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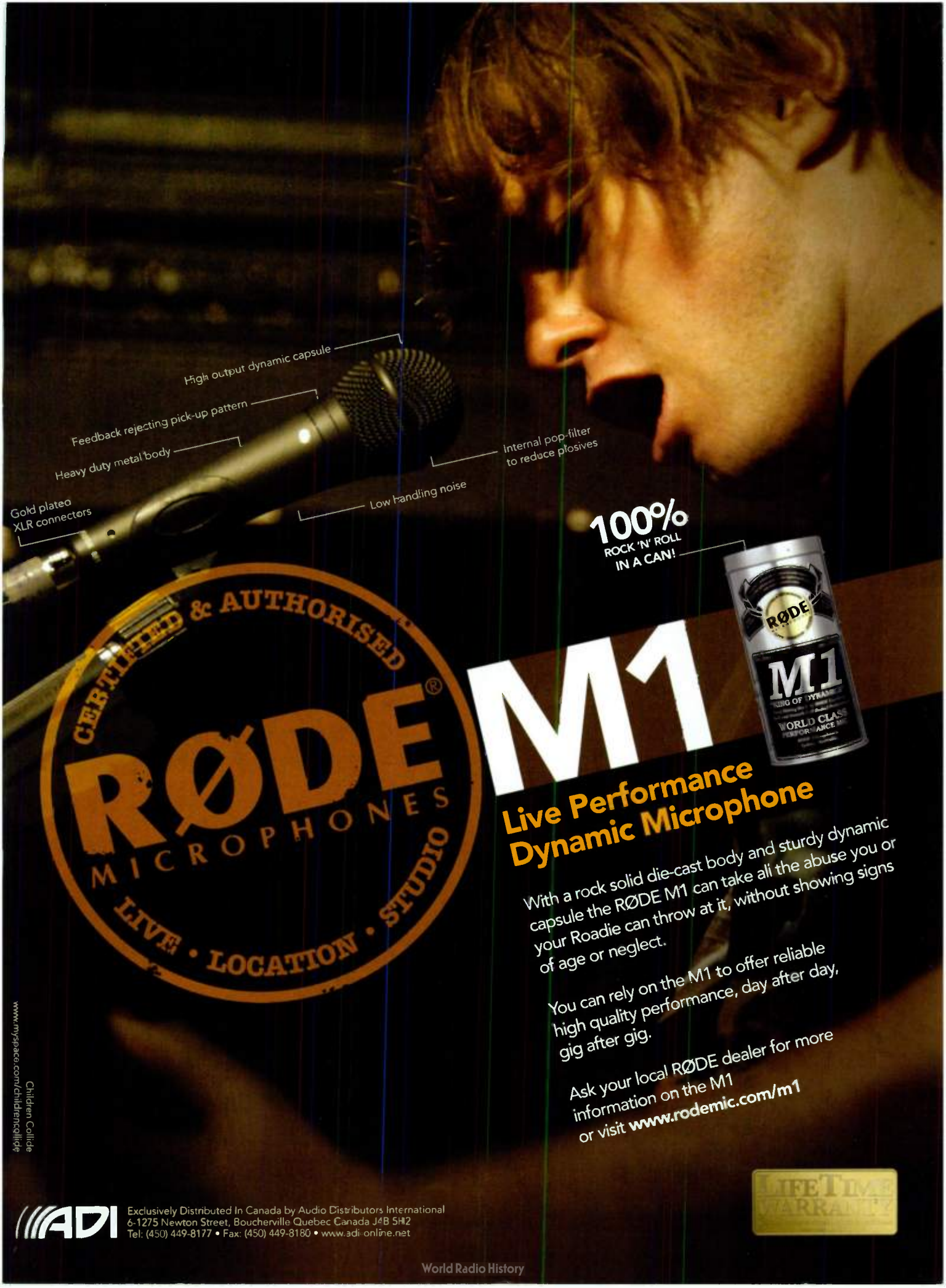


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DEAR CANADIAN MUSICIAN,

Congratulations on 30 great years! I read Pat Leyland's column on Where The Money Goes, and a couple of things jumped out at me. First was Chris Taylor's breakdown that stated that about 10 years ago, the manufacturing cost of an album was a dollar. As I recall, at that time the cost of a disc in a jewel

could easily double or even triple that cost.

Nowadays, Chris Taylor has Last Gang Records and most of its releases feature digipaks. Disc pressing has gotten cheaper, but much more expensive digipaks mean CD manufacturing is as costly as ever. My point is that CDs could cost \$1 to make, but very seldom do.

The other point is Pat's cost breakdown on digital albums. Everything he says is correct. There are, however, two very different approaches to paying the artist on a digital sale. The major companies commonly treat a download just like a CD and pay the artist a royalty rate; hence Pat's math which shows the labels making three times as much as the artist and producer combined. There's another school of thought that says a download sale is a transaction involving a master use, not a "product." This thinking would cut out the producer in many cases, but provide the artist with half of all net revenue. In fact, if the artist is also the songwriter, then the label makes considerably less than the artists. This is the case with many artists that are signed to indie labels.

Keith Brown
Aquarius Records

case was about \$0.90. So if you also consider the one-time cost of setting up the disc artwork, let's call it a dollar a pop for the first 3,000 CDs. That, however, doesn't include the "paper." You might have gotten a four-page booklet (black and white interior) and the tray card for another \$0.20, but the more common 12- or 16-page, full-colour booklet

Ed. Thanks for the detailed comments. Keith. There is probably nothing more contentious in the industry to date than the issues surrounding the future of the physical CD and the distribution of music online. Opinions abound, but musicians in Canada should be armed with as many of the business facts as possible.



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PLAYING THE CAMPUS CIRCUIT



Photo Credit: Aron McKenzie Fraser

(L-R) John Mullane, Brad Goodsell, Dan Ledwell, & Glen Nicholson of In-Flight Safety.

by Andrew King

John Mullane, singer and guitarist for Halifax indie outfit In-Flight Safety, is being thrashed around in the back of the tour van en route to the band's home city. The following night, he and IFS are playing a gig at Dalhousie University's Greenwood Lounge – a private show for university students. "It's always a fun time," he says of playing this kind of gig. "I don't think we've ever had a bad show on-campus."

The band is supporting its latest full-length, 2009's *We Are An Empire, My Dear*, and Mullane's got a shopping list of reasons that booking shows on college or university campuses is a smart move at this stage in the game. The reality is this: any touring band should be looking into these kinds of shows as huge opportunities to have your music exposed to perhaps the most music-hungry market in the country. While there are different channels to go through when booking campus gigs that may take more time and effort to land, the advantages they afford make them enviable gigs that established bands – like Mullane and Co. – know to seek out whenever possible.



terms of logistics, but your show is going to go off really smoothly considering the calibre of people you're dealing with."

Finally, the communication between the students and programmers putting on the shows is as efficient as it gets. "There's probably a better network of communication between the campus buyers than there is among bar owners," says Taylor. "So if an artist is heralded by one school, there is a dialogue – especially through COCA – where the word will pass."

Sociology 211

It really doesn't matter what kind of music you play – this is an audience you want to be tapping. "If it's possible to develop a following on-campus for a particular artist, there's probably going to be a longer loyalty," says Taylor. It's true. You've got a pool of educated, creative young adults craving entertainment. The success of the CMJ Music Marathon and the variety of acts that play it are both telling to how lucrative and accepting this demographic can be.

"Where are these young adults going to be in four years?" asks Mullane, getting ready to drive home a point. "We've had great success playing some of the local campuses in the past and now, a lot of our fans are spread around the country working

Business 101

"The nice thing about these shows is that they're more targeted – you're targeting specifically that campus' market, whereas if you're playing a club show downtown, you're competing against X amount of other clubs," says Ryan Heerschap of Underground Operations Booking Agency, staying on-theme with equation-like reasoning. "When it's on campus, it brings the whole school together and you get students who maybe otherwise wouldn't leave campus coming to the shows."

There's about as much of a variety of different types of gigs you can land on-campus as there are campuses in Canada, so opportunities are aplenty for acts playing different kinds of music and at different stages in their careers. "There are plenty of schools out there investing in up-and-coming artists and giving them a shot to play to that market," says Heerschap, so don't think these kinds of gigs are reserved for the bigger headlining acts in Canada. In fact, even if it were only these types of shows being hosted, somebody would need to open...

Your turnout and subsequent payout is also stacked in your favour at these types of shows. Earle Taylor of COCA – the Canadian Organization of Campus Activities – echoes this sentiment from the other side of the equation. "Artists are likely to be treated better on campus – and always get paid," he says. As a former club owner, Taylor says he's heard far more horror stories about bands being ripped off at bars and clubs than on-campus.

Communication 202

Getting one of these gigs together may take a few extra steps when compared to a simple club show, but the process shouldn't make you sweat. "The initial contact is usually made with the program director or person hiring entertainment," says Taylor of the square one hook-up. "Sometimes, that individual can make decisions themselves, and in other cases it may need to pass through various committees." These bodies can include, but aren't limited to, the planners of a given event, the staff running the on-campus venue, or representatives of the student union.

"If there's more than one person making decisions, the process may take a bit longer," explains Heerschap, "but it's much more efficiently run." He also says that any campus program coordinator he's ever worked with is very upfront and professional. Mullane can certainly attest to this being a huge plus. "They're different animals in

this being a huge plus. "They're different animals in

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**FOR MORE ON COCA,
VISIT WWW.COCA.ORG.**



COCA Executive Director Earle Taylor

interesting jobs – and still fans of the band.” It’s a hotbed of music fans with open minds and open arms.

“I’ve done a lot of shows with Fanshawe College in London, ON, and the crew there is pretty open-minded about working with all sorts of different artists – from singer/songwriters to rock bands to reggae bands.” UOBA

books acts ranging from Andrew W.K. to The Flatliners to Passenger Action, and Heerschap finds that the schools want talent as diverse as he’s able to offer.

Marketing 322

The avenues for promotion on-campus are as talent-hungry as the students they represent. “You have a great opportunity of connecting with the campus media who, again, are some of the best purveyors of indie music,” reminds Mullane. From the campus newspaper through campus radio, and even the flyers that grace the main student living centres, both your upcoming gig and your band as a whole can really be pushed into the limelight.

“I think it’s up to the artists when they get a gig to make it clear to the buyer that they’re available for interviews or any type of promo,” offers Taylor. The student media is notoriously ambitious and progressive, so in a lot of cases, your chances of being covered are a lot stronger than you’d find in the mainstream media.



Ryan Heerschap of Underground Operations Booking Agency.

“Almost every campus has a radio station targeted directly at the student body,” explains Heerschap, “so it allows artists that maybe wouldn’t be played on terrestrial radio the chance for an interview or some airplay. It’s a market that’s a lot more open than commercial radio.

They’ll take submissions and review them often.” In fact, there’s a give-take relationship between what campus media likes and the type of entertainment the campus wants. Sending in your music to be played on the air or reviewed in print may be the first step to landing this kind of gig.

Graduation Day

As even a dropout can see, on-campus gigs offer plenty of opportunities for working artists to really boost their fan bases. Again, the types of shows available are numerous and there’s probably one that could accommodate your act. Events can range from mid-week club shows to specially-themed events, sporting events, fundraisers, or the ever-notorious frosh week. “Frosh week is definitely famous for doing the big, outdoor festival-style shows that invite a lot of artists to come participate,” says Heerschap.

He recently joined colleagues at Sheraton College in Oakville for a Rock the Vote-type

show with Protest The Hero. “The show was held in hopes of bringing out more students to vote in the campus election,” he says. While some of the more prominent gigs are reserved for bands with a bit of notoriety under their belts, there are still plenty of cases where yet-to-be-heralded talent can be of use.

“Artists that are willing to put in a bit of extra time meeting people and pitching themselves to campus buyers will find success playing these types of shows,” says Taylor. Send your music to campus radio. Try and hook up with a writer for an interview or spotlight. Play gigs close to campus and try to draw some students over. The people booking talent know what the

students they represent want to see.

“To be honest, it’s a tough gig to get,” says Mullane bluntly. “You won’t get a university show as your first gig. You’ve got to work hard, and build up your fan base to get to that level.” Still, as acts like In-Flight Safety can tell you, the dividends are worth the bumpy ride and extra homework.

Andrew King is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician.



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CANADIAN INDUSTRY UNITES FOR CMW 2009



Keynote speaker Gene Simmons.



The Trews perform during Canadian Music Fest.

Celebrities, indies, icons, industry executives, and music enthusiasts came together from across the country and the globe this year for the Canadian Music Week festivities. Running from March 11-14, 2009, the festivities included awards ceremonies, industry panels and discussions, artist showcases, music film screenings, and more.

The Crystals, hosted by guitarist Wendell Ferguson, honoured winners with Gold, Silver, and Bronze awards of excellence in radio creativity, while The Canadian Music and Broadcast Industry Awards were hosted by Gowon with a performance by Randy Bachman. John Roberts and Chuck McCoy accepted their Lifetime Achievement Awards to commemorate their inductions to the Canadian Music and Broadcast Industry Hall of Fame. April Wine collected the same honour at the Canadian Radio Music Awards, hosted by Sass Jordan along with a three-award win for Hedley.

Jeff Leake hosted The Indies, which were broadcast live on XM Satellite Radio. The accolades continued as members of Anvil were inducted into The Indies Hall of Fame, Lights collected two Indie awards, and Hey Rosetta!, Jon Lajoie, Arkells, The Midway State, Beast, USS, and Crystal Castles performed.

CMW 2009 presented a Spotlight on China to promote the opportunities that exist for the Canadian industry abroad. Keynote speakers Gene Simmons and Bob Lefsetz addressed CMW delegates separately, then together as controversy ensued – leading to an impromptu head-to-head between the two.

Canadian Music Fest brought 600 bands to 51 venues across the city. Artists performing included Canadian acts like Arkells, Chad VanGaalén, Down With Webster, Lights, Holy Fuck, illScarlett, Matt Mays, SNFU, Shane Yellowbird, Two Hours Traffic, and many others from home and abroad.

The CMW festivities will return to the Fairmont Royal York in Toronto from March 10-13, 2010, featuring the regular program of conferences, a trade expo, a film festival, awards shows, and a new music festival. For more on this year's or next year's editions, visit www.cmw.net.

CMW At A Glance...

Industry Delegates: 1,700 +
Attending Musicians: 3,000 +
Countries Represented: 21
Media Accredited: 613
Number of bands performing: 600
Number of participating venues: 51
Number of Days: 5



Discussions heat up during the Indie Panel.

The Midway State accepts an award during The Indies.



Copyright Creators Debuts Online Copyright Protection Service

Copyright Creators has launched its online copyright registration service for artist. The launch of the site's copyright registry is meant to encourage artists to continue producing their work.

"We've come across thousands of artists who have work they want to promote, but are scared it will be copied or used without permission," comments Co-Founder Allan Pynn. "Copyright Creators offers them an affordable, secure, and convenient online service to create the legal proof they need to help them fight infringement if it occurs."

The Internet-based system enables artists who create works to register and store their copyright for the life of copyright with no membership or renewal fees, while having the ability to access the work online. The guided step-by-step registration process ensures artists will record the information they require while providing a time-stamped copyright registration form instantly after registration. Once purchased, the registration can be used at any time with no expiry.

Visit www.copyrightcreators.com for more information on the service.



Shawn Trotter performing a house show.

Bring The Band Home

House concerts are a means for musicians to get extra gigs in an intimate, comfortable environment that offers benefits for all involved.

Musician Shawn Trotter recently hosted a seminar on holding house concerts at the Burlington, ON Long & McQuade location. "House concerts are a win-win situation for both the host and musician," comments Trotter. "For the musician, these intimate performances for a captive and interested audience guarantee a decent night's wage, increased merchandise sales, and exposure to new fans."

The host makes arrangements with an artist to come perform at his or her home for an audience - a gathering of friends, neighbours, and fans. Attendance is decided by available space, usually bringing in 15-35 people, though some have swelled into the hundreds. The cost to the host is minimal, and the musician is paid by a flat fee or donation collected at the door, and can also sell merch and music at the show.

"For the host, it's a unique, inexpensive, and entertaining evening with friends and an opportunity to be up-close and personal with the artist," adds Trotter. House shows are great for off-days on tour, or can even be hosted in an "unplugged" setting before or after a scheduled nearby gig.

For more information, visit Trotter's webpage at: www.shawntrotter.com, or www.acousticroof.ca, a Canadian house concert resource.



Dallas Green performs during the 2009 JUNO Awards Broadcast.

St. John's To Host 2010 JUNO Awards

The Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) along with broadcast partner CTV has named St. John's as the host city for the 2010 JUNO Awards, to be held April 15-18, 2010. This will mark the second time St. John's has hosted the event that encompasses four days of local festivities and JUNO Awards Weekend Events. The 39th Annual JUNO Awards will be broadcast on CTV Sunday, April 18, 2010.

This year's broadcast was aired live on CTV March 29, 2009, hosted by Russell Peters and featuring performances by artists like The Stills, Great Big Sea, City & Colour with Gord Downie, and several others. Visit www.junoawards.ca for more information.

Virtual-Vancouver.com Helps Artists Grow Online



Utherverses's Virtual-Vancouver is a unique website that presents a real-time, 3D venue for artists to connect with other artists, fans, and industry contacts through showcases, galleries, live concerts, and other events.

"Virtual-Vancouver

is visually entertaining, truly interactive, and profoundly collaborative – all in a real-time environment," says Brian Shuster, Founder and CEO of Utherverses Inc. "The venue presents visual capabilities for engaging art lovers beyond the usual scope

of the Internet's promotional power."

Modelled after the city of Vancouver, Virtual-Vancouver lets members, represented by customizable avatars, take part in social activities revolving around music, live concerts, art galleries and shows, and other platforms for personal interaction. The site worked in conjunction with last year's edition of New Music West to host what it's dubbed "the world's largest online music event," showcasing more than 100 real-time live performances.

For more information on Virtual-Vancouver, visit: www.virtual-vancouver.com.

Canada Council Deadlines For 2009-2010

The Canada Council for the Arts has published its calendar of application deadlines for its year from April 1, 2009-March 31, 2010. The Council has several funding programs for musicians, composers, organizations, and more. Visit www.canadacouncil.ca for information on the Canada Council, its programs, publications, and activities.



Kevin Parent

CREDIT: Pascale Levesque

Astral Media is donating \$700,000 over the next seven years to MusiCounts, the music education charity handled by the Canadian Academy of Arts and Science. Over 70 schools are set to receive grants of \$10,000 for new music instruments and equipment. The media company has also launched a cross-country PSA radio campaign with Canadian artists Gregory Charles and Kevin Parent to raise awareness of the importance of music education in schools.

Musician Friendly RECORDING

RATTLEBOX STUDIOS

Rattlebox Studios is owned by producer Brian Moncarz (Moneen, The Junction, Pilot Speed) and 3 time Grammy winning producer David Bottrill (Peter Gabriel, Tool, I Mother Earth). Rattlebox is a musician friendly Toronto creative space catering to both Canadian and International artists. A state of the art SSL AWS 900 is the engine for both tracking and mixing and the studio has a wealth of equipment - Neve, API, Urei, as well as instruments assembled over the years by the owners.

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Groove Essentials YouTube Channel For Drummers

To further the education of drummers while bringing attention to the *Groove Essentials* series of DVDs and books from Hudson Music, a group of drum and percussion companies have joined together to promote the launch of a dedicated *Groove Essentials* channel on YouTube.

The channel, located at www.youtube.com/group/grooveessentials, has been established to allow drummers to record and post videos of themselves playing *Groove Essentials* grooves and share their videos with other players around the world.

In addition to supporting the launch of the YouTube channel, Roland, Zildjian, Drum Workshop, Evans, Rhythm Tech, Hudson Music, LP, and Vic Firth are also offering thousands of dollars in drums and accessories in an online giveaway contest. Contest entries can be made on any of the participating sponsors' websites from May 15 to June 30, 2009 for a chance to win prizes in a random drawing.

For more information on the contest and *Groove Essentials* titles, visit www.hudsonmusic.com/grooveessentials.

New CIRAA Website Goes Live For Indie Artists

The Canadian Independent Recording Artists' Association (CIRAA) has redesigned its homepage for easier user navigation. CIRAA's mandate is built around education and advocacy for independent recording artists. The Association launched *The New Indie* program in 2008, while advocating for independent artists in terms of CanCon regulations, Canadian talent development, and more.

The new site offers more information into the Association's mandate, as well as a full FAQ page, and even allows artists to sign up and join the association. Visit the updated page at www.ciraa.ca.



