL nut they shear open microscopic capsules loaded with Teflon lubricant.

Teflon is slipperier than graphite and is impregnated throughout the Black TUSQ XL material so its lubricating properties won't wear out. Black TUSQ XL nuts will keep guitars in tune longer than graphite, bone, plastic, or synthetic nuts. In addition, Black TUSQ XL nuts have clear tone and sustain.

For more information, contact Graph Tech Guitar Labs: 604-940-5353, FAX 604-940-4961, www.graphtech.com.

Two electric guitars are shown against a background of horizontal red and black stripes. The guitar on the left is orange with a black pickguard, and the one on the right is black with a white pickguard. They are positioned vertically, with their necks pointing upwards.

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Ecler EVO 4 Digital Mixer



■ Ecler has released the EVO 4, a 4-channel digital mixer addressed to professional DJs and clubs. The mixer equips digital audio technology with 24-bit stereo A/D and D/A converters and a 96 kHz sampling rate.

The mixer is powered with 25 assignable MIDI controls on channels one to four and a dedicated MIDI panel with four rotary and push encoders. The main strength of the EVO 4 is a double effects processor at 24-bit/96 kHz. Processors EFFECTS 1 and EFFECTS 2 are placed on each side of the mixer for intuitive operation, and both of them feature DRY/WET crossfaders and 3-parameter controls. Both processors feature 18 sound effects, including different kind of filters, delays, beat crusher, sweep, flanger, phaser, and loop sampler with automatic beat detection, among others.

The EVO 4 is also equipped with an output limiter protected with a password for safe use of the PA system, as well as large, ergonomic EQ knobs, loop to external effects units, fader and crossfader shape adjustment, and more.

For more information, contact Soundwerks Audio: 514-335-6208, FAX 514-335-2281, info@soundwerksaudio.com, www.soundwerksaudio.com.



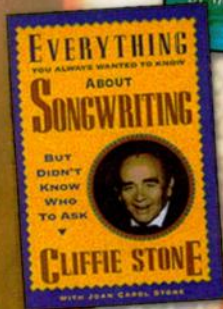
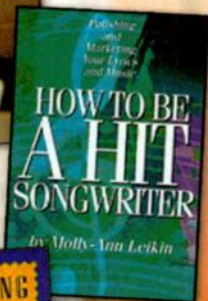
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Tama Starclassic Performer B/B

■ With the Starclassic Performer B/B, Tama has expanded its line of higher-end drum offerings. Featuring four plies of birch with another three plies of Bubinga, these thin-shell drums offer a focused, warm sound with good projection.

Tama has been developing its shell isolation and aesthetics, as marked by the addition of rubber dampers under the lugs and the tension rods, as well as changing its Starcast Mounting System to a one-piece cast mount solution in chrome for the Performer series, and brushed chrome or black nickel for the Superstar and Starclassic Bubinga series.

With a wide range of sizes and colours, the Starclassic kits can be arranged around a host of applications. New from Tama is the 20" x 22" bass drum size in the series, offering both depth and punch. The pictured shell kit is the PX44ZS/LGG with add-on 16" x 18" floor tom and the 18" x 24" Performer B/B bass drum in Lava Glass Glitter finish. Separate hardware packs are sold separately.

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

CruzTOOLS GrooveTech Bass Player Tech Kit



■ CruzTOOLS has expanded its line of musicians' tools by announcing the new GrooveTech Bass Player Tech Kit.

Included is a six-in-one screwdriver; three metric and five fractional hex (Allen) keys; a 15-blade thickness gauge, 6" steel ruler; diagonal cutters; capo; and 3-LED flashlight. The screwdriver includes two Phillips tips (#1 and #2), two slotted tips (1/4" and 3 mm tip for vintage-style bridge saddles), and two nut drivers (1/4" and 3/16" to handle Gibson and other truss rod nuts). Hex keys are long-pattern, colour-coded gold for metric and black for fractional, with all truss rod sizes having a ball-end on the long side for easy access. The tools are professional-grade and lifetime guaranteed.

Another component of the kit is its Easy Setup Guide, which is designed to educate bass players about basic set-up and maintenance with a tutorial on neck and bridge adjustment, pickup height, and intonation.

The tools are stored in a rugged 600-denier polyester pouch with woven elastic and a clear vinyl front. A compartment is provided for the Easy Setup Guide, bass owner's manual, and spare strings. A pick storage pocket is also included.