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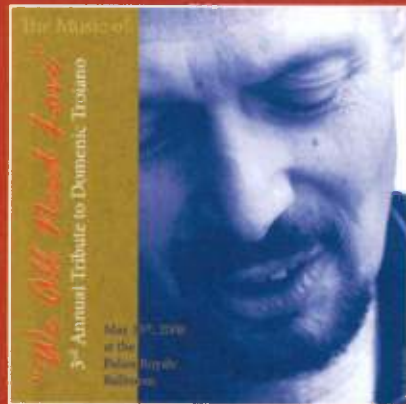
Cirque MySpace Offers Opportunities For Musicians

Cirque du Soleil has put together a MySpace page for singers and musicians, listing current opportunities for employment and collaboration with its various productions. The site also features Cirque's Artist of the Month, songs from the Cirque du Soleil repertoire, the Talent Scout Blog, and a list of featured stage career opportunities. A list of the Top 5 Questions for Casting should be helpful to those exploring the requirements. Interested parties are able to apply online for positions. Visit www.myspace.com/cirquedusoleilmusicians to check out the site.



Be Your Own Publicist

IAmThePublicist.com is a new website for musicians, bands, artists, and companies involved with the music industry. The site offers a contact database for music insiders, which includes tips, a commission calculator, profiles, and contacts for management, lawyers, endorsements, magazines, radio, and more. The site was designed to allow artists to make their own contacts and connections. Visit the site at: www.iamthepublicist.com for more information.



We All Need Love: A Tribute To Domenico Troiano has been released after months of preparation. The album was recorded live at a fundraiser of the same name in 2008. Funds from the recorded event and CD sales are being directed to Toronto East General Hospital's redevelopment campaign. The tribute is now a biennial event, with the next concert set to be hosted in the spring of 2010.

For more information or to purchase the record, contact the TEGH Foundation, 416-469-6580, ext.6866 or jneel@tegh.on.ca.

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East Coasters Don't Keep Quiet For MIMEFest

Members of the independent music scene from the Maritimes connected in Moncton, NB for MIMEFest 2009. Held from April 2-5, 2009, the event featured artist showcases and gave musicians the chance to take in educational seminars from industry delegates, including sessions titled Go On Tour... Or Don't (How NOT To Get Booked), DIY Band Promotion, AFM - What Is It And Is It Right For Me?, and What Are Labels Looking For?

The educational events were hosted at the Music New Brunswick offices, with the showcases held at various venues across the city, and featuring artists like Michou, Today I Caught The Plague, and Iron Gianf. For more on the event, visit www.mimefest.ca.



Force Fields performs during MIMEFest.

CREDIT: Marc Xavier LeBlanc aka Bones



It All Starts With A Song...

Astral Media Radio has launched a new website, accessible at www.itallstartswithasong.ca, listing its initiatives to develop and assist Canadian musical talent. The site features areas for songwriters, emerging artists, music industry members, and aboriginal music makers. The company has committed to donating roughly \$80 million in assistance to the industry over the next few years. Visit the website for more information.



Create Your Own Band With Sennheiser

Sennheiser is giving musicians the chance to connect, make music, and vie for an assortment of prizes from Adidas gear to the company's own product offerings. The initiative is the brainchild of Sennheiser Canada, but is open to musicians in Canada and the US.

"We're proud about bringing this opportunity to musicians that unites them with their peers and gives them the chance to collaborate and network remotely," says Sennheiser Canada's Anne Joyce. "We're really looking forward to seeing what people are able to come up with using the site." Visit www.createyourvirtualband.com to sign up and compete for prizes.

FACTOR Program Changes & 2009-2010 Program Deadlines

On an annual basis, FACTOR and its Board of Directors meet with a group of industry professionals and review all of its funding programs.

FACTOR President and CEO Heather Ostertag says that there have been many changes to the 2009-2010 fiscal year applications, some of which have been the greatest changes in FACTOR's 27 year history. "The greatest change this year is the reinstatement of the Re-

coupment Dividend Fund," says Ostertag, "a strategy by which half of the funds repaid to FACTOR (from a Sound Recording loan) in excess of \$1,000, can be banked or set aside for the recipient to put towards another FACTOR program. I like to look at it as rewarding success."

For more information on Program Changes, the Recoupment Dividend Fund, or FACTOR's new deadlines, visit www.factor.ca.

Meaghan Blanchard performing in Corner Brook



CREDIT: Pam Samson

East Coast Music Amazes In Corner Brook

The east coast music industry came together in Corner Brook, NL for the annual East Coast Music Awards, Festival, and Conference. The festivities ran from February 26-March 1, 2009, and featured plenty of music

showcases, industry seminars, and culminated with the Awards Gala, broadcast live from the Pepsi Centre on CBC.

Newfoundland's own Hey Rosetta! came away with three awards, while Jill Barber, Matt Andersen, and Gordie Sampson took home a pair a piece. The winner of this year's Fan Choice award, which had 20,000 online voters choosing between nominees, was hip-hopper Classified.

The Dr. Helen Creighton Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Newfoundland's Dick Nolan. This award recognizes an individual or group that has had a profound and lasting effect on the Atlantic Canadian music industry and the recipient is chosen each year by the ECMA board of directors. Nolan, who passed away in 2005, was originally from Corner Brook, NL, and was a pioneer of Newfoundland's music industry, sharing the music of his province with the rest of Canada.

The ECMA Music Awards Gala capped off the event, which attracted 2,000 delegates from home, as well as nations like the US, UK, and Australia.

For more information, visit the ECMA online at www.ecma.com.



A Year Of Roland Contests

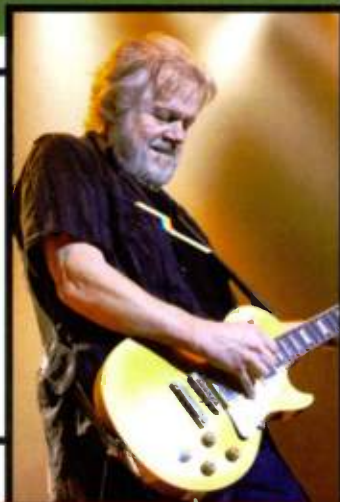
Roland Canada has launched a series of contests to give aspiring musicians the chance to pick up a range of prize packages.

Four contests are running this year: the BOSS Loop Station 2009 Championship, the Roland V-Drums Contest, the Roland Synthesizer Contest, and the 3rd Roland V-Accordion Festival. Last year's Roland Synthesizer Contest and 2nd Roland V-Accordion Festival saw competitors duke it out for first prize.

The BOSS Loop Station contest launched in April 2009, while the V-Drum, V-Accordion, and Synth contests launched at the beginning of May 2009. All are currently accepting submissions. For details on the contests and links to each contest minisite, visit

Luminato Guitar Festival Illuminates Toronto

The Luminato Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity has announced its 2009 program. The festival honours the art of the guitar and power of music, running from June 5-14, 2009. The Luminato's Guitar Festival was co-founded by the New York Guitar Festival's David Spelman, and features guitarists like Randy Bachman. Visit www.luminato.com for more information.



Randy Bachman

Mapex Canada Announces Its Drumheroes

Mapex Canada has announced the winners to its first Mapex Drumheroes Competition, which was held exclusively online until February 20, 2009. Each finalist submitted a final solo performance video that was rated on technique, groove, and creativity.

The winner was Curtis A. Marquis of Calgary, with Bryan Valeriani of Kempville, ON and Dennis Dumphy of Sioux Lookout, ON named runner-ups. Marquis took home an extensive prize package from Mapex, including a 6-piece special edition kit and the opportunity to perform a clinic alongside a Mapex clinician. The

judge panel consisted of Mapex endorsers, including Canadians Moe Carlson of Protest the Hero and Josh Trager of the Sam Roberts Band.

"Hats off to our extremely talented winners as well as to the numerous other Drumheroes we discovered along the way," states Mapex Canada Product Manager, Sami Kizilbash. "To respond to the numerous inquiries - yes, this will become an annual event. Stay tuned to Mapex Canada's website for details on how to sign up!" For more information, visit www.mapexcanada.com.

Canadian Entries Welcome For U.S.A. Songwriting Competition

The U.S.A. Songwriting Competition has launched for 2009, with the deadline for submissions being May 29, 2009. The contest offers up a \$50,000 (USD) grand prize, along with several other prizes for individual categories. The contest aims to promote excellence in music and the art of songwriting. Songwriters, composers, bands, and solo artists are encouraged to participate.

For more information on the contest and how to enter, visit www.songwriting.net.

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Hamilton, ON
May 7-9, 2009
www.springmusicfestival.com

■ New York Amp Show 2009

New York, NY
May 9, 2009
818-992-0745
loni@ampshow.com, www.ampshow.com

■ 2009 PianoTexas Academy & Festival

Fort Worth, TX
May 15-June 7, 2009
817-257-7456, FAX 817-257-0178
t.ungar-pianotexas@tcu.edu,
www.pianotexas.org

■ 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

■ Distillery Blues Festival

Toronto, ON
June 15-17, 2009
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064
info@distilleryblues.com,
www.distilleryblues.com

■ NXNE 2009

Toronto, ON
June 17-21, 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

■ MENC Music Education Week

Washington, DC
June 17-23, 2009
703-860-4000, FAX 703-860-1531
mbserv@menc.org, www.menc.org

■ Ottawa Jazz Festival

Ottawa, ON
June 25-July 5, 2009
613-241-2633, 888-226-4495
info@ottawajazzfestival.com,
www.ottawajazzfestival.com

■ Summerfest 2009

Milwaukee, WI
June 25-July 5, 2009
414-273-2680
www.summerfest.com

■ Jazzfest International 2009

Victoria, BC
June 26-July 5, 2009
250-388-4423, FAX 250-388-4407
info@jazzvictoria.ca, www.jazzvictoria.ca

■ TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival

Toronto, ON
June 26-July 5, 2009
info@tojazz.com, www.torontojazz.com

■ S.C.E.N.E. Music Festival 2009

St. Catharines, ON
June 28, 2009
jennifer@scenemusicfestival.com,
www.scenemusicfestival.com

■ Montreal Guitar Show

Montreal, QC
July 3-5, 2009
514-871-1181, FAX 514-525-8033
info_sgm@equipespectra.ca,
www.montrealguitarshow.ca

■ 5th Montreal Musical Instrument Show (MMIS)

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

■ TD Canada Trust Atlantic Jazz Festival

Halifax, NS
July 10-18, 2009
902-492-2225, FAX 902-425-7946
info@jazzeast.com, www.jazzeast.com

■ 32nd Annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, BC
July 17-19, 2009
604-602-9798, FAX 604-602-9790
info@thefestival.bc.ca, www.thefestival.bc.ca

■ Home County Folk Festival 2009

London, ON
July 17-19, 2009
519-432-4310, FAX 519-432-6299
info@homecounty.ca, www.homecounty.ca

■ South County Fair 2009

Fort Macleod, AB
July 17-19, 2009
403-388-4414
www.scfair.ab.ca

■ 21st Annual Beaches International Jazz Festival

Toronto, ON
July 17-26, 2009
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064
info@beachesjazz.com,
www.beachesjazz.com

■ Guitar Workshop Plus Toronto

Toronto, ON
Session 1: July 19-24, 2009
Session 2: July 26-31, 2009
905-567-8000
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ 26th Hillside Festival

Guelph, ON
July 24-26, 2009
519-763-6396, FAX 519-763-9514
info@hillsidefestival.ca,
www.hillsidefestival.ca

■ KoSA International Workshop Camp & Festival

Castleton, VT
July 29-August 2, 2009
514-482-5554, FAX 514-483-2226
info@kosamusic.com, www.kosamusic.com

■ GMA Immerse 2009

Nashville, TN
July 29-August 2, 2009
615-242-0303, FAX 615-254-9755
info@gospelmusic.org, www.gospelmusic.org

■ 2009 Canmore Folk Music Festival

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

■ Guitar Workshop Plus Vancouver

Vancouver, BC
August 9-14, 2009
905-567-8000
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.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

■ Guitar Summit 2009

Mont-Orford, QC
August 24-28, 2009
866-319-5754
info@theguitarsummit.com,
www.theguitarsummit.com

■ Canadian Country Music Week 2009

Vancouver, BC
September 11-14, 2009
416-947-1331, FAX 416-947-5924
country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

■ 5th Annual LA Amp Show

Van Nuys, CA
October 3, 2009
818-992-0745
loni@ampshow.com, www.ampshow.com

■ Billboard Mobile Entertainment Live! Fall 2009

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October 6, 2009
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

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Electro-Harmonix Voice Box

by Bernie LaBarge

If you're wondering why *Canadian Musician* would ask me to Road Test a vocal processor, there's a valid reason. Although these days I'm primarily known as a guitar player, I have spent many years singing jingles and making my own records, and continue to do so. Getting the opportunity to evaluate something related to vocals was a pleasant change.

With the advent of home studios, and everyone hunkering down in their bedrooms recording their original tunes, leave it to the creative folks at Electro-Harmonix to come up with the Voice Box, a multi-functional vocal synth processor which enables you to create 2- to 4-part harmonies directly from your lead vocals in real time. It also contains a Vocoder for a "robot" effect, an Octave mode (above and/or below), a Whistle mode for the Roger Whittaker fans out there, a Unison mode for a group-sound effect, and three different Harmony modes with different preset blends.

The Voice Box connects the same way as any foot pedal. There are 1/4" connections for your instrument, plus XLR connections for your mic.

I've been having a lot of fun with this pedal. The first song I attempted was "This Boy" by The Beatles, and it worked very well, even with the maj7 chord. That's one of the most impressive features of the Voice Box. I remember going to see a guy doing a solo act in a bar many years ago, and he had a very expensive Eventide harmonizer hooked into the PA. I was blown away the first time he used it to harmonize his vocals, but it didn't take long to notice that it didn't change with major or minor chords. After a while it just sounded kind of silly, at least to me (I wasn't drinking). The concept intrigued me, however, and I'm glad that Electro-Harmonix has confronted that problem, which makes this unit a valuable recording and live performance tool instead of a novelty item. The Voice Box follows every chord you play, and it adjusts the harmonies accordingly; however, I must tell you that it's not a miracle pedal, and if you change chords on every beat to try and



fool it, you can fool it. The unit takes a bit of getting used to, but in a fun way. I tried singing "Ohio" by CSN&Y, and I discovered that using a minor7 chord makes all the difference instead of using a plain old minor chord. It's a great ear-training tool. If you notice that one of the harmonies is off, try using a different inversion of the chord and see what happens.

One of my favourite features of the Voice Box is the Gender Bender knob. By adjusting it, you can make the harmonies sound either male or female, or a combination of the two (all without expensive and time-consuming surgery). The Voice Box also has separate reverbs for your lead vocal and also for the harmony vocals.

You'll also notice that the harmonies "scoop" into their notes like many humans do. That minimizes the mechanical sound that I like to avoid. Speaking of mechanical sounds – I looked at a few YouTube clips of the Voice Box in action, and it seems that a lot of people enjoy the Vocoder setting. For the uninitiated, the Vocoder modulates your voice (when accompanied by an instrument) into a synthesized sound that resembles what I imagine R2-D2 would sound like if he could sing. (Listen to "O Superman" by Laurie Anderson, or anything by Kraft-

werk to hear what I'm talking about). The neatest part of this sound is the fact that the inventor of the original Vocoder designed the circuit for the Voice Box Vocoder, so it's the real deal (as far as synthesized sounds can be referred to as the "real deal"). This effect can only be prescribed in small doses, however. I much prefer the human element, and the Voice Box covers that very nicely.

There's also a Preset function to enable you to create your own blends and reverbs and save them. A Presets switch, along with a Mic Bypass switch, are on the unit.

I've been a fan of Electro-Harmonix effects since the LPB-1 power booster came out in the late '60s. They have been at the vanguard of excellent, affordable, and creative effects, which have literally changed the face of music. I'm not surprised that I like the Voice Box. The EHX people are music lovers, and there's no reason why they would put a sub-par unit on the market.

I would highly recommend the Voice Box as a valuable addition to your home studio or even a live performance situation. Nothing beats the interaction amongst several prima donnas gathered around a microphone, but the Voice Box will give you results without the squabbling over the deli tray. Enjoy!

Bernie LaBarge has been playing professionally since 1967, and has performed on tour and on recordings with The Irish Rovers, Kim Mitchell, Ian Tyson, Long John Baldry, Doug Riley, Dione Taylor, George Canyon, Cassandra Vasik, Joel Feeney, David Clayton-Thomas, and others. Bernie played guitar on TV shows shown worldwide such as Fraggie Rock (a Jim Henson production), Care Bears (with John Sebastian), Twilight Zone (with David Cassidy), Danger Bay, Smith & Smith (starring Steve Smith, comedian), and Party With The Rovers. Bernie is also the guitarist for The Doodlebops TV show, which is released worldwide, and he also plays on the new Hockey Night in Canada anthem, which premiered October 11, 2008.

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Celemony Melodyne Studio 3.2

by Paul Lau

Celemony has been around for about eight years, and it has been a pioneer in the software development of audio file manipulation and editability. When I wrote one of the first articles on the development of the DNA Groove Template, I never thought years later that MIDI manipulation could turn into extensive audio manipulation. If you're familiar with editing in MIDI, the amazing team at Celemony has created technology

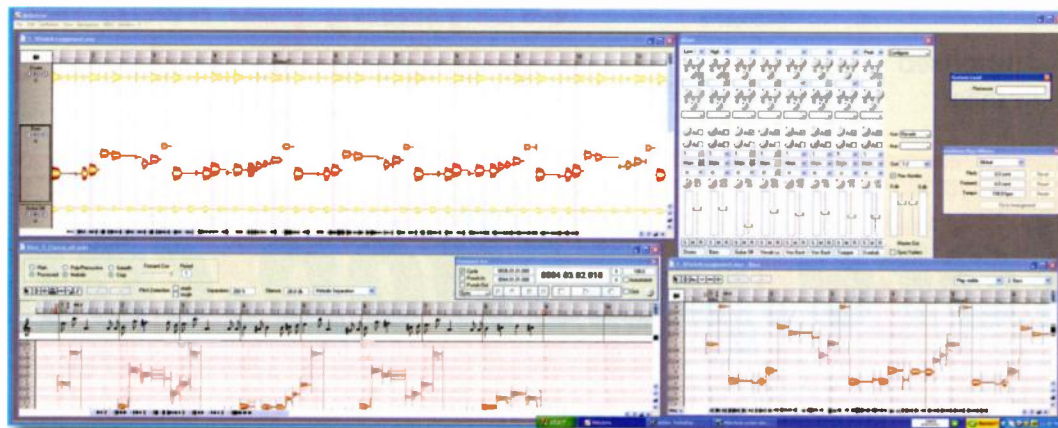
create matching tempos of whole songs to any other audio file, and loop – all making perfect musical sense. With Studio, you not only have manual, but also automatic editing and correction of pitch and timing of note/audio files. There is also the ease of restructuring of a melody or phrase, and the usual cut/copy/paste rearranging of audio files and passages.

All the versions typically allow you to change tempo and correct pitch.

parameters can be MIDI-controlled and also automated. With Studio, one can also quantize to a reference track to have a solid lock onto the groove, thereby controlling the groove factor in a song or passage.

As much as Melodyne is a needed tool for all producers and engineers, there is a completely creative side of Melodyne that should not be overlooked. New melodic phrases can be easily affected and created – not just corrected. Melodyne is

as much an "inspirational tool" for creativity than just the program that fixes the pitch of a vocal track. Melodyne opens up various avenues for creativity and compositions, which never before would have been possible. Imagine taking a short audio file and just stretching it – creating a whole different sound and soundscape with subtle or extreme changes to the characteristic of the audio file.



even more powerful for the manipulation of audio files. Melodyne comes in a variety of flavours, starting with Essential (usually available with software bundles), Uno, Plug-in, Cre8, and Studio.

In this Road Test, I will be referring to the flagship version: Studio. Studio is a multi-platformed Mac or Windows software program, compatible with OSX, XP, or Vista. It is a very powerful audio editor, but it is much more than just that! Melodyne is unique in the way it can read audio files and separate or distinguish the individual notes of the audio, thus creating individual parts very similar to the way we perceive and control MIDI notes. The cool thing about this is that the manipulation is not only the same as MIDI, but even more powerful and as easily editable. The layout of the software is very similar to that of many sequencing programs, with track and transport control layout. Studio has an unlimited track count and can also handle polyphonic audio files, like an entire song. Studio is a must for any remix producers, since it's able to

Creatively, you can even generate doublings and multiple parts just from the lead line. Imagine having octaves and perfect thirds/fifths pitched properly and harmonically-sound every time. Melodyne has a feature called Scale Snap, where it can automatically place the notes in the right harmonic range and scale to deliver a natural sound.

Melodyne is a powerful vocal editor that can correct your pitching and timing mistakes – that is true – but Melodyne can be used for any instrument line, i.e. guitar, bass, woodwind, percussion, or keys. Melodyne works with all the most popular sequencers either through ReWire or its own proprietary Melodyne Bridge. Another interesting feature of Melodyne is the ability to create MIDI information from audio. Melodyne can replay the audio line as a MIDI line having the same pitch, dynamics, tempo, and phrasing, and thus also being able to trigger virtual instruments or live keyboards via MIDI – in tandem with the original track if wanted! Vice-versa, all Melodyne

Manager, accessing one's older sample library, and viewing and hearing files differently through Melodyne allows one to create new usable versions and variations.

With the advent of Direct Note Access coming soon, there will be even more creative processes to explore. Melodyne Editor will be the first product from Celemony with DNA Direct Note Access, which allows audio files that are whole chords to be broken down to the individual notes and edited. Now that's very much like magic! If you have your Internet handy, just plug in these co-ordinates to have your mind blown away with the latest technological marvel in audio file manipulation: <http://www.celemony.com/cms/index.php?id=dna>.

Paul Lau B.Sc.
Musician/Producer/MIDI/Digital Audio Specialist
Technological Solutionist for Axe Music Calgary
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Managing Director of PowerMusic5Records
(www.powermusic5.com)
Member of the Cool Christian Pop Band Scatter17
(www.scatter17.com)

Vault Artisan Crashes & Hats, HHX Raw Bell Dry Ride

by Chris Taylor-Munro

SABIAN continues to evolve "traditional" cymbal craftsmanship with modern characteristics to accommodate the expectations of today's drummer with its HHX series and Artisan range.

When the Vault collection was introduced a couple of years ago, the Artisan rides became a hot commodity for drummers wanting that "vintage" sound without scouring hock shops, estate sales, or outbidding the hordes of collectors on eBay. What is most impressive about the Artisan rides is that they not only capture the essence of that darker, Turkish sound, but have such versatile tonal qualities that drummers of all genres rave about these cymbals. After another Road Test a couple of years ago, yours truly never returned the 20" natural finish medium-weight ride, and it's still garnering accolades gig after gig. SABIAN received an onslaught of requests to extend the Artisan line, and has done so with the introduction of the 16" and 18" crashes and 13", 14", and 15" hi-hats.

Aesthetically, the Artisan cymbals are a feast for the eyes with wide-blade lathing and a combination of high-density hand hammering and jumbo-peen dimpling. They are offered in natural and optional brilliant finishes. The crashes perfectly complement the Artisan ride cymbal's characteristics, offering excellent response at any dynamic, and they remain consistent with a subdued wash. The 16" is remarkably fast due to its thin weight, making it great for snare-cymbal combinations à la funk or big band shots. The 18" has even sustain and a hint more sizzle – ideal for swells and filling longer passages or breaks. Both sizes project with ease, without any unwanted saturation, no matter how hard you strike 'em. Don't be surprised if SABIAN expands the crash line with more sizes once the word is out that you can have the best of both worlds.

The Artisan Hats come in three sizes, each with a medium top and heavy bottom. Interestingly, the only way to tell which is the top and which is the bottom cymbal is to hold both at the same time, mentally weighing them, because they're identically marked but with no text indicating "top" or "bottom." I suppose that's not a big deal, but it would make setting up in a hurry a little easier if they were specified. Busting out a Sharpie would be a simple way to discretely mark them, but that would be a pity 'cause they look so darn good! To keep them looking that good, SABIAN tucks each Artisan cymbal into a felt-lined nylon gig bag with a card signed

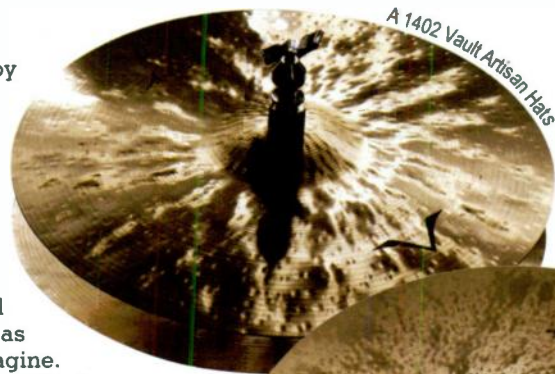
and numbered by the "Vault Team Specialist" who tested and approved your cymbal. Nice!

The 13" hi-hats are nicely defined, quick underfoot, and do indeed cut – as you can well imagine. They are, without a doubt, the warmest 13"s I have played in recent memory. There are no harsh overtones even with lots of foot pressure applied – just a satisfying chick, splash, and stroke.

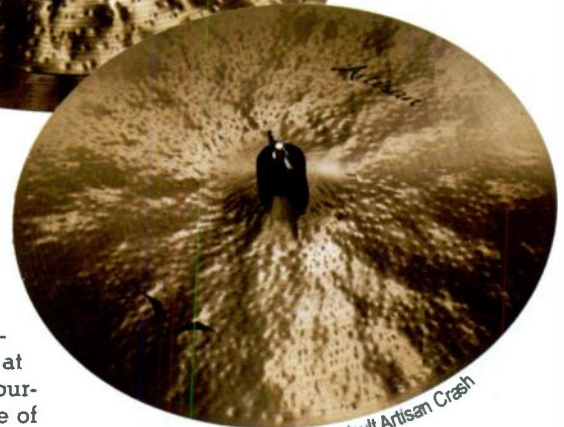
The 14" pairing is closer to the tonality of the 13"s than to the 15"s. Check out the demo SABIAN master product specialist Mark Love has at www.sabian.com and listen for yourself. The 14"s are the most versatile of the three sizes as they exhibit all the aforementioned qualities of the 13"s but have more presence and body. That may be stating the obvious, but would be my choice nonetheless. The Artisan Hats are made from B20 Bronze and are shipped in natural finish only; however, SABIAN will do yours in brilliant finish upon request.

I used the 15"s for a gig with my karaoke band and was duly impressed with their performance for most styles of music, albeit with a bit more finesse needed for the softer tunes. When I did get the chance to open them up, I was loving the thick wash and the ease at filling the airwaves around me. The absence of wincing faces from my bandmates lead me to believe the tone of the 15"s is great for grooving with a thick stick sound, as they blended with the music – never becoming brash and overpowering it. And yes, you will notice more weight on the footboard with these babies, so plan on warming up those calf muscles before playing some bebop.

And speaking of bebop, the new HHX 21" Raw Bell Dry Ride can exude definition even when crashing the bow and edge. It is, after all, "dry." Faster cymbal work for jazz, prog, metal, punk, and ska will leave nothing to be desired when it comes to cutting through the noise. Using the HHX ride in combination with the Artisan crashes and hi-hats was a lesson in stark contrast – sort of like playing in the sea surf and then being instantly transported to a desert. Projection is ample, intense even,



A 1402 Vault Artisan Hat



A 1606 Vault Artisan Crash

with jumbo-peen dimpling and an extra-large and unlathed bell driving the sound. The HHX 21" is made from B20 Bronze and is available in natural and brilliant finish.

All Artisan and HHX cymbals are covered by a two-year SABIAN warranty and are available now.

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

Manufacturer's Comment

The SABIAN Vault collector offers a wide range of diverse cymbals and sounds, many formerly in our now-defunct Signature series. The Artisan is a unique concept in this collection because it is essentially a state-of-the-art traditional cymbal with high-density hand hammering and musically-rich, complex tones. But we improved on that concept by adding just a touch of innovation, which the reviewer alludes to when mentioning the larger hammering marks. The Raw Bell Dry Ride, also available in HH, AA, and AAX models, is a perfect example of how innovative design can improve on great concepts of the past.

Wayne Blanchard
Senior Marketing Manager,
SABIAN Ltd.



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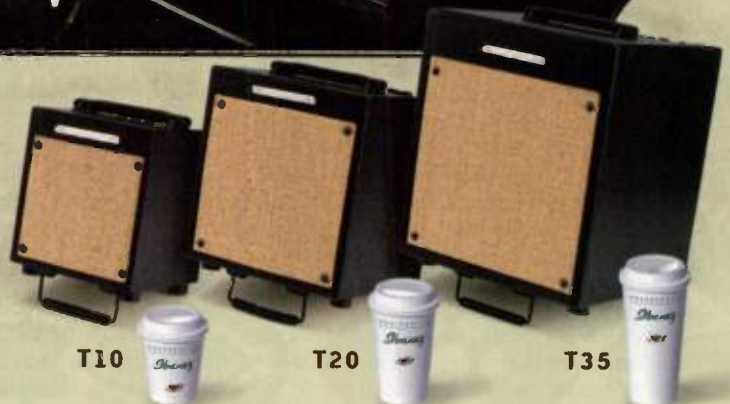
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World Radio History

Versatility & Your Own Style Part I

by Luke Doucet

Regardless of whether you ask people or not, when you're a young musician there are always people around you giving you advice, whether it's solicited or not. The advice would range from "Don't learn anybody else's guitar parts because then you'll sound like them" to "Learn as much of other people's work as you can. You'll enrich your palette and then your personality will eventually trumpet." You're often torn in the early stages. I've dealt with that too – I wanted to learn Albert Lee, Charlie Christian, Mark Knopfler, Stevie Ray Vaughn, and Brian Setzer because it's fun – yet I didn't want to just end up sounding like somebody else.

My father was a jazz guitarist. We

up Harmony guitars. All of a sudden, I found all the things that I had been practicing for years were no longer relevant. All the country licks and all the blues licks fell away, and slowly, over the years, I started to find the things that I did that didn't sound like anybody else.

Here are some techniques that I've studied and eventually evolved into something of my own:

Travis Picking

I think there are two important things. First, I don't think you can really get into the modern "alt country" world without having a fair grasp of the Merle Travis fingerpicking approach, where the thumb is alternating bass lines. I think of it as in terms of groupings of four strings. Let's say you've got a C7 chord: I would focus on A-, D-, G-, and B-strings. Your thumb is alternating between the A-string and the D-string, and your index finger and your middle finger are alternating between the G-string and the B-string. It doesn't have to be fancy, but it can be. If you're interested in that world, being able to walk around through basic country songs (Johnny Cash stuff) with the thumb continuously moving bass notes is an important thing to be able to do.

Second of all, because I was learning from people like Albert Lee, Mark Knopfler, and Stevie Ray when I was a kid, it was really important to me to not just use a pick. That's obviously key to the whole chicken-picking vibe – you've got a pick going or just your thumb if you've got a long enough nail, but you also have to involve your fingers. I do the hybrid picking style: I use my pick (any kind of chromatic runs tend to just be the pick) and then when I want to jump strings I'll use my index finger or my ring finger. I have acrylic nails that I go to the local chop shop to get done. You can buy the stuff at Shoppers Drug Mart and do it yourself, but I've never done that. It's pretty funny – I walk in, get strange looks, and people eventually say, "Oh, you play guitar!" Yeah, so I have pretty long fake nails, but I don't always like the way they sound. In the

studio it's a bit clicky, but it definitely enables me to do certain things live that I would not otherwise be able to do.

Slide

When I'm playing my own shows and singing, I don't play slide much because I find that it's a bit of a jump if you're playing rhythm guitar and then you want to go to slide. Maybe I'm just lazy!

I tend to play slide more when I'm working with other people on their material. I approach slide initially the Duane Allman way, where I play in standard tuning, and I've found that's been a really great way to become more familiar with chord inversions. I still practice it a lot. I'll play Bb in first position, and then play all of them. When you're playing with a slide, you're obviously limited to anything that can happen in a straight line unless you're playing notes behind the slide – sort of Sunny Landreth-style. Typically, I'm playing a basic first-position A shape with my slide and that's my home base for my major chord, and then your basic E minor chord will be my minor. So, on the G-, B-, and E-strings I can slide on the minor chord.

When I'm playing slide in more of a rootsy or a Delta approach, I use D, A, D, F#, A, D tuning. I'll use open G like Keith Richards to a lesser degree. I'm more fond of the open D, but that's probably just because I tend to sing in E more than I sing in G – I can use open D or I can D major chord and then put a capo at the second fret. Lately, I've been just tuning the A-string up a whole tone, the D-string up a whole tone, and the G-string up a semitone, which gives you an E major chord – same intervals, same fingering as the D, A, D, F#, A, D, but it's E, B, E, G#, B, E. It's basically an E major triad and I'll use that for slide.

Play a couple of notes when they're appropriate. If you're playing blues, for example, have yourself in a tuning like one of the tunings I've referred to, and two or three well-placed notes are really all you need. Listen to Ry Cooder or Bonnie Raitt – they don't play very much.

Most young people just getting into discovering an instrument tend to overplay because you play more when you lack confidence. This is sort of ironic because I overplay constantly – and I've been doing this for 15 years. That's the beauty of the slide!

Luke Doucet has toured extensively throughout the US, Canada, and Europe and/or recorded in various capacities (performer/producer/songwriter) on albums with the following artists: Sarah McLachlan, Danny Michel, Blue Rodeo, and many others. Luke Doucet and the White Falcon is set to continue touring Blood's Too Rich in 2009.



Memo From The Bassist: Get Out Of My Way!

by Ron Davis

You're on stage. You're laying down a killer keyboard solo. Wow. Every note's got game.

Imagine your bass player starts playing exactly what you're playing. Note for note. Same thing. That's not right. You want to yell out: "Get out of my way!"

Now, reverse polarities. You're the bass player, laying down those heavy roots that anchor the song. C-F-C-F-G. But what's this? The pianist is playing every root with you in the left hand. You hit a C, and the pianist hits one in the bass chord. You play F... so does the piano, and so on. It's the bass player's turn to say, "Get out of the way!"

Get out of the way. It's a musically sound idea. **And** it's a good way of staying on good terms with the bassist. Don't play the root. Leave the bottom to the bass. Play around it.

To make sure we're all clear, here's a simple review: the root is the first note in a chord. In a C major chord, that would be C. (E is the third, G is the fifth.) What I'm saying is drop the root. Lose the C. Go rootless.

Rootless. Also called rootless voicings. They may seem scary at first. After all, we're taught to play C triads as C-E-G, and F triads F-A-C. Dropping the C or the F might feel like taking a wheel off the tricycle, then trying to ride it. The two remaining notes might hardly seem to make music alone.

Not at all. By leaving the bass to the bassist, you open up a host of possibilities. You can add notes. You can add textures. You can enrich harmonies. Don't think of it as losing something. After all, the root is always there, thanks to your now-content bassist. Think of it as a vacation for your pinkie.

If you have any doubt, just listen to jazz piano giants Bill Evans or Wynton Kelly. They're often credited with creating rootless voicings. Listen to succeeding generations, and you'll hear how rootless voicings have evolved: from Herbie Hancock to Nancy Walker and Robi Botos. All are practitioners of the rootless arts.

How to start playing rootless voicings? Take them in steps. Begin simply. Take a C major triad and an F major triad. Stick the root in the bass. Play the two remaining notes in the right hand.

In Example 1, you start with C in the bass, and E with G above (bars 1 - 2). The E can be above or below the G. You also have F in the bass, and A with C above, in either order (bars 3 - 4). Pay attention to how the pair of notes sounds in your right hand.

Example 1



Memorize that sound in your mind's ear. Play a few melody notes in the right hand. See how it sounds.

Once you've got these examples down, you can thicken the sonic soup.

In major keys, adding the 6th or the 7th (major or minor) or the 9th to a rootless voicing is almost always safe, and almost always interesting. In C major, this means adding D, A, B, or Bb.



Example 2 shows the options. Play these 3- and 4-note chords. Focus on the added D, A, and B. What kind of sound do they make? How do they colour the simple C triad? Is the result soft (as bar 3 is to my ears), or crunchy (bar 4)? How can you use them in the tunes you play? How can you use these sounds musically?

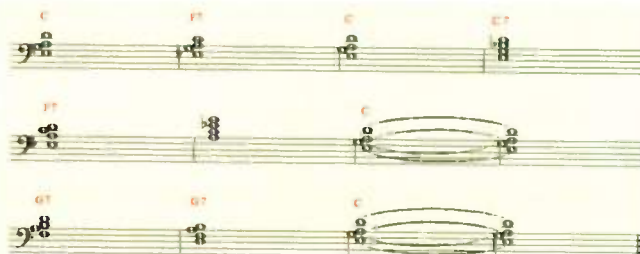
Example 2



Play these examples over and over until you have some answers to these questions. Play them until they feel comfortable. Bring in the right hand. Add some simple melodies on top. Get used to holding down the rootless voicings in the left, while you weave melodies in the right.

Let's bring this all together in a blues. Example 3 is a simple jazz blues in C with rootless voicings. Once again, start with the left hand alone. Get used to their shape and feel. Then start laying down right hand lines. Start simple. Build. Then go back into the left hand and start switching some of those voicings around. Experiment with the permutations and combinations.

Example 3



You'll be happy with the expanded array of sounds rootless voicings open up to you. Plus, you and your bass player will love your newfound harmony.

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

Writing A Memorable Bass Line

by Brian Minato

What is it that makes a bass line both memorable as well as supportive to the song in which it was created? What are the things that can inspire the creation of a bass part that gives a song forward momentum? What types of bass lines can stand alone?

Like most musicians, you can probably often be found sitting around absentmindedly noodling away at seemingly nothing on your instrument. This is when inspiration can strike! The previous nonsensical noodle session can quickly become the foundation of an unforgettable bass line and, hopefully, part of a song which might live forever! I find having some sort of recording device very handy just so you can document your latest masterpiece. These days, your options for recording ideas are almost limitless: cell phones, BlackBerries, handheld digital recorders, laptops, and more sophisticated recording devices. These various recording tools will allow you to have a copy should you really want to explore your initial ideas.

Coincidentally, I had just been asked to DJ an upcoming party when I got the call about this column, so I'd already been going through my iTunes library, creating playlists and listening to a lot of songs. As a result, there's a lot of bass! Listed below are songs which totally fit the bill for our topic:

"Walking On The Moon," Sting, The Police, *Regatta de Blanc*
 "Come Together," Paul McCartney, The Beatles, *Abbey Road*
 "Money," Roger Waters, Pink Floyd, *Dark Side of the Moon*
 "Sunday Papers," Graham Maby, Joe Jackson, *Look Sharp*
 "Safe From Harm," Massive Attack (Billy Cobham Sample), *Blue Lines*

I tried to pick examples that are fairly well-known, just so my points of reference aren't lost. The one thing common to each song is that if you took away the vocals, the other instrumentation, etc., and only had the bass parts going, you would probably still be able to name the song being played. That, to me is the biggest distinction between a bass line being able to stand on its own and one that is of a more commonplace, garden variety type. When I say commonplace, I don't mean it in any sort of derogatory way. I mean it more like this: if you did the same thing to a country-esque song with a root-5th type of bass line, it could fit into any number of songs, and if played on its own would not really give a clue as to the name of the song.

When I hear "Walking On The Moon," "Come Together," and Pink Floyd's "Money," I get the distinct impression those bass lines were very pivotal in directing what the other musicians came up with. Each bass part has such a strong, signature-like quality. I feel like they were written apart from the actual songs themselves. To me, they are the kinds of parts upon which other instruments can build, creating a more unique sound. They are the kinds of parts that can inspire other musical events to occur. Consider the sound, the grooves, and the push and pull between the Sting/Stewart Copeland, Paul McCartney/Ringo, and Roger Waters/Nick Mason rhythm sections on those tracks. Check out those songs and see what you think.

On the other hand, the "Sunday Papers" and "Safe From Harm" bass lines seem to have a more arranged feel to them – rather like they were written or created alongside with other existing musical parts. Graham Maby's iconic herky-jerky part from Joe Jackson's post-punk classic "Sunday Papers" feels like the sum of the guitar and drum parts all working



together. The sound of Massive Attack has a strong basis in the world of turntables, samples, loops, and technology. "Safe From Harm"'s heavy, repetitive groove owes its debt to the wicked sample of Lee Sklar's bass from 1973's jazz fusion gem "Stratus" off of the *Spectrum* album by Billy Cobham. Again, check out those songs and see what impressions you get.

What I notice about bass lines like those previously mentioned is that you can sing them or hum them with relative ease. Try it. You'll see what I mean. That, to me, is another hallmark of a memorable bass line. Even though each bass part discussed above has a distinctiveness which allows it to be recognizable apart from the song it comes from, all those parts ultimately lend themselves to the support of the song. They are there to provide a solid low-end groove, to inspire the other musicians, and to make it easier for them to access to their creativity.

Good luck!