For more information, contact CruzTOOLS: 888-909-8665, FAX 209-536-0463, www.cruztools.com.

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Randall Christian Olde Wolbers Half Stack



■ Randall Amplifiers has launched a new signature half stack that was designed in conjunction with guitarist Christian Olde Wolbers of Fear Factory. The half stack includes the V2 Archetype head and the RS412XLT 100BC 4x12 cabinet.

Developed based on the existing Randall Valve Dynamic, the V2 Archetype can produce a wide variety of tones by utilizing a full tube preamp, as well as the Randall solid-state pre-amp. The head features three MIDI-programmable channels: Classic Solid State Clean, Classic Solid State Overdrive, and Modern Tube Overdrive.

Onboard EQ controls include bass, middle, and treble, along with an additional Sustain Boost and Attack

Switch. The amp's master controls include volume, presence, and density. The Valve Dynamic power amp features tube and MOSFET functions, loaded with three Ruby 12 AX7AC5HG tubes. The stack pushes 480 W at 2 Ohms, 400 W at 4 Ohms, and 280 W at 8 Ohms.

Additional features on the unit include MIDI in/thru, assignable 6-band graphic EQ, a parallel EFX loop, slave output with level, a Mic Eliminator XLR output, and world voltage selector. An RF5V2 MIDI footswitch is included with the amp.

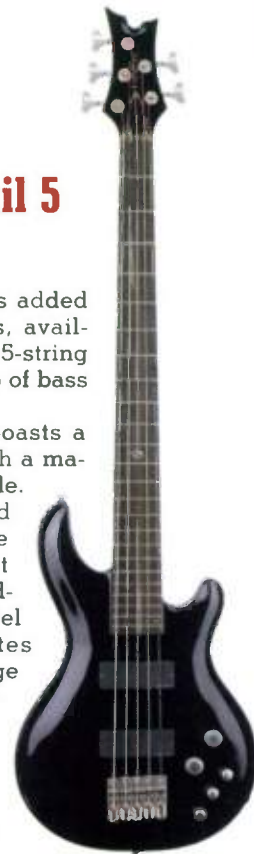
For more information, contact U.S. Music Corp.: 847-949-0444, FAX 847-949-8444, cservice@usmusiccorp.com, www.usmusiccorp.com.

Dean Hardtail 5 Bass

■ Dean Guitars has added the Hardtail 5 bass, available in both 4- and 5-string models, to its lineup of bass offerings.

The Hardtail 5 boasts a mahogany body with a maple top and a 35" scale. The guitar's rosewood neck features abalone inlays with die-cast tuners atop the headstock. Brushed nickel hardware completes the aesthetic package along with the instrument's Classic Black finish. Onboard electronics include a pair of EMG Hz pickups, with active 3-band EQ.

For more information, contact Intellimix Corp.: 514-457-9663, FAX 514-457-0575, salesinfo@intellimix.com, www.intellimix.com.



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■ Designed for computer-based recording, Audio-Technica's AT2020 USB cardioid condenser mic is ideal for digitally capturing any acoustic audio source using recording software.

Equipped with a USB digital output, the Mac- and Windows-compatible AT2020 USB offers articulation and intelligibility for field recording, voiceover, podcasting, and home studio use. With low self-noise and extended frequency response, the mic offers a solution for the varied spectrum of digital recording set-ups.

Based on the AT2020 and featuring a custom-engineered low-mass diaphragm, the AT2020 USB is a rugged side-address condenser mic that offers the performance of a studio mic with a USB interface. Designed to provide versatility in demanding production applications, the AT2020 USB has a fixed cardioid polar pattern to allow isolation of the desired sound source. The mic has been tailored for a smooth, natural sound while ensuring accuracy.

Walden Concorda High-Gloss Acoustics

■ Walden Guitars has introduced a series of high-gloss instruments under the Concorda line. One of the features of this new series will be the polyester/polyurethane high-gloss finish.

The Concorda features an inlaid rosette comprised of two rings with the centre section made up of maple and mahogany. Integrated in the design will be the Walden SupraNatura headstock, while the string ramps on the classical line will be rounded like the Natura. All steel-string guitars will feature microdot position markers as used on the Natura T550 and 0550, and carry Walden pickguards.

Twelve models make up the new Concorda series, which includes solid Engelmann spruce, Sitka spruce, or cedar soundboards. Solid rosewood and laminated rosewood or mahogany back and side combinations are available on different models in the series, which includes cutaways and Fishman CL4 onboard electronics options.