Brian Minato is the bassist for Sarah McLachlan. He is a Vancouver-based musician/producer currently working with Anthill, Sandy Scofield, boywonderbread, Jennifer Campbell, Hiroaki Takashiba, The Blue Alarm, and other artists.

Visit these websites to check what he's up to.

www.myspace.com/anthillcanada

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www.eden-electronics.com/artists/brianminato.asp

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Introduction To Graphic Scores

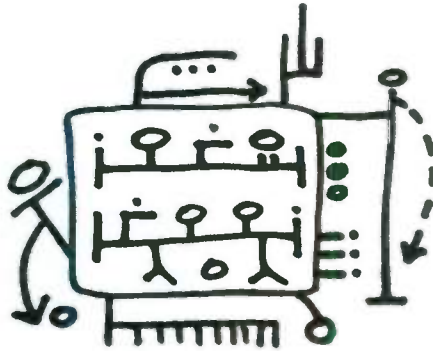
by Daniel Schnee

In 1968, the legendary composer John Cage published an anthology of music called *Notations*. In it, he gathered scores by many famous composers of the day. They were randomly arranged, with guidance from the Chinese work the *I-Ching*, with a brief description alongside. This book became a classic work, and had an influence on many of the more adventurous or experimental composers that came along afterwards. This was because the anthology concerned graphic scores – manuscripts that used original designs and symbols to arrange the music – not the standard methods that had been previously used. Many composers and improvisers are also involved in visual arts, and promoting graphic score work gave many musicians and non-musicians alike a new, exciting venue to access each other. Now a “pure” visual artist could hear her colours being played, or a calligrapher could have his own original alphabet spoken out from a violin. This process also became a liberating method for the artists and musicians who strive to explore the extremes of their abilities.

So how do you go about creating a graphic score? What if you have no experience or skill in drawing, design, or painting? Does that make a difference? I don't think so. But if you want to have an organized, rather aesthetically-pleasing collection of original graphic scores, there are several things you can do.

The first task is to go about establishing a general sense of what shapes, lines, and dots create images that you personally find pleasing, leading to which usage of each could be seen as being expressive of your ideas and feelings. In my case, I have always enjoyed scribbling while on the phone, so I kept several of these scribbles, and documented them in a journal. Using these initial scribbles, I began to take them apart and create new scribbles based on parts of the older ones. Soon I discovered that curves accented by dots were interesting forms to me, and I began to work out shapes using combinations of each. At this point, the favourite shapes began showing up like icons or letters in the drawings, and I began to make rudimentary hieroglyphs and graphic forms that I could fashion imaginary

musical “sentences” out of. After several months of creative play with these forms, I had what you could call a private vocabulary of symbols that could be assigned musical values in a score format.



Another task that coincided with this activity is looking through books on semiotics, alphabet development, graphic design, and such for inspiration or ideas. This is where the Internet is a fabulous tool for finding such things. You can find graphs containing ancient symbols and alphabets, Taoist alchemical symbols, ancient cross designs – all sorts of things to mix into and influence your private language system. Having studied such languages as Japanese, Korean, and Farsi, I chose to dig through my old study materials for interesting characters to morph into symbols, and as you can imagine, the field was rich.

Another rich field of symbols to play with and interpret of course is terminology and equations from the sciences. Physics, algebra, and geometry are endless supplies of letters, brackets, the Greek alphabet, Latin words, and such, let alone the various styles of graphs and charts. Having failed general math twice in high school, I have always had a phobia of and somehow a secret admiration for complex equations and measurements. I have great difficulty thinking mathematically, but I turned this weakness into a visual strength by creatively altering equations into semiotic art. I don't understand square roots, but I can certainly give the square root sign three legs and a purple halo!

Once you have found a few inter-

esting shapes and techniques that you enjoy working with, it is vital to begin limiting yourself rather than expanding your system until you begin forgetting your initial shapes and forms. Your greatest enemy will always be too much freedom. Everything needs a system or a structural principle inherent in the work or guiding it from behind the scenes. Charlie Parker had a very limited set of phrases he liked to use, but oh how those phrases poured out of his horn in exciting and unexpected ways. Michel Brecker had his bag of chromatic phrases and chord/scale ideas he used frequently, but they always had a twist, and I loved anticipating them or being happily surprised by their subtle alterations. So it is an important exercise to pick one shape and find 25 small ways to make it different. Many of these ways won't be “good” or be very interesting, but it forces you to be creative, as opposed to just mindlessly pumping variations without any thought. As frustrating as this exercise is, it will really pay off when you come up with something interesting that you couldn't have imagined without the constant reworking of one form.

Crack open a notebook and start scribbling today! You'll be amazed at where this little graphic exercise can lead you.

Daniel Schnee is a Toronto-based saxophonist who has performed worldwide with a number of Juno and Grammy Award-winning musicians, and has been internationally recognized as a graphic score composer. Currently, he is doing doctoral research on German aesthetic philosophy and East Asian studies.



The Modal Continuum Part II

by **Brownman**

In our last installment, we took a look at major modes and chord-scale relationships. In this episode, we'll continue to examine modes, specifically the melodic minor modes. But before we forge forward, let's summarize quickly the major mode applications. Below is a list of each mode (corresponding to each starting point on a major scale).

- 1st mode:** C Ionian
C D E F G A B C – can use on Cmaj7
- 2nd mode:** D Dorian
D E F G A B C D – can use on Dmin7
- 3rd mode:** E Phrygian
E F G A B C D E – can use on Emin7(b9)
- 4th mode:** F Lydian
F G A B C D E F – can use on Fmaj7(#11)
- 5th mode:** G Mixolydian
G A B C D E F G – can use on G7
- 6th mode:** A Aeolian
A B C D E F G A – can use on Amin7(b6)
- 7th mode:** B Locrian
B C D E F G A B – can use on Bmin7(b5)

Classical theory acknowledges three types of minor scales: the natural minor, the harmonic minor, and melodic minor. The natural minor (or pure minor) is merely the Aeolian mode of the major scale. The two other minor scales yield more interesting applications for the improviser. We will focus on the melodic minor (ascending) – also known as the jazz minor – and its modal applications.

A C melodic minor scale is built: C, D, E \flat , F, G, A, B, C.

Below, each mode of the melodic minor is summarized, along with their commonly-used names, the scale itself, chord change the mode is often used on, and a few alternate names for the particular mode.

- 1st mode:** C Jazz Minor
C D E \flat F G A B C – can use on Cmin(maj7)
- 2nd mode:** D Dorian \flat 2
D E \flat F G A B C D – can use on Dmin7(b9), Phrygian \flat 6
- 3rd mode:** E \flat Lydian-Augmented
E \flat F G A B C D E \flat – can use on Emaj7(#5), Lydian-#5
- 4th mode:** F Lydian-Dominant
F G A B C D E \flat F – can use on F7(#11), Lydian \flat 7
- 5th mode:** G Mixolydian \flat 6
G A B C D E \flat F G – can use on G7(b13), Hindu
- 6th mode:** A Aeolian \flat 5
A B C D E \flat F G A – can use on Amin7(b5), Locrian-#2
- 7th mode:** B Altered
B C D E \flat F G A B – can use on B7(#5,#9), super Locrian



Jazz Minor

In its root mode, melodic minor – or jazz minor – finds its most obvious application for improvising on a Cmin(maj7) chord change. Want to put it to use immediately? Take a look at the changes to “My Funny Valentine” – you’ll find a min(maj7) as the second change of the tune.

Dorian \flat 2 (or Phrygian #6)

The second mode of the melodic minor scale has no standardized name, but is often referred to as the Dorian flat 2 (or \flat 2). Building this scale, using C melodic minor as our root scale, yields: D, E \flat , F, G, A, B, C, D. Note the mode name comes from the fact that this scale looks just like the Dorian mode of the major scale, but with a flattened 2nd. Also notice here that it could alternatively be looked at as the Phrygian mode of the major scale with a sharp 6. It is very often used as a substitute for the Phrygian mode.

Lydian Augmented

The third mode of the melodic minor scale is known as the Lydian Augmented scale. Using C melodic minor as our root scale, the third mode would be spelt E \flat , F, G, A, B, C, D, E \flat . Arpeggiating this chord (E \flat , G, B, D), spits out an augmented major 7th chord, making this mode appropriate for improvisation over E \flat maj7(#5). This change is an often-used substitution for stock major 7 changes.

Since returning to Canada from New York City, the last decade has seen Brownman – now widely considered a vanguard for the evolution of jazz in Canada – extremely busy as a session musician and with leading seven highly-acclaimed ensembles of his own. He has won multiple awards nationally and is currently touring the globe as the featured soloist with the legendary NYC jazz-hip hop artist GURU (of Gangstarr fame) for his JAZZMATAZZ ensemble. Check out www.brownman.com.

The DNA Of Audio

by Paul Lau

One of the milestones of MIDI was the ability to groove-quantize the feel factor of a MIDI sequence. Using software, it was rather cool to be able to just go to the note and adjust to the corrected note, and slide it back and forth for timing issues or feel factor. This allowed you to have a more realistic sound and create a passage of music not so robotic or perfect. Also, if you couldn't really play or perform the part that fast, changing tempo is a snap. Presto! You're hearing lines that you actually can't play.

Some think of this as cheating; I call it "spontaneous, intuitive creation using the technological tools at your disposal." So what would be next? Where would music technology lead us into the manipulation of sound files? What about an audio file?

You may have read my last column: The Yin & Yang Of Digital Audio. Most refer to audio or WAV files with an extension such as .wav or .aiff. If you're part of the Linux crowd, it would be referred to as a .ogg file. For many years, there have been hardware-based pitch correction devices that enhance live performance. When performing and singing live, the unit instantaneously tracks and corrects pitch. These units range from \$300-\$1,500. And for even longer, there has been a mountain of processing units that have effects such as delay, reverb, chorus, and all sorts of goodies that can enhance whole songs or individual parts.

For the last number of years, music software technology has allowed you to be able to zero in on individual WAV files, dividing the actual words sung, and the pitch and duration. With this visual editable ability, one can easily manipulate the audio file. The actual audio file can be pitch-corrected with a mouse movement similar to the manipulation of a MIDI note; this would include note durations, either lengthening or shorting the value.

What about copying the actual audio part? And then pasting a 3rd interval and copying above the original note? Absolutely! Hence, you would have automatic harmony, even a 5th and so on, creating automatic back-ups and a choir effect – all this originating from one voice. So now, if one can do that, what about sliding the 3rd interval back a very small amount? You can create an automatic chorus effect – now, isn't that just cool? Here, it isn't as much as what the music software technology can do, but more about the musicality and end result of how you use it. Imagine creating a 2nd interval above a tonic voice. Well, it just clashes and doesn't sound right (unless that's your effect), so a bit of musicality and ingenuity does count for the creativity process.

Recently, music software technology has begun to cross another threshold, passing another milestone. When you see a one-note WAV file and move its pitch up or down, that's



quite amazing. But what about a chord? When you strum or play and record a three-note chord, it's just a giant WAV file, but the whole file can still be pitched up or down, too. What if you could see the individual WAV files of each note in the WAV file? If you played and recorded a C major triad (C,E,G), but you really wanted a minor chord, wouldn't it be great if you could just reach in that WAV file and move that E to an Eb with the click of a mouse? Well, we've just crossed that bridge with new technology called Direct Note Access. Sometimes, it's just easier to see it and hear what I'm writing about, so if you have your Internet ready, just plug in these co-ordinates to have your mind blown away with the latest technological marvel in audio file manipulation: www.celemony.com/cms/index.php?id=dna.

The DNA Of Audio was something I wanted to pen for a long time, but actually, the DNA Of Audio lies within you. The notes you record, perform, or sing all originate from you, so when technology allows you to correct your mistakes instantaneously, and create perfectly-pitched harmonic intervals, I'm thinking ... why not play it again? Or why not try to create your own intervals and harmonies as humanly imperfect? The word I think that is needed here is "balance." One has to decide, when using such amazing technology, how much of this technology we subject our artform to, so we don't lose it to non-human creation. I've always said, "Don't let technology lead you, but use technology to open the door to creativity – and the key to the door is inspiration!"

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Expanding Your Range

by Paula Shear

In learning to sing with increased range, the best approach is a slow and steady one. The last thing you want to do is to try to force your way up. In fact, I touched on this in previous issues of *CM*; the best approach to singing higher comes from targeting “down” to higher levels in the vocal mask. The roof of the mouth, bone structure, and sinus cavities are all areas of resonance for freedom.

Learning to work through the “breaks” in your voice is somewhat like driving standard in a car and changing gears so that the vehicle doesn’t sputter and stall. Not learning how to make these transitions causes you to force the chest voice up; with no room for proper resonance, the shoving of the sound will cause strain and damage to your instrument. If you’re constantly feeling it in the back of your throat, something is amiss.

The most relaxed part of your singing voice is comprised of the notes closest to your speaking voice. That’s why when you’re warming up and developing your ability to sing with increased vocal range, it’s imperative that you begin in the “middle of your voice” and ease your way up, then work your way back down past the starting note, easing into the lowest tones. You need to work through breaks in your voice and transition through chest voice, mixed tone, and head tones.

In theory, you want to be able to create uniform, smooth sound from bottom to top, somewhat like a “string of pearls.” Consistency, ideally at your fingertips, allows for fluidity and a relaxed sound. To create interesting and compelling phrasing, however, you also want to texturize and vary the tones. Sometimes breathy is effective, but what you don’t want is breathless. Remember: powerful notes have less air expelled. When breath is audible, it should be for emotional emphasis. Gasping, however, is never desirable or helpful!

In the beginning, you might find yourself going for it, sort of taking a wild leap of faith and flying by the seat of your pants. Sometimes, incredible adrenaline will help things fall into place, but consistency is not likely to develop when you don’t have a clear handle on what’s going on. Hitting great notes sometimes, but forcing at other times, can lead to problems like vocal nodes, swelling, and hoarseness. Left unchecked, the problems compound. Now, I feel I should also say that, beyond technique, just doing too much at a time can create problems, and sometimes we’re forced to sing when we’re not well. So recovery with down time is crucial, and in learning to strengthen methodically, we find the detours away from ongoing problems.

Essentially, a rich, open voice has an overtone system. It’s as if each vocal register has an appropriate slot for releasing the note down and out. Moving up, you’ll inevitably come to a point where the sound wants to flip up to another area. Anything with any amount of power will feel forced unless you learn to actually target down to a higher area. In the case of the first break, this moves from the roof of your mouth, to the second position, which is the lower nose and sinus cavities. Just try plugging your nose when you’re singing,



Photo by: Steve Carfy

and you’ll realize how much nasal resonance adds to the sound – not falling back into the throat. If you feel you want to climb, rethink it, thin the note out, and slot down from a higher place.

Exercise

do/re/me/fah/so/

fah/me/re/

do/so/do

– sung to sound of “fah”

Make sure your jaw is relaxed. Divide the exercise into the three sections, and feel the notes being expelled down diagonally with crescendo.

Choosing the best key for a particular song is going to make a huge difference in your performance. Even when your range has increased by octaves, the foundation of your voice has to sit in a place that is comfortable, and best serves the tone in the middle of your vocal range. Remember, high notes are like icing on the cake, and having a relaxed lower end adds richness to your sound. This will also allow you the vocal stamina to bend, shade, and balance everything in a way that is compelling and helps unleash your highest creative potential.

Paula Shear is a Toronto singer/vocal coach who has guided singers of all levels, from beginners to recording artists. She teaches how to open your voice to unlimited power, gain octaves, and discover the beauty of singing with ease in a diversity of styles: rock, pop, R&B, and jazz. Her debut CD, So Talk To Me, features Bernie Senensky, Kieran Overs, Rob Piltch, Mark Kelso, Robi Botos, Frank Botos, Mark McLean, and others.

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World Radio History

The ROAD Hammers

TAKING A Second Swing

BY KEVIN YOUNG



When Jason McCoy started The Road Hammers, he saw it as a bit of a bridging project – something to do between solo records, an expansion on an already extremely successful career in country music, and a nod to a genre of music that had helped form him as an artist. As it turns out, freewheeling tunes that celebrate living and working on the open road resonate with a fair number of people and the little side project, very quickly, became a pretty big deal.

You don't have to be a country fan to appreciate The Road Hammers. You just have to have a pulse. Relying on a mix of covers like "Eastbound And Down," and the Del Reeves classic "Girl On The Billboard," as well original anthems like "I'm A Road Hammer," the self-titled debut record sold over 80,000 copies in Canada and yielded four top ten hits. The response from fans and the industry alike was overwhelming: two seasons of a reality TV show documenting the band's genesis, songwriting, and business trajectory; a fistful of Canadian Country Music Awards; and a Juno for Country Recording of the Year in 2006.

The first record was unbelievable," says bassist and backing vocalist Chris Byrne. "From the time we put the band together to the time the record hit the street, we didn't have a lot of time to prepare. We just kind of went into this room, made this record, and said, "Wow, that sounds pretty good."



LEFT: THE ROAD HAMMERS: CHRIS BYRNE (VOCALS, BASS), JASON MCCOY (VOCALS, GUITAR), CLAYTON BELLAMY (VOCALS, GUITAR)
ABOVE: MARCH VIDEO SHOOT IN TORONTO.

It was a whirlwind for guitarist/vocalist Clayton Bellamy as well. At the time, he wasn't even playing music. He was working construction and looking at settling down in his hometown in rural Alberta. "Then," he says, "I got asked to join this group of Jason's, and the next thing you know we're in Nashville doing a record."

All the attention isn't based on hype. There's a truckload of reasons for the band's success, but number one on the list is the undeniable chemistry between Bellamy, Byrne, and founder McCoy. It was evident from the moment they first began playing and singing together, says Byrne. But while they were all aware of the potential of the project when McCoy first brought them together, none of them had any idea how much life the project had in it, or how popular it would prove to be. Byrne, who previously toured with McCoy's back-up band, saw The Road Hammers in much the same way as McCoy did initially, and assumed after the first record he would return to his successful solo career. "I thought it was going to be a one-off thing," he says.

Far from it. Having seen the band live a few times, I've always gotten the sense the bandmembers just don't want to leave the stage after whipping the crowd up with their trademark mix of big riffs, relentless down-home stomp, and "funny because it's true" humour. Now, on their latest record, *Road Hammers II*, McCoy and company are taking their signature brand of rough and tumble road music up a notch. . .

In the past four years, they've gone from feeling each other out to knowing each other probably better than they'd ever wanted to. The upside is that the band, the sound, and the record, Bellamy explains, are more cohesive than ever. They call it "the blessed union," according to McCoy. "The three of us are kind of like brothers. We bicker, we argue with each other, but it's like a gang – we can mess with each other, but no one can mess with us."

This time out they favour more original material, picking songs written on and off the road, with each other, and with a variety of co-writers. The list was huge, they say, and culling it down was a challenge. "You've got to live with the tunes and find the ones that really jump out at you to get down to a core batch that are going to create a good story for the record," says Bellamy. In the end, that came down to filling in the

The ROAD Hammers

blanks on the record in much the same way they'd create a live set. "You want to have a flow to the record. It kind of gets down to the nitty-gritty."

They also set a far less punishing pace for putting the record together. Recorded in Nashville with returning producer Scott Baggett, it took roughly three months to get in the can and spanned three studios: Baggett's room, The Electric Sandbox; McCoy's own home studio, Airstrip; and The Sound Emporium, where Steve Earle recorded both *The Hard Way* and *Copperhead Road*. "That place has tons of history," says McCoy. The album also lifts three songs from the American debut, *Blood Sweat And Steel*, but though recorded in an earlier session the end result still hangs together exceptionally well.

While more subtle in places than the first outing, *Road Hammers II* never loses sight of the band's basic obsession with tearing a wide strip of asphalt off the road with wailing B3s, dueling guitars, and trademark harmonies. It's the latter that really sets the band apart – a blend of voices that's equal parts laid-back country and urgent balls-to-the-wall rock that's tight, but not polished to such a fine gloss that individual personalities disappear.

The band credits Baggett's sonic midwifery for getting that distinct sound on tape. "Personally, I don't like the sound of perfect and polished," Byrne says. "It's not the individual part that matters." It's not all about glitter, smooth edges, and getting a staid, perfectly-engineered vocal down – it's a dialogue. "Again, that's Scott Baggett. I'd sing a part, or Clay would sing a part, and we'd say 'Sorry Scott, we kind of missed that one. Let's do it again.' And he'd say 'No, that's exactly what we want.' Breath and personality – that's what he's all about."

McCoy references "Cowboy 'Til I Die" as an example. Easily one of album's sonically deeper tracks, it's a dramatic but compact tune, complete with Skynyrd-esque female backing vocals and rollicking guitar riffs that channel "Sweet Home Alabama" and "Free Bird." "You tell him, 'Scott, it's a spaghetti western in three minutes,' and he gets it." Between Baggett and the band, says McCoy, "It's a wacky circus of influences," from Beatles-inspired riffs, to organic sampling of Conway Twitty's live show, to the bits of dialogue and FX that haunt the space between tracks on both the debut and the follow-up. "You get an idea in your head and you become a little 18-year-old geek in your basement playing with your little

multi-track recorder. That's what we all are – we've just got better multi-track recorders." It's the kind of ear candy he describes as "off-the-hook good." But for McCoy, it's also off-the-cuff fun to listen to. Even now, after no doubt spending an inordinate amount of time with the tracks, he still works up a good chuckle when I bring up the running dialogue in the album's final cut, "Girl Who Loves To Truck."

Cover or original, no track gets past the band without it having a unique stamp put on it. That's clear on *Road Hammers II*'s only cover, "Thank God I'm A Country Boy": the John Martin Summers tune made huge by John Denver. At first, the choice might seem a bit like playing to the lowest common denominator, but after applying the Hammer formula to it, the result is a compelling re-imagining of the original. What started as a tune McCoy did a cappella during his solo shows has been kicked into shape and cranked up into a chunky, head-bobbing, southern-fried anthem for the everyman. The formula is simple, says McCoy: "I sing low country verses, Clay sings the higher rockin' choruses, and Chris glues it all together, way up there, with that high harmony."

Sounds simple, but in some bands, choosing who sings lead, and where, would be a knock-down, drag-out shit fight. Not here. Again McCoy brings up "Cowboy 'Til I Die." "I can't sing that. I would love to. It's one of my favourite songs on the record, but I wasn't born with the genetic makeup to pull it off." On the flip side, he says, "Clay can't sing 'Ain't Got Time For Long Goodbyes' because he's not a hillbilly. It works out so you get to cover a lot of feels on a record that a lot of bands don't get to."

That's not to say there isn't any conflict, but when there is, it pretty much works itself out, Bellamy explains. "A lot of times, we tend to write toward that idea and the type of song picks the person." The mix of voices is dynamic, he says, referencing some influences, and examples of acts with multiple lead singers like The Band and The Eagles. "It's a tension and release thing, where a vocal isn't just a harmony, but also a focal point of the song. That's what a band is supposed to be – the sum is greater than its parts."

You don't have to look too deeply to see why that's the case here...

McCoy was playing local bars and Legion halls before he was even legal, growing local notoriety into a lengthy solo career that's made the Minesing, ON native big news in Canadian country since 1995. And though Bellamy didn't start with music he hit the road just as hard, traveling across Alberta and British Columbia for 10 years racing dirt bikes. "When it came to a crossroads," he says, "I went with the music." Then there's Byrne, who started his musical career by ditching his final month of high school in Alberta to take a recording gig with Rip Torn in Vancouver. You simply couldn't find three guys hungrier for the road when they started out...

They still are hungry, but where the debut record focused on ripping up the highway for the sheer joy of it, this record hovers somewhere in between the highway and home. "You really need a base. You need to come from somewhere to get to anywhere," says Byrne. That's a fact made crystal clear on both the lead single, "Homegrown," as well as on the album's stand-out ballad, "I've Got The Scars To Prove It." Simply stated, the songs put voice to the longings of people who work the highway to make a living, regardless of what they do. "We all have families and your energy gets focused to two different places; you're trying to keep the band going and you got to make sure your wife's happy and the kids are looked after. It's life-evolving."

"There's been a lot of changes in the last couple years." Bellamy adds. One of those changes is the band's moving its base of operations from Canada to Nashville. For McCoy, it's the perfect spot to foster writing relationships. "I've been here long enough that I have people I really click with." Larry Haack for one, whose co-writes show up on *Road Hammers II*, and Odie Blackman, who's written for the likes of George Strait and Leanne Womack. Today, after our interview, it'll be Rivers Rutherford, potential producer of the Hammers' next outing, says McCoy. "There's really no place like it. It's like being an athlete in training. If you write every day, it becomes second nature. It's one of the few towns that allows for



CHRIS BYRNE, JASON MCCOY, & CLAYTON BELLAMY PAUSE FOR A PHOTO OP DURING A VIDEO SHOOT IN MARCH.

"You get an idea in your head and you become a little 18-year-old geek in your basement playing with your little multi-track recorder. That's what we all are - we've just got better multi-track recorders." - JASON MCCOY

For tour dates, info, and music go to www.theroadhammers.com.

that kind of prolific co-writing." As for the conception of Nashville as a kind of puppy mill for hits, McCoy is clear about the value of the process. "We may write almost everything of ours, but I don't set out with that plan, because that may cut you off from finding that one great song." And, when you're writing with great songwriters, as when you're playing with great players, it ups your own game substantially.

"You've got to be in town to win," Bellamy says, and Nashville's not exactly unpleasant in mid-February. "It's 15 degrees today. It's muggy and warm." Still, home sticks in his blood. "I miss it, but right now I have to be here for work." For Bellamy, the process of writing with people outside of the band provides greater perspective and a wider palette of songs to draw on than they might have otherwise had. "You'll write stuff that might not hit the mark with the band, but when everybody gets their hooks into it, it becomes a Road Hammers song. Take "Cowboy 'Til I Die,"" he adds, which he wrote with label mate Willie Mack. "I



wasn't really that crazy about it, but I took it back to the band and Jason started digging into it and we turned it into what it is now."

All three bandmembers agree that the record is stronger for the time taken to put it together, but they're irritated it has taken so long to release a follow-up in Canada. While the new record has been well received in the weeks since its release, and the band is solid and has a good home in Canada with Open Road Recordings and label owner/management RGK, the route they took for their initial success to this point hasn't been entirely smooth. "Canada isn't the issue," says McCoy. "It's the US and beyond." Specifically, it's the relationship between The Road Hammers and US label Montage Records. Rather than go with the first record in the US, Montage released a mix of tracks, some from the debut, some additional covers, and three tracks that ultimately found their way onto *Road Hammers II*. The upshot is, by making and promoting a different record in the US than the one here meant taking time away from Canada when they really believed they should strike while the iron was hot.

When McCoy and I spoke in early January, about a month before the sophomore release, he was frustrated. "I've got a pride for Canada that can hurt me in the American market at times. When anybody at a US company says 'Well, that works in Canada, but this is a different market,' I take that personally. We know good music — country music is country music. It was born out of bluegrass there and born out of folk up here, and now it's modern country music — give me a break."

Now, although McCoy's temper seems to blaze a little less hotly, he's still not shy about his feelings. "I'm angry — I'm not daunted or beat down — but I'm disappointed in how they've played that." Part of the overarching problem, he believes, is a business-as-usual approach that doesn't reflect current industry realities — a "we have won for so long" attitude that comes with a sense of entitlement and an unwillingness to change that does little to inspire trust in artists. "Everything has completely changed," he says. While he gets the neces-



sity of serving the bottom line, he suggests that doing so ought to be tempered by creativity — trusting the artists a bit more instead of bulldozing over them with a master plan that doesn't necessarily speak to their strengths.

Bellamy also has concerns about the wait to release in Canada. "It's frustrating to build something up to a frenzy and then have to wait. There's always that potential that people won't care as much anymore." After touring the motocross circuit for so many years, Bellamy also toured his own musical project all through the late '90s. It was hard going, he explains, and with a growing family and ever-heavier responsibilities staring him down, he eventually packed it in. Taking another shot at it was a risk, but staying in the business requires taking risks sometimes. "If there's no great risk, there's no great success. My wife was the one that said, 'you should go check this out and at least see what it's all about.' Six months later we had a number one record in the country." For him, this is a second chance, a dream come true at the very last second. It's one he'd hate to see evaporate before the band has a chance to capitalize on the momentum it has built up so far. "I was working a day job. I'd put a bid in to buy a bar in my hometown. I had a baby on the way and I had to get my act together, so I had to put that dream away." Put in personal terms like that, it's easy to understand how deeply irritating any barriers to fulfilling personal potential can be.

Signing a US deal does not immediately guarantee that the hearts and wallets of the folks below the 49th parallel will open like magic. "It's not even a cautionary thing; it's a realism thing," says McCoy. "If you have a deal on the table, you have value. Do not jump into bed unless it is right. Do not be afraid to walk away." His advice might be hard to take, but it's also hard to argue with. "Make sure the deal is right for you, because if it isn't, it will be the worst thing — it will just sap all your energy."

Still, right now, the members of The Road Hammers are in a very good place. With the album out, their thoughts have turned to the current Canadian tour, and lately McCoy and company have spent some serious time thinking on how the band can up their live game this time out. The Road Hammers is offering up a leaner, meaner show, stripping down the lineup to a down-and-dirty four-piece. "From top to bottom, when you see a Road Hammers show, it's got to be a one-two punch in the face," says Bellamy. He also hints that they have a few new tricks up their sleeves that they'll be using to kick up the live show visually. "I don't want to give away any of the goodies, but it's a step up from where we've been," he adds.

While they're not willing to give the game away, McCoy is pretty clear about how they've managed to come up with what is already one of the most compelling live shows in the business...

"You know what it takes to make a great live show?" he asks. "It's fearlessness." Part of that fearlessness is the combined strengths of the blessed union, strengths that energize the band on- and off-stage. "It takes all the different influences we have in the band. I certainly wouldn't come up with all the ideas that we put into our show. That may sound like I'm skirting the whole thing, but it's true. What it takes to make a great live show is having a lot of things to offer." ■



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



MONEEN

Studiophiles

BY CHRIS TAYLOR-MUNRO
PHOTOS BY LANA BUTLER

With three records and three EPs under its belt, Brampton-born, Toronto-based Moneen can now add Juno-nominated to its credentials for the DVD *It All Started With A Red Stripe*. 2008 proved to be a productive year for the members of Moneen as they embarked on recording their fourth record – this time taking a new approach, one proving to be, in their words, “the best yet.”

We pick up the story in downtown Toronto; it's winter and the weather is crap. We couldn't have picked a better day to hang with the band at Rattlebox Studios a full three-and-a-half weeks into tracking the new tunes the band has painstakingly prepared. “We've had about a year-and-a-half off the road and we've been writing the

whole time,” comments guitarist/vocalist Chris “Hippy” Hughes. Kenny Bridges (vocals/guitars) chimes in: “a ridiculous amount of time off, actually” with a laugh. Bridges continues, “With Steve (Nunnaro, drums/percussion) joining the band we didn't want to rush anything ... we wanted to take our time. Every record before this, we had a set amount of time, which gets interrupted by touring in the middle of ‘it’ when we're supposed to be writing and working on a record. This time, we had to put our foot down. We take every tour we're given pretty much ... if we kept doing that we would have never written this record.”

On previous records, Moneen fesses up to not spending much time on pre-production. “I think every one of our records has turned out great for the time and place, but we were never really ready to have a producer come and make suggestions,” says Bridges. “This time, we had David (Bottrill, co-producer, three time Grammy winning producer with Tool, King Crimson, Peter Gabriel) come into the pre-production stage. We wanted

other opinions. We wanted this record to grow." In the early stages of pre-production, while Bottrill was working in Los Angeles, he would get the files, make notes, and offer suggestions via e-mail until ultimately spending a few days "in the basement" with the guys. Bottrill adds, "I try to adapt what I do to the band I'm working with. I suppose I have a sound that people associate with me, but I feel the producer's job is mainly to bring out the best in a band rather than to stamp such a strong personality that turns it into a producer's record instead of a band's record." Bassist Erik Hughes is quick to appreciate having Bottrill's influence early in the game. "We had this 'jammy-type' song, it was a cool tune, but not a lot of focus to it. David came in and suggested, 'Why don't you try this part as the chorus,' which was bizarre at first, but it really works. Right then and there we knew it (the process) was going to be great."

At this point Bridges begins to explain that not only do they have Bottrill at the helm, but co-owner of Rattlebox, Brian Moncarz (The Junction, Pilot Speed) is co-producing and engineering as well. "Dave comes in and out during the sessions. We'll be locked down with Brian working from 11 a.m. 'til 11 p.m. laying down guitar tracks and messing with tones." Bottrill and Moncarz have worked together on several projects as producer and engineer respectively,

but this marks the first time they have co-produced, not only with each other, but on a project as co-producers ever – and everyone seems to agree that it's working. As mentioned previously, in the early stages of recording, while Bottrill was working in Los Angeles, he would get the files over the internet and work on them, cutting, tweaking, rearranging them, and so forth, then send them back. Bottrill comments that he was initially there "mostly for the first part of the project, but I'm back now. More hands-on." Having that "space" between has worked to the benefit of the process. Bottrill continues, "If I keep out of it, I can come in here and hear things that I'm not emotionally invested in. If I come into the session and they've done a bunch of guitar overdubs, I can say 'Well, that bit is really working, but that's just not serving the song or serving the vocal as well as it could do, so why don't we change

that?' It's really just refinement of what they're doing already because the parts are all there."

Like many records, the process often involves working in more than one studio. Drummer Steve Nunnaro is first up to track at Metalworks Studios after somewhat labour-intensive, but gratifying, pre-production. Nunnaro comments in the studio logbook, "I was preparing to record the first of 14 to 16 drum tracks ... feeling nervous and excited. I was always sure I could do it, but still I was pretty stressed." Turn the page and Nunnaro's tone has changed: "Pretty effin' stoked to be recording at Metalworks with a mish-mash of drumkits and snares." Funny how cool "new" gear to record with can be a positive distraction and enthuse musicians, often relieving some of the stress involved with being in the studio.

Metalworks is a large studio by today's standards, both in physical space

RIGHT Co-producers Brian Moncarz & David Bottrill at Rattlebox Studios. A state-of-the-art SSL AWS 900 is the console for both tracking and mixing and the studio has a wealth of gear including selections from Neve API Urei and a wide selection of instruments.

BELOW Brian Moncarz, David Bottrill, Kenny Bridges and Chris "Hippy" Hughes collaboratively nailing a guitar part.



MONNEEN

and the array of gear at a band's disposal, so it gets its fair share of bands wanting the option of that "open, airy" sound for recording drums without needing to duplicate that effect artificially. Nunnaro comments about day one of recording: "Day one went well. Managed to do a good job of tuning the drums. That night I went back to my in-laws' and ended up sleeping in the laundry room, so day two I was feeling pretty rough ... after showing up an hour-and-a-half late, I managed to make good time. All of the songs that I thought would be hard were easy." Even though Nunnaro could have chosen a better place to crash, he manages to pull it together with Moncarz' help and with three days of solid drum tracks laid down, the album is off to a great start.

Next it's Erik Hughes' turn to lay down bass tracks and the session moves into Rattlebox studios for another grueling three days of intense focus. Timelines have to be kept. Reading Hughes' notes, you can hear a definite sigh of relief: "Bass tracks are done. Wow, it feels so good to say that. It's like when a student studies all year and then aces the exams, but I'm no scholar. Still, it's a liberating experience." With the rhythm section's comments, you get a sense of what musicians experience when being put through their paces. The adrenaline, anxiety, and desire to record strong and memorable parts leave musicians emotionally and physically exhausted, but there are few moments in one's career that are as satisfying as a job well done.

"It was very exciting to approach each song with a 'what tone should this have?' mentality, as opposed to finding one good tone and recording the whole record that way. It's the first time we've ever done that," Hughes notes. "My trusty Fender Aerodyne proved faithful for all the loud, crushing songs. A '60s P bass (with 10-year-old strings still intact) was used for the mellow, pretty songs. And a black and white 'Ricky' (Rickenbacker) was used for everything in between." Using three basses is not over the top by any means, so what types of things can you do to further treat your tone? "We definitely weren't afraid to use distortion pedals this time around. Kenny's 'fuzz probe' provided some of the most ripping tones I've ever heard! Pure destruction."

So far the boys are on schedule and both Hughes and Nunnaro are happy with the results. Moving on to guitars...

For those not privy to the recording process, we haven't really touched upon the set-up time involved with each instrument and the studio itself, but rest assured, it can be tedious and time-consuming. Granted, miking drums and getting good tones can be loathsome for other bandmates to endure, but when it's time to lay down guitar tracks (and I say this in a loving way) things can get a little stupid. Bridges' notes read: "This is the first day in the studio to do guitars, vocals, and anything else we feel like doing. We have to take a good part of the day to set up amps. We have about 10 amps to try, so this may take some time. Along with the amps, we have six or more cabinets to try as well - just because you have a cab that you use live doesn't mean it will sound good in the studio. It takes time, but setting up every amp and hearing everything is very important. That way, at any one time we can bring

up a certain sound for what the song calls for." Picture a studio floor covered with amps and cabinets, often using a combination and blending of tones to get that certain sound, Bridges finishes with "so that was half the day." Now imagine selecting which guitar(s) from the countless Strats, Teles, and baritone, and what effects to choose, and you start to realize how things can get "stupid," right? Guitar players do take pleasure in this - trust me. Bridges adds, "I don't want to say how many tracks we're using for guitars, but let's just say we have a guitar record on our hands here."

The following day Bridges moves onto vocals for "Song 1." "It's weird to be on vocals within a couple of weeks of recording ... it's great actually. I do all my guitars for a song in a day, then come in the next for vocals right away. I find talking all day makes my singing sound tired, so I like to be fresh. 'Song 1' was very easy to sing. No thinking. Just doing." Singing in the studio versus live can be a whole different ball of wax for many vocalists. Bridges notes: "Sometimes I hate vocal booths. This one is alright. I don't like being in a room alone, but I am friends with this room now so it's OK. Brian (Moncarz) is good to do vocals with - very nice to a singer. We have a good system, and I'm glad we found it early. We will try anything, but it has to feel natural." Band diplomacy is important, as indicated by the next comment: "Ideas are great,

but as a band you have to be ready to let go of one if it's bad ... luckily, I don't have any bad ideas. Yeah, right!" And a good sense of humour always helps.

Continuing with the song-by-song method, it's "Hippy's" turn up to bat - and it's now obvious that layering can be a challenge at this stage of the game. "Excitement! Today I started to record my parts and quickly realized that between the bass, rhythm guitar, and baritone guitar the sonic spectrum had been pretty much covered. We had to go for something extreme. Brian laid out a DI box and Kenny hooked his 'fuzz probe' (proving to be a handy pedal indeed) to it and craziness was born. It was exactly what the part needed."

With layering different textures, the songs begin to thicken in a powerful way, but what happens when things start to sound, um, strange or worse: out of tune? Somewhat behind schedule, Bridges keeps notes on a few sessions that didn't go to plan. While recording the song "Dark And Ugly Sky" he writes, "We had issues with tuning, but we realized it was the backup vocals. Layering can be amazing and can also cause problems that you don't expect. That won't stop us from layering though." A few days later, Hippy makes this entry: "We then

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World Radio History

MONEEN



moved on to Kenny's guitars for 'The Way.' This shouldn't have taken long. The problem arose when Kenny placed the capo on the fourth fret: tuning issues. The intonation was not rockin'. This was the best-sounding guitar for this clean pretty song, so Kenny went to work on the guitar and eventually got the intonation back. Good job, K-Plus." With the clock ticking, every small dip along the way puts you further behind schedule. Then there are the problems you can't control, like drive failures. It's not "if" but "when" will a drive decide to cack. With the stress and long hours, immune systems can also cack. Bridges writes: "Today woke up really sick. Hate it. Why? Why? Why? To keep on track I have to sing today." He sang, and the effort was recognized by all.

We're now into the third week of January, and Toronto's weather isn't letting up. Power outages in the area are wreaking havoc, and at this point have only been marginally annoying. Bridges writes: "Waited two hours to have our 'end-of-week pizza party.' (Good to know the tradition continues in studios across the land.) Friggan' power outage. The whole grid went down. The entire street around us was out, but the studio was fine. Good for us. Pizza took forever ... they had to make it with a lighter." The next power outage did, however, hit the studio mid-session, only hours after they dealt with the aforementioned guitar intonation problem. Hippy writes: "It was 8 p.m. by the end of it all (guitar problem), and we were still optimistic about getting my guitars done and getting back on schedule. Then, right before 9 p.m., the power went out. At 9:30 p.m. the studio was beginning to get cold, and we decided to call it a night. Just as we did, the power came back on ... we ended up getting it all done by 11 p.m."

On Groundhog Day, it was anything but routine for Bridges: "Had to go for a physical in the morning, so I was up at 7 a.m. Feeling pretty good actually ... except for being sick all the time. Got to the studio and turns out that part of the ceiling had fallen in from a leak in the roof. Poor guys have to deal with that, so that was half of our day. After cleaning up ceiling and water-logged hard drives, we moved onto 'Believe' vocals. One might think the recording of this album is somewhat plagued by minor disasters, but if it were easy everybody would be doing it."