For more information, contact Coast Music: 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, info@coastmusic.ca, www.coastmusic.com.



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World Radio History

by Doug Gallant



CARA MATTHEW

Contact: Cara Nunnenmacher, 647-239-0510, 312-2811 Bloor St. West, Toronto, ON M6S 1N3, www.caramatthew.com.

Cara Matthew has the potential to become Canada's next international jazz star.

The Toronto-based singer has a great voice, an innate sense of what works for her and what doesn't, and a talent for taking songs which aren't generally regarded as jazz songs in the traditional sense and putting a whole new spin on them.

She displays all these talents and more on her recently-released debut album *Make You Feel My Love*.

A very polished effort, the album was recorded in Toronto with Juno Award-winning producer Greg Kavanagh and a go-big-or-stay-home roster of session players that included bass player George Koller, keyboard player Robi Botos, drummer Davide DiRenzo, and trumpet player Guido Basso.

Matthew's first record is full of surprises, not the least of which is her choice of material, which includes songs from artists like Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, Billy Preston, Elton John, and Aerosmith, all of which were favourites of hers growing up — and all of which have been given a new jazz/blues arrangement.

She takes some of these pop gems in directions I expect their creators never anticipated — like Preston's "Nothin' From Nothin," but the treatments are goody and the material fares well.

Matthew, who was born on the west coast but now calls Toronto home, is a gifted musical interpreter and I suspect she could be a good songwriter. She says she mulled that possibility over when planning this record, but opted instead to stick with material she knows and loves.

After listening to the album, I can't say I blame her for going down the road she chose — she does some very interesting things with some of these tracks.

Matthew is already enjoying some success internationally with the record, netting radio play in Australia, the Netherlands, and the Virgin Islands.

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MICHOU

Contact: Ryan Frith, 519-980-6731, 13225 Meadowland Cr., Tecumseh, ON, N8N 4N4, www.myspace.com/michoulondon.

The members of Michou have been playing together for less than a year, but the material that's coming out of this Windsor-based act would leave you to believe this is the work of a well-seasoned, road-tested band several records into a career.

The calibre of the songwriting, the beauty of the arrangements, and the level of musicianship within the band all suggest this is a band with legs.

Lead singer/guitarist Michael Hargreaves and bandmates Ryan Ard (guitar/banjo/cajon/xylophone/slide whistle/vocals), Ryan Frith (bass/vocals/harmonica), Sasha Appler (keys/trumpet/vocals), and Lucas Semple (cajon/drums/xylophone/tambourine/accordion) have crafted a sound that draws heavily from the folk tradition of simple-but-often-beautiful melodies and everything-you-need-but-no-more orchestrations. But this is unquestionably a pop record with pop sensibilities.

Imagine, if you can, a musical partnership between an acoustic Ben Folds, NRBQ, and Bareback Ladies and you might get some sense of what Michou has to offer.

Hargreaves has one of those voices that's very easy on the head and so sweet at times that it's almost tranquillizing. He and his cohorts are capable of producing some great vocal harmonies when the moment calls for them.

The band is currently gearing up for a major tour in support of its latest record, *Myshkin*, which will take it across much of Ontario and into the Maritimes.

If the opportunity arises to see them live, take it. You won't be disappointed.

DNA6

Contact: Nova Koocher, 604-314-4360, 1506-2004 Fullerton Ave., North Vancouver, BC, V7P 3G8 dna6music@gmail.com, www.dna6music.com.

Music, like life, is in a constant state of evolution. New people bring new influences, new ideas, new concepts to the table. Vancouver's DNA6 is a case in point.

Bandmembers Alex Maher (vocals/sax/guitar/percussion/beatbox), MC Dosia (vocals) and M. Prime (vocals/guitar) describe themselves as essentially a hip-hop/rap act and while there's no question that that's where their centre of musical gravity lies, they have also infused their music with elements of classic pop music, jazz, funk, and blues.

They cite The Beatles, A Tribe Called Quest, Sade, Miles Davis, D'Angelo, Talib Kweli, and Elliott Smith among their influences, and if you listen closely, you can hear almost all of them at play at some point.

Having read who they were influenced by, I expected their music to be interesting. Just how interesting I didn't realize until I heard material like "Megalodon," "Why Can't I Sleep," "All The Things You Do," and "All Up To Me."