Halfway through the recording stage, it's time for Moneen to show management its efforts to date, and negotiate for some more time. Bridges writes: "At one point, we almost had to cut two songs from the list. That would have been impossible. So now, with the extra week, we are good to go. Joel, our manager, and our booking agents Rob and Adam came by to check out some songs. We were a little nervous to show them songs before they are done, but it was fun listening back to songs

after moving on. I think they liked them. We played them six songs, jumping back and forth from intense songs to nice quiet ones. Keep 'em guessing."

Management types and booking agents aren't the only folks dropping in during the sessions. Hippy Hughes' turn again to make some an entry into the studio logbook: "Before we got down to business today, we had to do a little cleaning of the Rattlebox. Not that there was much to clean - considering musical equipment surrounds every inch of the studio. Still, we all wanted it to look nice for when the press (yours truly with Lana, our photographer) arrived. Even scented candles were used to mask the lingering scent of dudes spending all day, every day in one room." The interview started out with some photos, and I for one couldn't detect any funk - scent wise, that is. Erik Hughes finishes off his entry for that day: "By midnight, our eyes were burning and our ears were melting. We left the studio to embrace freezing cold Toronto, then took the bus to Hippy's to sleep on his floor." Doesn't that sound like the perfect way to end your rock and roll day? It's not always glamorous, kids.

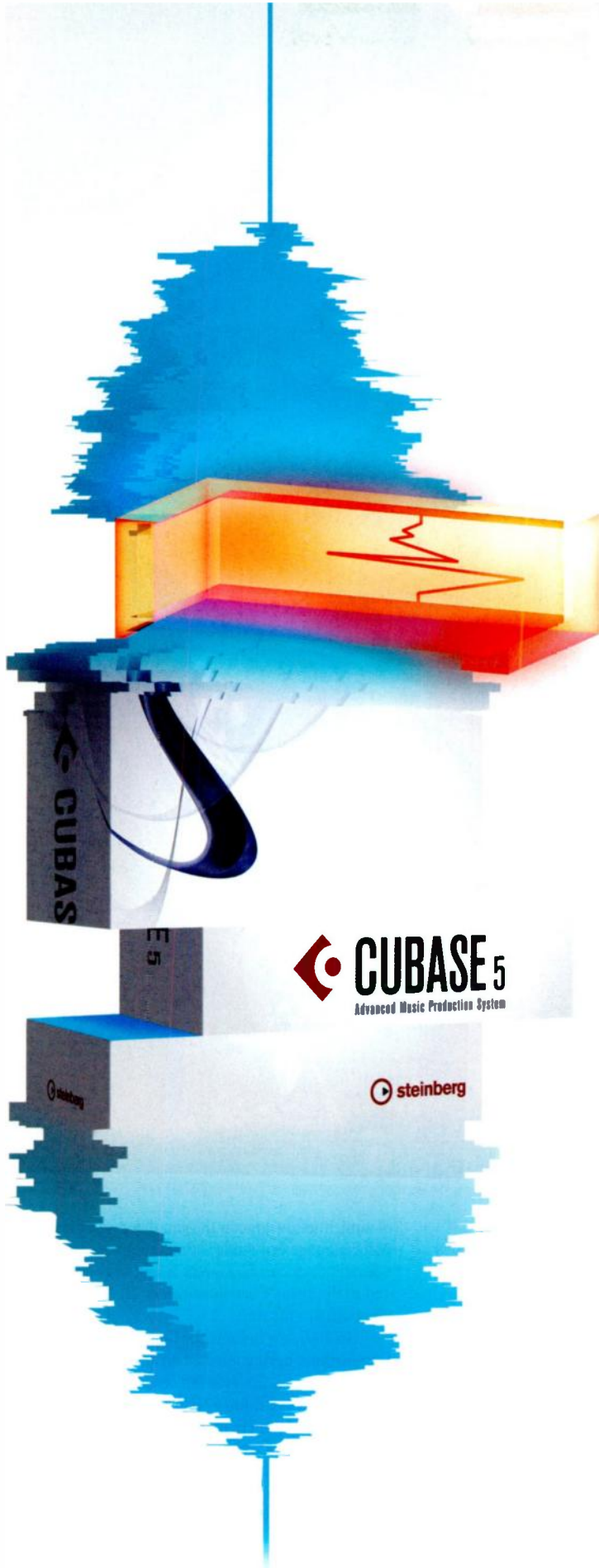
With so many parts to keep track of, Moneen is keeping it old school with "small pieces of paper" with lists of all parts recorded marked with an "X" and those remaining left blank. They're basic and functional white sheets scribbled out with a blue Sharpie. Bottrill, with a sheepish grin comments, "I generally like to see a completion sheet up somewhere so you know your progress, but we haven't got around to it."

Work is being done away from the studio as well. Bridges remarks, "David and I have been taking versions of the sessions home - for homework almost." Bottrill agrees, "Yeah. If I hear a part or Kenny hears a part, he can write an arrangement at home or I can do a string, organ, or a piano thing and bring it in and play it to them in the morning. I'll process sounds through my system at home. One of the great things about computers is that you can take a copy to the home studio, mess around, then present it back into the main session."

With an end date just days before heading off for a tour in Australia, the boys leave their work to be mixed for another two weeks in the capable hands of Bottrill and Moncarz. In total, the recording and mixing ends up being about seven weeks of what will undoubtedly be an experience never forgotten. The studio logbook probably seemed like homework at first, and for that I thank the guys for doing a good job recording their random thoughts and play-by-plays. The ".M." book, as it's labelled with that familiar blue Sharpie, is now closed on another chapter for Moneen. ■



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



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World Radio History



BY LONNY KNAPP
PHOTOS BY RUSS HARRINGTON

Crystal Shawanda stares at the massive dreamcatcher hanging from the Rogers Centre's rafters. The 15th annual Canadian Aboriginal Festival is in full swing. From our table in the Toronto Renaissance Hotel's lobby lounge, we have a bird's-eye view of the crowd milling around booths on the stadium floor, and a great vantage point to admire the 40 ft. wide and 70 ft. high structure suspended from the ceiling of the sports arena.

Many First Nations people believe that dreamcatchers protect us from the bad dreams that steal into our rooms as we sleep: good dreams pass through, while bad dreams are snared and perish at dawn. A webbed hoop adorned with beads and feathers, the dreamcatcher hanging inside the Rogers Centre resembles those hanging in windows or dangling from rearview mirrors across North America – only bigger.

Crystal Shawanda is no stranger to big dreams. Looking absolutely striking in a tight-fitting black top, a zebra-print scarf tied loosely around her long neck, and her jet-black hair falling easily at her shoulders, she shines like a ray

of authentic sunshine in the simulated seaside glow of the tropically-themed Aribba lounge. She smiles often, laughs easily, and her eyes sparkle when she talks about music. Shawanda is one of country music's hottest young stars, and in the span of her short career she has realized more dreams than most of us will in a lifetime.

In 2007, she became the first female artist to perform at the Grand Ole Opry without having released an album. Simultaneously, she became a reality TV star when Country Music Television (CMT) chronicled her amazing journey from small-town Ontario to the stage of the Ryman Auditorium in the six-part documentary series *Crystal: Living the Dream*. Shawanda's powerful voice and genuine persona have garnered the attention of industry heavy-hitters south of the border. She was briefly managed by the infamous McGhee Brothers (Kiss, Bon Jovi), and is currently on a roster with ZZ Top, Fleetwood Mac, and The Who being represented by Carl Stubner at Sanctuary Management. Her debut album, *Dawn of a New Day*, on RCA Nashville hit the *Billboard* Charts at number 16, making her the highest-charting full-blooded Native American artist in the SoundScan era. When we first met in early December, she was in Toronto to attend the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, having been nominated for five awards including

CRYSTAL Shawanda

Best Female Artist, Best Song Single, and Best Country Album. She took home all five.

"It's a huge honour. I feel like it was a really beautiful homecoming. This is what inspires me," Shawanda says, beaming.

But the story begins a long way from the bright lights of the Grand Ole Opry. Born into the Ojibwa nation, Shawanda was raised on the Wikwemikong Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island in Northern Ontario – a world away from Nashville. Still, for as long as she can remember, her dream was to become a country singer, just like her heroine Loretta Lynn.

"Loretta was a little girl from a coal mining town in Kentucky, and my mom was this little res girl from Wiki in Ontario – they both grew up the same way. Loretta was a beacon of hope. She taught me that you can make it out of any situation," she says.

Growing up on the reserve, Shawanda was witness to friends and family losing their lives to depression, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Through music, she dealt with the hopelessness that she saw as part of everyday life on the reserve. Drawing on the storytelling heritage of her community and inspired by legendary songwriters Loretta Lynn and Johnny Cash, she penned her first song when she was nine years old.

"For me it was an outlet. I still found a pile of trouble to get into, but if it wasn't for songwriting, I would have been into a lot more trouble. I might not even be here today," she says.

At age 11, Shawanda began tagging along with her truck driver father on his southbound runs to Nashville. Too young to perform in the clubs, she would stand in front of the city's famed Tootsies Orchid Lounge, peering in the window. At the age of 13, she debuted on the Tootsies stage to belt out the classic "Stand By Me."

"I got a standing ovation, and I was hooked for life," she says.

By the age of 16, Shawanda was living part-time in Nashville, cutting her teeth on regular gigs at Tootsies. Her reputation grew, and before long country music stars such as The Mavericks' Raul Malo were popping in to see what the fuss was about.

"That's how Nashville works. If your name gets mentioned enough in a good light, people start to sit up and take notice. Nashville is a big city, but it's a very small town in a way. Everybody works hard to earn one another's respect," Shawanda says.

Nashville is home to many of the music industry's most talented and prolific songwriters. To the outsider, the city appears to be a veritable hit factory where megahits roll off an assembly line. In truth, however, Nashville songwriters compose just like the rest of us – it's just that they work harder. In Nashville, writers book appointments to collaborate and may conduct two or more appointments every day. These appointments are booked at the most uninspiring hours, and in some cases writers crank out hits long before noon.

To gather the songs for her album, Shawanda collaborated with top-tier professionals such as Rivers Rutherford, who has penned tunes for Brooks and Dunn, Randy Travis, and Tim McGraw, as well as The Warren Brothers, who have had a hand in penning more than 500 songs for diverse artists such as Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Van Zant, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. The product of these and other collaborations helped land her a deal with RCA Nashville. Though she isn't credited on all of the tracks that appear on *Dawn Of A New Day*, she is listed as co-writer on the stand out tracks "You Can't Take It Back," "Dawn Of A New Day," and "Tender Side." At first, the thought of writing with these big-name troubadours intimidated Shawanda, but she found her collaborators warm, encouraging, and familial.

"I wrote 'You Can't Take It Back' with The Warren Brothers. At the appointment, we were talking and laughing like long-lost best friends. By the end of the session, we wrote an amazing and touching song, but we had so much fun writing it. The three of us just helped one another shine. It's about meshing styles to complement each other, and seeing what comes out of it," Shawanda says.

Shawanda will proudly display her Aboriginal Music Awards on a prominent shelf in her home in Nashville, but she will have little time to admire them. By the time you read this, she will have wrapped up a national arena tour in support of country music star Brad Paisley. She is currently booked on her own dates throughout North America.

"I was used to playing honkytonks and being able to interact with the audience. I had never done an arena tour, so I was nervous – but it was an excited nervousness," she says.

Without doubt, Shawanda's short career has had many high points, but when I ask her choose the highlight thus far, she answers without hesitation. This past September, she was invited back to the Grand Ole Opry on a bill that featured Jessica Simpson, Patty Loveless, and her all-time heroine Loretta Lynn. After her performance, Loretta took the time to come speak with Shawanda and her mother.

"She came floating in with this big beautiful blue gown on and with her hair all teased up – she looked just like a country music fairy godmother," Shawanda says, obviously still in awe. "For me, it has never been about awards or charting on the radio, but meeting Loretta was a dream come true." ■



Lonny Knapp is a Toronto-based musician and freelance writer.





STAYING OUT LATE WITH

BY ANDREW KING

The Waking Eyes

A mild night finds me biking around the back of a convenient venue to meet up with the four members of Winnipeg's The Waking Eyes, whom I eventually find unloading gear from their trailer onto the pavement. Greeted by drummer Steve Senkiw, I'm immediately introduced to guitarist/keyboardist/vocalist Matt Peters, bassist/vocalist Joey Penner, and guitarist/vocalist/keyboardist Rusty Matyas, who ditches his cigarette prematurely to offer a handshake. After exchanging pleasantries, I join them in hauling equipment into the venue.

Although it's only been days since first getting my hands on the band's most recent LP, *Hold On To Whatever It Is*, I've quickly become enveloped. An eclectic offering of styles and attitudes, the record incorporates elements of everything from synth-based dance grooves to hints of late '90s beard punk (dig deeper into "Keeps Me Coming Back" if you disagree) delivered with an undeniable finesse. Once roadie duties have been handled, Matyas, Penner, Peters, and myself (Senkiw has been battling a cold and seeks refuge in the van) head down to a local pub for some beers and banter, focusing mainly on the songwriting process that gives the latest record its variety and charm.

"The songwriting has always been mutual," Peters shares. "We make a lot of decisions by committee, and I think that's when we get the best results." Indeed, the process is more collaborative for The Waking Eyes than other bands considering each member is seasoned on multiple instruments and, though Peters and Matyas share the leads, each contributes vocals to

the record and live performance. A Waking Eyes show is far from void of "set changes," if you will. "Well, Steve stays back where he belongs," says Matyas laughing, "but other than that, we switch [instruments] a few times throughout the show." And on the album, for that matter.

The frosted mugs finally hit the table, acting as a catalyst to a more interactive and subsequently insightful discussion. Considering the input each member is capable of offering, even on a strictly musical basis, to the collage of ideas that will eventually become a Waking Eyes track, the crafting process is really something to behold. "It's different with every song," attests Peters. "There are some songs where the songwriter will write most of the parts, and then people will add their own arrangements to make it more 'our song' as a band." Of course, there are other times where something will completely change from an initial idea to a final song. Peters offers tracks like "Masters Of Deception" and "Pick Up Yer Number" as examples of the latter school. "With 'Pick Up Yer Number,' we'd recorded three or four versions of that song and just couldn't get it right," explains Matyas. "Then all of a sudden, we found this cool keyboard sound, and that just made the song what it was."

Lyrically, the band adopts a similar ethic: "If it's going to be a Waking Eyes song, nothing is etched in stone until everybody signs off on it," says Matyas. While generally the main songwriter will take care of most of the writing, there isn't a case where input doesn't come from other corners. "We



never run into the problem of having too many cooks in the kitchen," explains Peters, referring back to the process at large. "At this point, our relationships with each other are strong enough that we can check our egos at the door and make something as good as it can be."

He offers an encompassing idea of the big picture: "We've never really been a 'jam band,' where whatever happens happens — you throw up some mics, hit record, and say, 'Fuck, yeah!'" Instead, the band builds songs brick by brick, layer by layer, with all four members getting their hands dirty.

During a quick cigarette break away from the recorder, discussing everything from Weezer's first record to Winnipeg's music scene, I come to discover that these gentlemen are some very prolific songwriters and players, not only as The Waking Eyes, but also through several side projects and initiatives that range from a solo dance pop act and collaborations with various members of Winnipeg's music community to a touring stint Matyas did with The Weakerthans on guitar. Back inside, I'm sure to delve more deeply into the subject.

"They're all pretty casual, but they're still things we're proud of," says Peters. It's hard to argue that keeping creative through different avenues of

expression enhances what each member can bring back to The Waking Eyes, and it seems none of these musicians would do anything else in their spare time than write songs. I'm later proven right when the three begin explaining the rules of what they've dubbed The Four Hour Challenge.

"Our asshole friends write the most obscure and ridiculous song titles and put them in a hat. So you go into the room, pick a title, and write and record these songs in four hours." An honour system is in place ensuring that no pre-meditated ideas enter the process — everything is off the cuff. "They have names like 'Everything Is a Satanism for Randy Travis,'" says Penner while the rest of us share a laugh. "They all turn out really well, too," says Matyas, as though I'd be surprised. Of course, the final songs would understandably lack refinement and full maturity, but although it hasn't happened yet, each carries the potential to contribute to, or even become, a Waking Eyes song.

Considering the amount of ideas that seemingly spew from each member with remarkable frequency, the band's recording set-up in its practice space is likely a saving grace for documentation. Incorporating a Digidesign 002 Pro Tools rig, the band has one Rode NT1-A studio mic, along with a few SM57s and SM58s, with which to record parts and ultimately write songs. Along with a trusty PC loaded with Reason and set up to never crash Pro Tools, the band is more than happy with its accumulated tools. "Pretty much any idea you can have, the tools are available to you there," says Peters, and the fact that the band has written over 100 songs in that very space is testament to his claims.

Taking the tracks from *Holding On To Whatever It Is* and back catalogue offerings from *Combining The Clouds* and *Video Sound* onto the stage involves a chameleon-esque commitment from the three musicians not behind the skins. With all of the various parts and layers that go into the recording process for these tracks, not to mention who actually played or sang them, the band's sets become orchestrated circuses. "Somebody just brought up the other night how busy we are when we play a show," recalls Matyas. "There are hands and feet on everything, doing something."

Even with the lengths each member takes in order to replicate the album experience from the stage, some compromises still need to be made. "We had to sit down and decide what the most important melody lines and sounds were," shares Matyas. "It was like a puzzle trying to figure it out." The band admits it took a long time to get things shaped and set for a live performance. A fifth member was even brought out for shows until it was finally decided they were ready to pull things off as a foursome.

Also, technology offers a solution for the replication of a few key elements from the album. "With 'Get Me To The Doctor' on the record there's an accordion that the three of us were all playing together," says Peters while the others snicker. Matyas adds, "I was pushing and pulling while Matt hit the notes." Being that nobody knows how to play the accordion, a Korg N364 is employed onstage to deliver a similar sonic experience. "It's a bread and butter keyboard," says Peters after describing the band's love/hate relationship with the instrument. "It has so many sounds that are quintessential to what we do, and when you need to do a quick Whitesnake cover..."

If the aforementioned accordion anecdote didn't make it evident enough, The Waking Eyes spares no expense or labour during the songwriting process. Sitting down with *Holding On To Whatever It Is* and really digesting it piece-by-piece only furthers this argument. As for the live show, as I'd witness shortly after settling the tab and trekking back down the street for the band's set, a fine balance is struck between replicating the parts that make the record shine and adding that bit of spontaneity and energy that makes a live show worth the sticky floors and overpriced beers. In reality, whether your first opportunity to experience the band is onstage or on record, you're in for a pleasant awakening as to what diligence during the songwriting process can ultimately accomplish. ■



Andrew King is the Assistant Editor of *Canadian Musician*.



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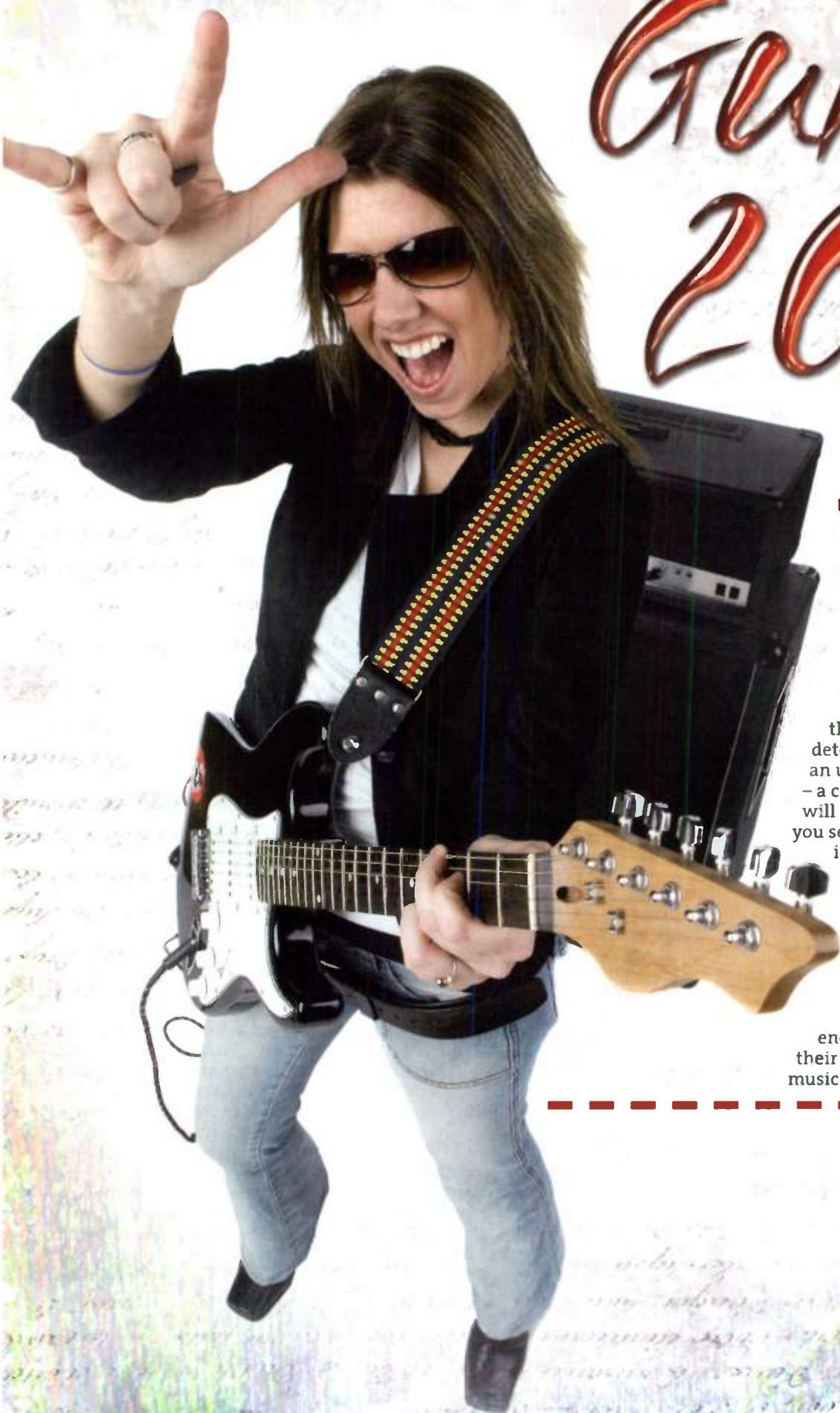
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Guitar 2009

What It Takes To Succeed

by Levon Ichkhanian

Legendary racecar driver Mario Andretti once said, "Desire is the key to motivation, but it's the determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal – a commitment to excellence – that will enable you to attain the success you seek." Each of the artists featured in this article knew they wanted to be musicians at a very young age – when they first picked up a guitar and started playing. That was their motivation. What followed next were many years honing their skills. Talent, perseverance, willingness to work, and energy are what led them to fulfill their dreams, to become professional musicians, and the best in their fields.

Guitar 2009

Mike Francis may not be a household name, but he is one of the most recorded musicians in the business. Performing professionally since he was 17, his many years in the regular club circuit and in the studio helped him build the skill and versatility needed to become a first call guitarist, known for commercial jingles and session work, TV shows, live radio/broadcast, and soundtracks. (He's the one playing guitar in all those beer commercials – Budweiser, Miller, Molson Ex, Labatt's.) **Ted Quinlan** is regarded as one of the most versatile guitarists in Canada. In demand as a jazz player, session musician, writer, and educator, Quinlan's passion for learning continues as the Head of the Guitar Department at Humber College's Music Program. Multi-talented **Michel Cusson** set the standard for fusion jazz music in Canada with the long-standing success of UZEB, founded in 1976 when Cusson was only 19 years old. Always interested in the international world of music, he collaborates regularly with artists and producers from around the world. This, combined with his strong interest in composing, has led to a lucrative career outside of UZEB. He's created the music for 21 films, seven mega-shows, 17 TV series, and 30 albums, and is still going strong. Finally, **Javier Mas**, born in Zaragoza, Spain, started playing Bandurria at the age of nine. By 12 years old, he was playing drums and 12-string guitar. By 15, he was playing professionally and touring throughout Spain, and then at 18 moved to England and continued to work with the best in the business. His credits include Julia Leon, Maria del mar Bonet, Prabhu Edoard, and La Orquestra del Teatre Lliure de Barcelona. Currently, he is touring with Leonard Cohen.

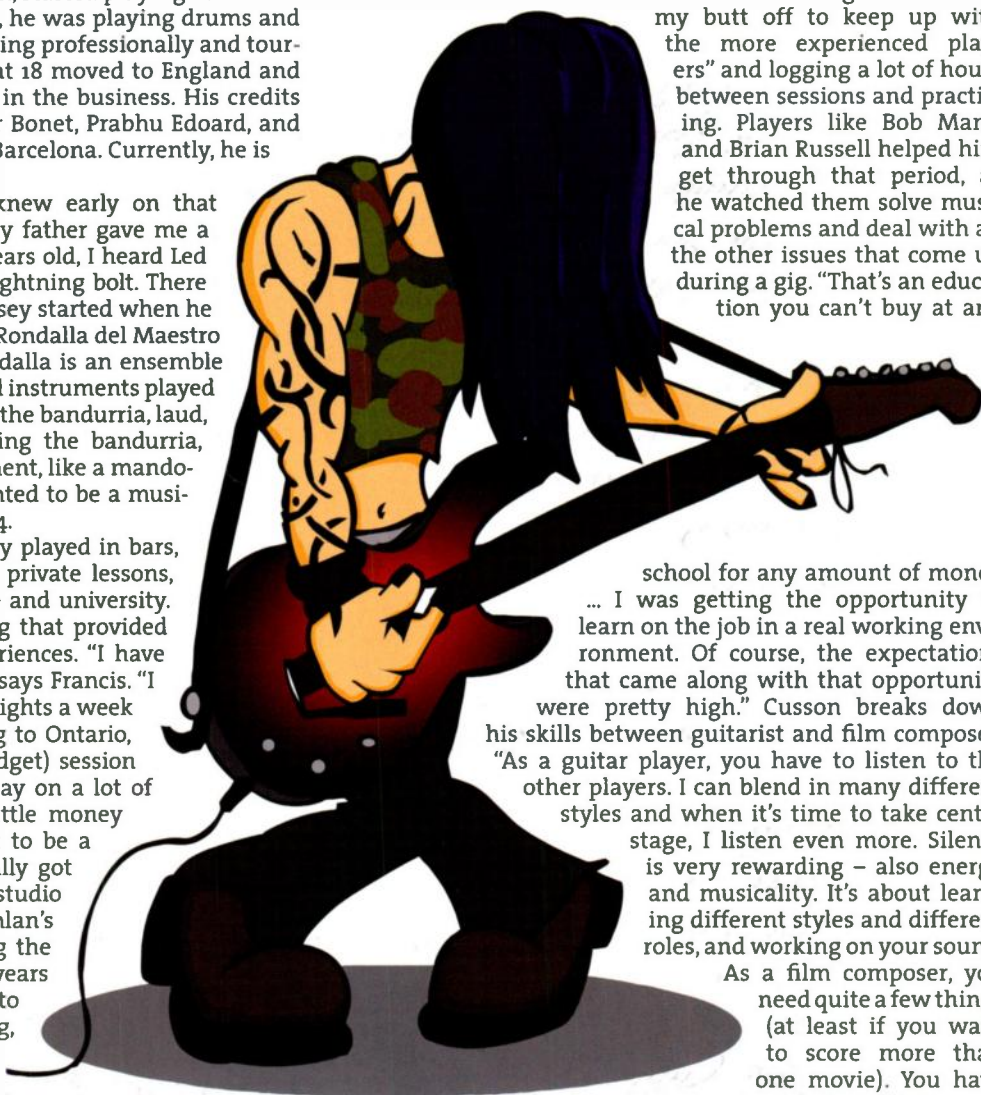
All the featured guitarists knew early on that they wanted to be musicians. "My father gave me a guitar at 11," says Cusson. "At 13 years old, I heard Led Zeppelin at school. It was like a lightning bolt. There was no choice." Mas' musical odyssey started when he was nine years old playing in the Rondalla del Maestro Peiron. Originated in Spain, a rondalla is an ensemble of plectrum instruments – stringed instruments played with a plectrum or pick, including the bandurria, laud, and Spanish guitar. "I was playing the bandurria, which is a 12-metal-string instrument, like a mandolin." That's when he knew he wanted to be a musician, and started seriously at age 14.

So they practiced ... a lot. They played in bars, in recording sessions, took some private lessons, and some even studied in college and university. But it was the on-the-job training that provided the most valuable learning experiences. "I have no formal background in music," says Francis. "I was on the road playing bars six nights a week at the age of 17 and after moving to Ontario, started doing some (very low-budget) session work. I got the opportunity to play on a lot of not-very-good records for very little money during that period. It turned out to be a blessing because when I eventually got the chance to work with the real studio guys, I had some experience." Quinlan's story is similar. "I started playing the guitar at 11. I did spend some years studying in college. I also started to play gigs when I was fairly young, probably before I had a right to be on a bandstand, but it helped me learn basic survival skills.

I have always believed in regular practicing and I try to maintain a practice regimen." For Mas, formal education included studying technique with Maestro Peirona for the sound of the tremolo on the bandurria, but his passion for rock 'n roll and listening to bands like The Kinks and The Who would have him try to copy their sound on guitar and drums. Cusson attended McGill University for a while, and then started working right away. He also went to Berklee School of Music in Boston. "I learned a lot there, especially outside of school at night, watching and hearing guys like Tiger Okoshi and Mike Stern playing in clubs."

Each guitarist has special qualities that served them well throughout their formative years in music – curiosity, tenacity, ability to listen, and practicing to get a sound and/or rhythm. But most of all, their passion for music and willingness to work at it is what took them to the next level. Says Quinlan, "In terms of personal qualities that are suitable to my work, the biggest one is probably an inability to do anything else! I really love doing this and, like most musicians, I think I'm fairly tenacious when it comes to hanging in and finding a way to make things work out so that I get to play and have fun."

Francis credits willingness to "work my butt off to keep up with the more experienced players" and logging a lot of hours between sessions and practicing. Players like Bob Mann and Brian Russell helped him get through that period, as he watched them solve musical problems and deal with all the other issues that come up during a gig. "That's an education you can't buy at any



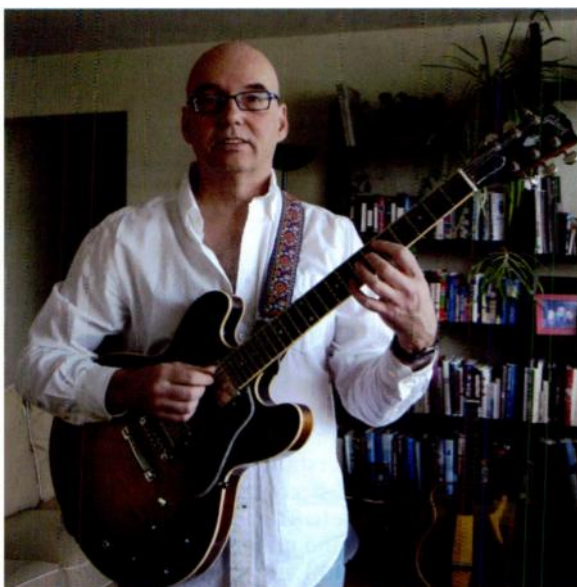
school for any amount of money ... I was getting the opportunity to learn on the job in a real working environment. Of course, the expectations that came along with that opportunity were pretty high." Cusson breaks down his skills between guitarist and film composer: "As a guitar player, you have to listen to the other players. I can blend in many different styles and when it's time to take centre stage, I listen even more. Silence is very rewarding – also energy and musicality. It's about learning different styles and different roles, and working on your sound.

As a film composer, you need quite a few things (at least if you want to score more than one movie). You have to have a broad language,



MIKE FRANCIS

"I couldn't read music when I started doing films, jingles, and TV shows ... it was hell learning on the job, but somehow I survived and kept going."
-Mike Francis



TED QUINLAN

"I have always believed in regular practicing and I try to maintain a practice regimen."
- Ted Quinlan

and be very curious, creative, and open-minded. Writing for images is very different than songwriting. Reading is a must, as is knowing every style of music and being at the cutting edge of technology."

Passion and dedication to their craft are only two ingredients in the recipe for success of these great guitarists. They were fortunate to have exposure to mentors/role models that helped them in their musical development. "Of course, my mentor was my grandfather Marcelino Arrond, who bought me my first bandurria," says Mas, who states he also learned a lot from his first maestro and from all the great musicians he worked with over the years. Cusson describes himself as a sponge during his formative years, picking up the best from many people. He identifies an experience with UZEB opening up for Miles Davis at Ontario Place as the best music lesson he ever had. Francis and Quinlan list many mentors that helped them on their developmental path. For Quinlan, "a few that come to mind are: Doug Riley, Bob Murphy, an incredible pianist who lives in Vancouver, P.J. Perry, and Fraser McPherson. These are all people who were amazingly patient and taught me a lot of things about music and life." "Ben McPeck would be at the top of the list," says Francis. "He gave me my first chance to do jingles and work with the best studio musicians in Toronto. I still don't know if he liked me or felt sorry for me, but he was wonderful to me - a real inspiration. There's a long list of other people that I need to thank as well: Tom Szczesniak, Brian Barlow, Barry Keane, Bob Mann, Brian Russell, Eric Robertson, Doug Riley, Russ Little, and many others. They were all very patient and kind to me during my internship at the big league level."

In addition, these guitarists made very specific career choices crucial to getting them to where they are today. Francis had to get through the hurdle of reading music in order to work in the studio. "I couldn't read music when I started doing jingles, films, and TV shows, and in 1975 it was an essential part of working in the studio here. It took about three years before I was comfortable with it, and it was hell learning on the job (under that kind of pressure), but somehow I survived and kept going." For Quinlan, it was accepting a job at Humber



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College. "I have always been a working musician and teaching was not part of my original career plan. That said, my job as the head of the guitar department at Humber has been hugely rewarding on any number of fronts. I think I learn more from the job than I teach!" Even while in UZEB, Cusson had a passion and talent for composition, which he declares is the best career choice that he made. "It's good for the brain. That allowed me to work for film, drama, TV, and also mega-shows like *Cavalia* (a multimedia extravaganza, which blends visual effects, live music, dance, and acrobatics with the equestrian arts of over 30 horses). I've discovered so much by not being only in the guitar player chair. As you take on more responsibilities, the number of decisions and problems increases, and

but it happens occasionally and I live for those moments." With success comes access to environments that also inspire. Cusson credits his state-of-the-art home studio for his motivation. "I can produce anything I want in there. I've been working hard to put that together. Once I'm in there, I'm in heaven. It takes me about five seconds to get inspiration. When you're curious, the music is endless." It's very intrinsic – it's part of them. As Mas puts it, "I need to touch my heart and the hearts of people. I only think in art, only for music, which is very bad for business. But life is now giving me back more."

If each had his choice, he would focus only on the creative side of making good music. Having said that, they all recognize that they are in the music business. "As far as business



MICHEL CUSSON

it is very rewarding. Especially when you are recording the scores you've been working on for weeks in front of 75 musicians ... it's kind of icing on the cake. Working for images for sure changed the way I compose and the way I play guitar." Mas says taking the leap to move to England at 18 and "trying to live by music, not depending on my parents" was his greatest career move.

Love of music is what led each artist to pursue playing the guitar professionally in the first place. Even now, after more than 20 years in the business, this is what still keeps them going. "I love to play the guitar," says Francis. "Always have, always will. It's not work for me. It's the best gig in the world. I practice every day, seven days a week. I've always done that. If I don't play I feel uncomfortable with myself – it sounds odd, but it's a fact. There are so many things I want to learn." This continual quest to learn is shared by Quinlan. "I hate boredom and predictability, so the unexpected is what makes me want to go to work every day. Even if I have a preconceived notion of how I think things will go, they usually turn out differently. This is neither good nor bad, and is probably a big reason that I love jazz so much. Sometimes, I have a hot night playing where I feel really connected to the people I'm playing with and it feels like the music is playing itself. It sounds like a cliché,

goes and music goes, it's always been tricky," says Quinlan. "I've always concentrated primarily on the creative side and have tended to ignore the business side for the most part. This is an area in which I'm making some changes. It's essential for contemporary musicians to take charge of their own careers and create their own work opportunities." Cusson has a small team around him, which allows him to spend most of his time in the music side, "but I do understand and I'm involved in very aspect of the business: legal, accounting, promoting, contacts, Internet, technical, studio, etc. The two most important things when composing: listen and understand what the director wants (seems easy but it's not) and meet your deadlines (be ready to sleep very few hours for weeks)." Francis agrees that it's good business practices that are necessary for the session musician. "It sounds simple, but things like being reliable, prepared, and having good gear and a good attitude make a huge difference. The most valuable studio players are not there trying to impress anyone with how many notes they can play; they are there trying to make the music sound better. Sometimes, that means not playing. Being unselfish musically and playing what's appropriate makes you much more valuable than being a hotshot. That's business strategy." With respect to logistics, he states his wife takes care of every-

"There are many ways to 'get there.'"

-Michel Cusson



JAVIER MAS (LEFT) WITH LEVON ICHKHANIEN.

"Don't copy anybody and have faith in your own music."

-Javier Mas

thing – family, house, books, baking, and “our lives.” This allows him the space he needs to focus on the guitar and music.

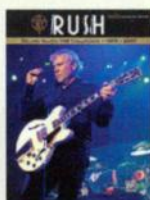
Being the best in their field, they have influenced music and young, upcoming musicians. “It’s very touching as well as flattering,” says Cusson. “I’m receiving many statements from all over the world on MySpace and Facebook.” Quinlan seems surprised: “I never thought I’d see the day but, particularly because of the amount of teaching I’ve done, I do see that I’ve had an influence on younger players.”

What do they think about reality TV shows like *American Idol*? “Why not?” asks Cusson. “It takes guts. There are many ways to ‘get there.’ I respect that.” Francis and Quinlan have different viewpoints. “My wife and I watch the very first few weeks of auditions because they show all the really bad ones and it’s funny,” says Francis. “It’s cruel ... but fair.” Quinlan can’t relate to the show. “I never watch them and probably have the attitude that they are somewhat superficial. But, of course I’m going to say that – I’m a jazz guy. Obviously, these shows are hugely popular.” Mas is the most extreme in his view. “I think TV is rubbish,” he says. “People show their own life without any privacy, just for a little bit of money and fame. I feel sorry for them.”

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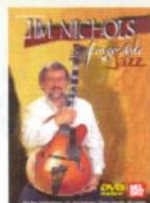
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The four guitarists all state that willingness to learn and to develop yourself, keeping an open mind and a worldly view of music and instruments other than the guitar, and following your heart are the best traits to instill in young musicians. "Be honest," says Mas. "Don't copy anybody and have faith in your own music." Francis recommends young musicians keep learning. "There's always something new to work on, always somebody new (or old) that makes you look at music in a different way. I know I could live to be 5,000 years old and still be just barely scratching the surface." Cusson focuses on the intrinsic. "It's an exciting life. No nine-to-five. It's more 24/7. If you feel it inside, go for it." Quinlan says he is old school when it comes to traits to instill in young musicians. "To me, it's critical they take their musicianship seriously and that they are

— some were sentimental and others practical. Here's what they said. Francis: "My best friend Ron Dann passed away and left me his classical guitar. It's long past its best years, but that's very sentimental to me. I have my dad's old Gibson acoustic; it's the first guitar I ever played. That's obviously special to me." Cusson: "I have a nice collection of stringed instruments. Besides quite a few electric and acoustic guitars, I have stringed instruments that I bought on different trips around the world. The "zhongruan" is one example — a very interesting Chinese 4-string guitar." Quinlan: "My most treasured piece of gear would probably be my Gibson ES-335 guitar. I've only had it for about three-and-a-half years, but it's pretty much all I play, and it really feels like home to me." Mas: "I have one old '70s Twin Reverb with JBL speakers, and plenty of guitars and lads."



willing to work hard to achieve their goals. It's also important that they develop themselves as human beings, investigate areas beyond music, and start to form a world view." As Mas puts it: "If you don't live life, you have nothing to say."

So what's it like for these guys outside of music? "I have many interests," says Quinlan. "I love to travel and I am interested in any number of topics. Politics and the environment fascinate me. All world cultures interest me. I'm a freak for crossword puzzles, and I do the Sunday *New York Times* puzzle every week. I have an interest in astronomy and own two telescopes." When not performing, Mas can be found swimming in the sea, cooking, taking photographs, or walking natural parks around the world. Cusson loves to read, bike, swim, and ski — one of these every day. In addition to spending time with his five girls, Francis loves to ride his bike in the country and hang around the house with his wife and family.

To guitarists like these, any equipment is available to them. I asked them each what their prized musical possessions were

The future is looking great for these long-standing musicians. Mas is playing and travelling all over the world with Leonard Cohen; Quinlan will be recording a trio CD in the spring to be released this autumn; Francis will continue to record jingles and commercials; and Cusson is working on a personal project called No Embargo — a new band or entity that he's been designing for over two years. He will be out soon playing guitar on stage with this band.