The music comes across as intelligent, imaginative, and highly inventive with sweet grooves, well-conceived melody lines, great rhymes, most of which are positive and upbeat in their orientation, and solid production values.

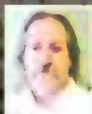
The three core members of DNA6 have been together just four years, but two members of the band, Alex and Mario, have been playing together more than 10 years, first in high school jazz bands, later in the band Flannel Jimmy. They met bandmate MC Dosia at a freestyle show in 2003 and formed this band the next year.

If you go out to see DNA6 live expect a full stage. For live shows it tops up the roster with bass player David Spidel, drummer/keyboard player Chad Taylor, and either Ryan Stewart, Tim Proznic, or Brendan McLean on drums.

At this point, DNA6's fan base is primarily in western Canada, but expect that to change as more people get a taste of what it has to offer.

And that's happening.

Some of the larger shows to date have included the World Freestyle Ski Championship, New Music West, Crankworx in Whistler, and the Vancouver Folk Fest. DNA6 songs have also been licensed for several film projects including a mountain biking video, *Seasons*, and the feature film *That One Night*.



Doug Gallant has been a reporter and entertainment writer with The Guardian since 1975. In a career spanning four decades he has developed, researched, and written profiles on more than 3,000 artists from every conceivable musical genre. Gallant produces a weekly entertainment column for The Guardian and is a regular contributor to CBC Radio's Mainstreet. He has sat on juries for The Juno Awards, The East Coast Music Awards, the Maple Blues Awards, FACTOR, CBC's The Great Canadian Music Dream, and the Polaris Music Prize.

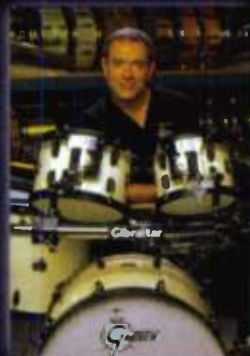
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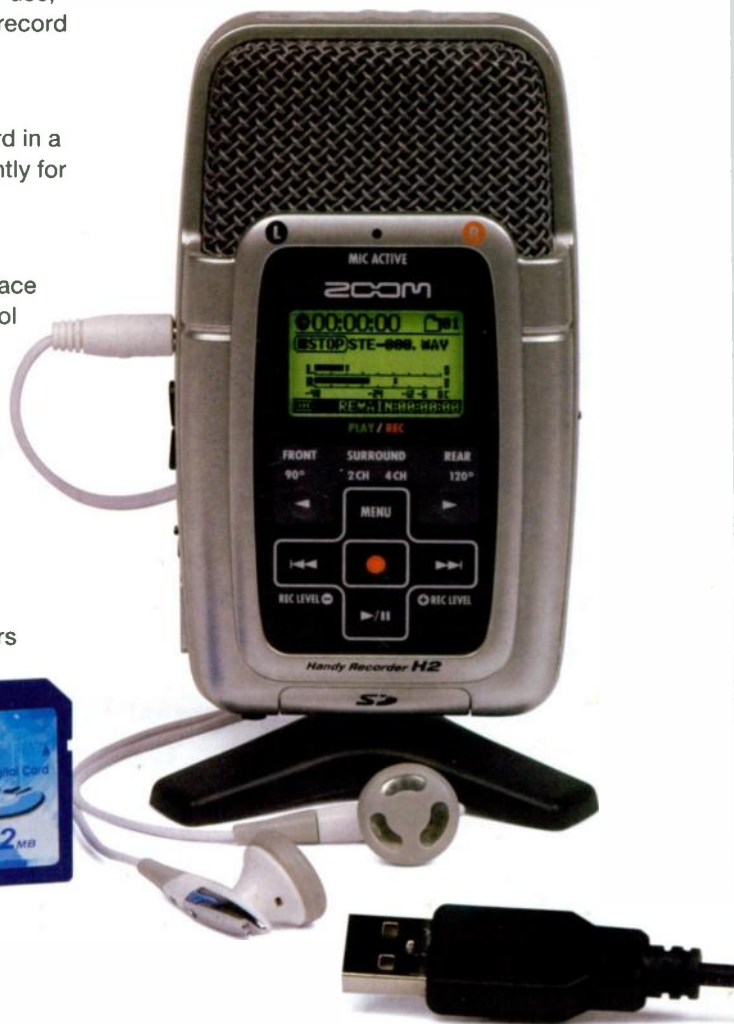
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