With a wealth of musical experiences behind them, it's hard for each musician to pinpoint his greatest achievement — they all feel they are only getting started and have a lot more in them to achieve. They hold no regrets for the decisions they made on their paths to success, stating the only thing they would do over again is study more seriously earlier on (learn to read, have more access to music information, not party so much), but they certainly have learned a few things along the way which shaped their outlook on life. These include being positive, surrounding yourself with positive people, looking



beyond the surface to find the deeper meaning to a situation both in music and in life, and to be grateful for what life has to offer.

I can certainly relate to these life lessons. Keeping an open mind at all the possibilities and opportunities that life presents us is critical to our growth and development as human beings. This past summer, I was juggling several projects at the same time – including producing and recording some albums, touring with the hit musical show *Spamalot*, and a performing tour in China during the Olympics. I could not have done it without planning and being prepared (like Francis says), willingness to give up sleep (like Cusson says), willingness to take on new challenges (like Quinlan says), and remembering that it's all about the music (like Mas says). I am thankful everyday for the opportunities that life presents me and to be able to share it with my family. I agree with the featured artists that it is important to live life to the fullest, to be the best spouse, parent, son, friend, and human being that you can be. As musicians, we have an opportunity to shape the world around us with our music, our voice. This is what allows us to be citizens of the world. To get there, we have to be committed and focused. After going to the Olympics and seeing what athletes have to do to reach the pinnacle

" ... I'm involved in every aspect of the business: legal, accounting, contacts, Internet..."
-Michel Cusson



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"If you don't live life, you have nothing to say."

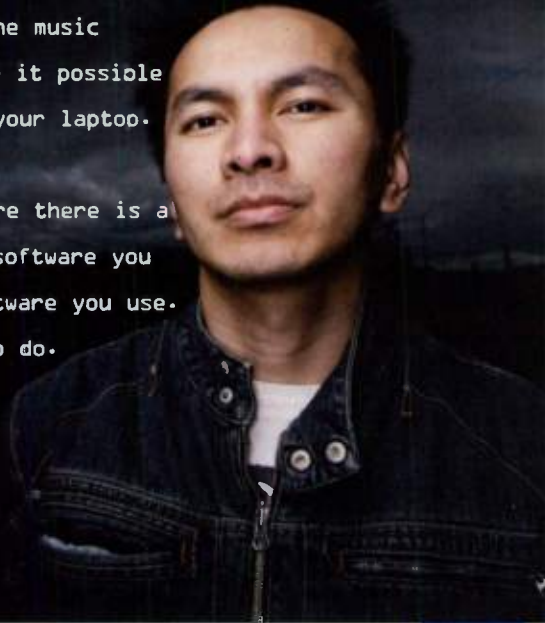
-Javier Mas

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of success, my view on commitment has reached a whole new dimension. Athletes practice regularly (eight hours a day, every day), eat and sleep properly, and exercise to keep their bodies in peak performance. They don't ever break their routine - even if they are not well, had a bad day, or just didn't feel like practicing that day. These are also lessons that we as musicians would do well to apply in our everyday lives.

Mike Francis, Javier Mas, Ted Quinlan, and Michel Cusson are living proof that your dreams as a guitarist can come true. As Francis put it, "I know that if you want something and are willing to work hard enough, you can get it. Of course, a little luck, being in the right place at the right time, and help from some good friends is important too." ■



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

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~ Mark Tremonti (Alter Bridge)



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~ Steve Lukather (Toto)

Murphy's Laws Of Songwriting Part I

by Ralph Murphy

"May you live in interesting times" is an old Chinese curse. As a songwriter, every day is an "interesting time" for us. As an effort to demystify what may be coming our way in the future, the best place to start is what just happened in the past. Paying the bills doing what we love doing is not only essential to us and to our families financially, but we need the approval and validation that having a hit brings on a creative level.

Bearing in mind that this is the music "business," lets take a look at what held the listener for the amount of time necessary for radio to "move those microwave ovens." In other words, to connect the jingles so that the pockets of songwriters and publishers could jingle.

2008 was 12 months of amazing change on a lot of levels. As I hadn't done a "what happened at number one" in country since 2004, I thought that 2008 would be a good window to look at the "new" business of what holds women from the burger commercial to the car jingle. Basically, how creators do their best to help our radio friends keep their listeners and make a living at drive time.

Writers follow their hearts and write what they write, but when it comes to pitch time we have to think like horse breeders. We have to be smart about which of our ponies are capable of functioning in the situation we place them. Some will be brilliant at harness racing, some have personalities that make them great for children to ride, some will be perfect at pulling carriages, and a few, very few, will be entered in the Kentucky Derby. Even fewer will win! Well, some songs work at drive time, most don't!

As all of you who have read the "Murphy's Law" articles have heard me say before, more people are struck by lighting each year than have a number one record on the *Billboard* country chart. So now lets get started.

So with 50 per cent of the '08 number ones written by the artists, more songs achieving number one status, songs spending less time on the charts and sales plummeting 24 per cent from '07, "may you live in interesting times" takes on a new meaning for the non-perform-

ing, or stand-alone, writer and the publisher working in the market.

Tempo/Intro

Well, there was only one waltz, "I'm Still A Guy" (Paisley/Miller/Lovelace). All the rest were in 4/4 time. Sixty-five per cent were mid- to up-tempo, which is a drive time staple. Strangely enough, all the ballads were written by the stand-alone writers. Generally, according to label A&R folk, the ballads tend to be written by the artist/writers.

As we have been told since the dawn of radio, the expectation for the intro is 13 seconds. In '08, after adding all the intros up and finding the average, the length was 15 seconds. Only two songs, "Should've Said No" (Swift) and "You Look Good In My Shirt" (Martin/Shapiro/Nesler), were longer than 20 seconds – the rest stayed in the teens.

In line with "get me to hook/title on time," i.e. 60 seconds from the top of the record, 62 per cent did just that. If you consider the intro separately and start timing from the vocal, all but one, "Cleaning This Gun" (Cannon-Goodman/Beathard), arrived right on time.

Theme & Person

The pronouns used in 14 of the songs were strictly first person "you and me," which means the writer made the song a conversation between the singer and the listener, inviting the listener in on a personal level.

As for the mantra, a country song should never whine, preach, or vent at drive time, UNLESS it's done with humour, irony, and detail – most of the number one's did that very skillfully. For instance, using the third person pronoun in "Just A Dream" (McEwan/Lindsey/Sampson) allows the singer to tell the story but not be the main character. "You're Gonna Miss This" (Gorley/Miller) made Trace Adkins not preachy by having the mom, dad, and plumber doing the preaching. Carry Underwood got to brag about an "All-American Girl" (Gorley/Lovelace/Underwood) without it really being about her. And those that were simply young and dumb redeemed themselves in "Back When I Knew It All" (Willmon/O'Donnell/Hannan).



With only a couple of exceptions, the songs behaved exactly as they were intended: to make the singer look good to women at the worst time of day possible, i.e. drive time. Professional writers are all very much aware that singers, unlike actors, are fairly consistent character-wise, from song to song. They are not irredeemably bad in one song and then good in the next. So, if the song is out of character for the artist, having it in third person (he, she, them) makes the singer the commentator, and not the main character. This allows the artist to sing about losers and old people, and not be one!

Themes were pretty much as you would expect:

- Love, Romantic
- Love, Of Family
- Love Lost
- Good Times/Party
- Revenge/Satisfaction
- Life Lessons
- Morality Play

So, there you have it. Love in all its glory: romantic love, love of family, love of good times, love of country and God, plus love lost, revenge, life lessons, and morality plays.

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Born in England and raised in Canada, the well-travelled Ralph Murphy has worked extensively on both sides of the Atlantic during his music career. His first #1 song in Europe was "Call My Name" by James Royal (1966). After several years as an artist and producer, Ralph moved to New York in 1969 to produce the band April Wine (two gold albums; one platinum). In 1971, Ralph had his first country hit Nashville with "Good Enough To Be Your Wife," #2 for Jeannie C. Riley. By 1976, Ralph and business partner Roger Cook opened Pic-A-Lic Music in Nashville. During the decade of its existence, the company prospered, more of Ralph's songs became hits ("He Got You" for Ronnie Milsap; "Half The Way" for Crystal Gayle), and Ralph served as president of NSAI. Ralph is now VP of ASCAP Nashville.

10 Tips For A Great Mix Part I

by Brian Moncarz

1 Try to start with a faders-up mix. Just push the faders up – don't worry about EQ and pans. Just push the faders up and get familiar with the track. Don't just dig into the mix. I like to really get comfortable with what I'm listening to and then start to think about the end game, and where things should be.

2 I think some engineers change from song to song, but what I like to do is start with a really cool kick drum sound. Once I do the faders-up mix, I clear the board, and then I pull my kick drum tracks up. I'm a little insane when it comes to recording kick drums – I'll use four mics sometimes and some drum samples as well, and then we'll blend them all. I'll compress, EQ, and get a really good kick drum sound because, to me, that's the whole foundation of the mix.

3 Add the rest of the instruments with effects. Once I'm done my kick drum, I add the snare and the rest of the drum kit. I then use effects – whether it's reverb, compression, or EQ. I then build my bass and my guitars, and then I add vocals.

I'm always thinking about the vocals, and oftentimes I'll have the fader up, but have it muted. I'll mute and unmute the vocal just to see how things are going with the vocal, and really try to get everything to gel together.

4 Stereo bus compression. To me, it's such an important part of the mix. I'm fortunate that we have an SSL console at Rattlebox Studios that allows me to have a kick-ass stereo bus compressor. That is the reason we got the SSL. That has actually changed my life – it's that one component of the board that just glues everything together for you really nicely. I'm not talking about a lot of compression; just maybe pulling it 2dB and it just really glues everything together and makes things sound tight.

5 Think about ways to add excitement to your mix, and move away from linear-sounding mixes and get it to be dynamic. Sometimes it takes me a while to get there. I'll start mixing, and obviously it's going to be linear – you're getting a global sound for everything. Then you have to think about carving things up and making the verses different from the pre-chorus, which is different than the chorus. Bob Ezrin always called it colour changes. Think about the mix in terms of colours, and all your different components need to change.

It's all about getting that excitement out. When bands write songs, they're usually pretty dynamic and exciting. The verse is more tamed-down than the chorus, and it's easy to mix those dynamics out. If you're not careful, it ends up really being linear – a vocal with some stuff underneath it, when it should really move and change. If you think about it as a puzzle that's being put together, you don't have to be afraid to mix the guitars a little too loud because when it goes to mastering it's going to get tucked anyways. For me, it's really about getting that excitement. For example, when I was mixing the *A Collision* record, I mixed a lot of electronic elements with aggressive rock, almost in a Nine Inch Nails or *A Perfect Circle* sort of vein – maybe a little poppier. There's this one song called "Clay" on the record that was a really difficult song to track. It had lots of big guitars, and I was finding just that the verse was sounding almost bigger than the chorus, which is a big problem.

I re-thought the whole thing. I recorded it and produced it, but maybe I wasn't thinking about my end game when I should've been. What I ended up doing on the second day of the mix was to come back and say, "We really need to change this." We just needed to take things out of the verse and screw it up a little, and EQ things differently in the verse than in the chorus. Just because you've tracked it doesn't mean you have to leave it in your mix – take stuff out. I took some guitars out, I fil-



tered them a lot, and when the chorus hit we thought, "Whoa, where did that come from?" I treated it like they were two separate songs. The verse was like an electronic song, and the chorus was a big rock song. It really worked – the bandmembers thought, "Wow, this is killer! What did you do here?" It was an exciting thing.

Brian Moncarz began honing his organic production style 10 years ago in various Toronto area studios. A musician himself, Moncarz's list of credits include, The Junction (Universal Music), Kyle Riabko (Aware/Columbia), Silverstein (Victory Records), Pilot Speed (formerly Pilate, Maple Music), Rise Electric (featuring Lukas Rossi, EMI Publishing), Machele Avenue (Underground Operations/Universal), and Moneen (Dine Alone) – see the feature this issue – plus engineering gigs with Bob Ezrin and David Bottrill (Tool, Silverchair, Peter Gabriel). Brian and David Bottrill have opened Rattlebox Studios in Toronto as a joint venture. Check out www.myspace.com/rattleboxstudios.

Having Fun With Axes!

by Terry Neudorf

When asked to write a column on miking guitars for live sound in smaller venues, churches, clubs, etc, my initial thought was "This will be easy – guitar mics optional!" Likely not what the editor had in mind so, cue Plan B.

Let's start with the primary task of a sound tech: to ensure the entire band is heard by the audience in a balanced, tolerable fashion. It's a fairly simple task ... until the standby switch is flicked off. Ah, guitar amps ... love the energy and attitude, hate the potential lack of mix control they leave the sound tech.

Control issues? Have an open, honest conversation with your guitar players to determine if it's truly necessary to run at 11 out of 10. If yes, is it possible to have the guitar amps turned around, facing the back or the side or across the stage, just not towards the audience? Would angling it up towards the ears result in being able to volume down a bit and prevent the "duck guitar" from flying off the stage (guitar SO loud that sound tech's "duck" behind the mixing console to stay safe)? Seriously, if guitar amp volume is killing any possible FOH mix (the band's too loud but the PA's not on yet) it's not just the sound tech's issue, it's a band issue and therefore worth solving.

Getting a mic on it. There are a variety of mics that work on guitar amps. Which one is best? Well, that depends, on many different things. Often in a smaller venue, a guitar amp will supply much of what you may need in the FOH mix, so you might just need to "supplement" the sound. For example: if you're getting enough midrange and top end from the amp, try some instrument mics that gives you a richer, warmer, fatter tone, or strange as it sounds, trying that "vocal" mic that sounds too muddy on your vocalist might be just right to fatten up the guitar sound.

Don't be afraid to experiment with different mics to find the combination of amp and mic that works for you. I have sometimes found the guitar "sound" I was looking for came from a mic people generally sing into. I'm not alone – one of my favorite kick drum mics also happens to be Metallica's first choice for its electric guitar mics.

Experiment with mic placements. A guitar "speaker" offers different sounds, depending on where your mic is "hearing" it. The centre of the speaker offers the brightest, cleanest sound. Moving to the middle and edge of the speaker cone will smooth the sound the mic is hearing. Sometimes, putting the mic at the back of the amp/speaker gives you the tone you are looking for – the point here being don't be afraid to try new things. Now, it goes without saying that the mic needs to be pointed at the speaker, not hanging down off the carry handle – that will generally never give you the sound you're looking for, no matter what you do!

Ensure that you EQ the guitar mic channel only to reinforce the frequencies that you are lacking from the guitar amp itself. Using the mixer's channel EQ, cut and roll off what you don't need and blend what you do need with the original source to complete the overall guitar sound you're listening



for. Remember: you're supplementing existing sounds. It's not ideal, but it's workable.

Blessed with resources and time to experiment? Try two different mics on the guitar cabinet at the same time, EQ them to have slightly different tonal personalities, and then pan one left, one right. Or take a direct box and put it in line between the guitar head/amp and the cabinet, or use a preamp output from the guitar amp, in addition to using the mic. Can you say "huge guitar sounds with options"?

Important note: Don't be afraid to work with the guitar player to get the "live sound" from his amp that works with the FOH mix. If something is just not working out, be a good guy and tell the guitarist – he'll likely want to make it sound right too. Give the guitar mic the best "show tone" possible!

Acoustic guitars can also benefit from proper mic placement. Often, the quick positioning is directly in front of the sound hole, but experiment with splitting the difference between the sound hole and the guitar neck; you may find it to be an easier, more natural sound. If using a pickup and DI, move a mic up the neck of the guitar and use it for adding natural "air" and openness to the overall sound.

Getting a guitar sound that has fullness and size with just the right amount of bite can be a challenge, but it's worth the fight! 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.

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World Radio History

Will You Play My Charity Event?

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

Introduction

Every week or so, I am approached by an individual or an organization inquiring whether or not a client of mine would be interested in performing or appearing at a charitable event. Most of these events assist great causes, and the people behind them are often willing to dedicate significant time and money to help others. This drive and dedication to help others in need, along with a lack of sophisticated knowledge on recording artists' careers, often clouds the expectation in this area.

The reality is that popular recording artists are approached daily to make themselves available for charity events, and while many artists dedicate themselves to helping those in need, they have limits on the number of charitable events they can be available for – especially where the organizers are expecting the artist to perform live.

So, what guides the decision on the charities they do choose to be available for?

Time

As discussed above, recording artists get approached to make themselves available for a countless number of events throughout the year. The life of recording artists can be incredibly taxing on an artist and their loved ones. They are often spending months away from their families, and time spent at home is a treasured commodity. Charity events often involve rehearsal, travel time, and general preparation. In my experience, artists are incredibly giving with their time, but there is only so much time to go around. Consider how you can make the time commitment minimal.

Busy artists are often booked 6-24 months in advance, so plan far enough in advance to plan around their schedule.

Money

An artist can show up to play a golf tournament a lot easier than they can show up to play a show. Artists normally have to pay for rehearsals, transportation, accommodation, and crew costs relating to performances. It's not as simple as showing up with the band and playing a set for ticket buyers. That being said, some artists can show up and play a few songs acoustically or on piano and save on the costs relating to a charity event. Consider whether a stripped-down musical performance can serve

the needs of your charity as much as a fully-instrumented show. Your event may be more attractive if there is a fee for the performers at least to cover costs. If the fee is significant, some artists might consider contributing it back to the charity and thereby receive a charitable receipt.

Dedicated Charities

Many artists I work with select their causes with which to affiliate themselves. Some of them may have a family member affected by a particular ailment (i.e. Multiple Sclerosis) or want to dedicate themselves to children's issues (i.e. SickKids), while others may be passionate about international issues (i.e. War Child) or environmental issues (i.e. Greenpeace). More and more artists I work with are finding dedicated causes and focusing their efforts toward areas they feel passionately about. It doesn't mean that they won't be interested in providing their time for your event – but they are more likely to volunteer if the event benefits a charity they are known for. Find out which artists already feel passionately about your cause and approach those artists first.

Professionalism

Once an artist has reached a certain level of prestige, he or she has to consider the professionalism of the event in question. If you have never put on an event before, most high-level acts will not consent to appear. There are too many items that can go wrong for a first event producer such as proper promotion, venue readiness, insurance, and live presentation (i.e. sound & lights). Get some experience under your belt or retain an experienced production company to help with this element if you are trying to entice big-name acts.

Career Benefits

There are a number of charity events on the calendar that involve significant prestige and artists will often elect to play benefits or charities that can further their careers. The Prince's Trust, for example, features the world's elite artists performing in front of the Royal Family for the benefit of charity. Other events such as Music Cares, Band Aid, and Farm Aid litter the charity calendar and compete for space on the artist schedule. As a charity organizer, you are up against these events, and it is tough to make a case that your event



is "good PR" when there are so many of these events that provide fantastic profile and a real benefit to a successful artist's career.

Conclusion

The reality is that your request will not make it to the artist if you haven't crossed a bunch of the hurdles listed above. The typical charity request often ends up on the manager's desk or the booking agent's desk, and both of them are paid on a commission basis; so, in an indirect way you are asking them to work for free as well.

If your request takes into account all of the above, you will have a better shot at landing that big-name act. The reality is, although famous recording artists give of their time generously, most big-name acts are booked up far in advance, and the career obligations and numerous charity requests compete for dates on the calendar, and it's often impossible for an artist to do it all.

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

Chris Taylor is a music lawyer with the law firm of Taylor Mitsopoulos Burshtein and works with Nelly Furtado, Billy Talent, and Sam Roberts among others.
www.tmkolawyers.com.

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Levy's Platinum Collection Guitar Straps

Levy's Leathers has expanded its comfortable and fashion-oriented Platinum Collection guitar strap line for 2009.

One of this year's updated offerings from the strap manufacturer, the line is fashioned with a striped polyurethane fabric called Online, and features foam padding and soft leather backing for comfort while playing, as well as a decorative median braid. Pictured is model PC17OL, available in six colour options.

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



EMG X Series Active Pickups

EMG has released the X Series, a new line of high output guitar and bass pickups for all styles of playing.

The pickups feature a more organic nature to their sound due to a newly-designed internal preamp from EMG, which allows for more gain to emanate from the amp and instrument as opposed to the preamp. The major effect of this new design is to provide more headroom and body while still maintaining the clarity and response of EMG's other pickup models.

For more information, contact Kief Music Ltd.: 604-590-3344, FAX 604-590-5999, sales@kiefmusic.com.

MB450H with MBC410 cabinet

Marshall MB Series Bass Amps

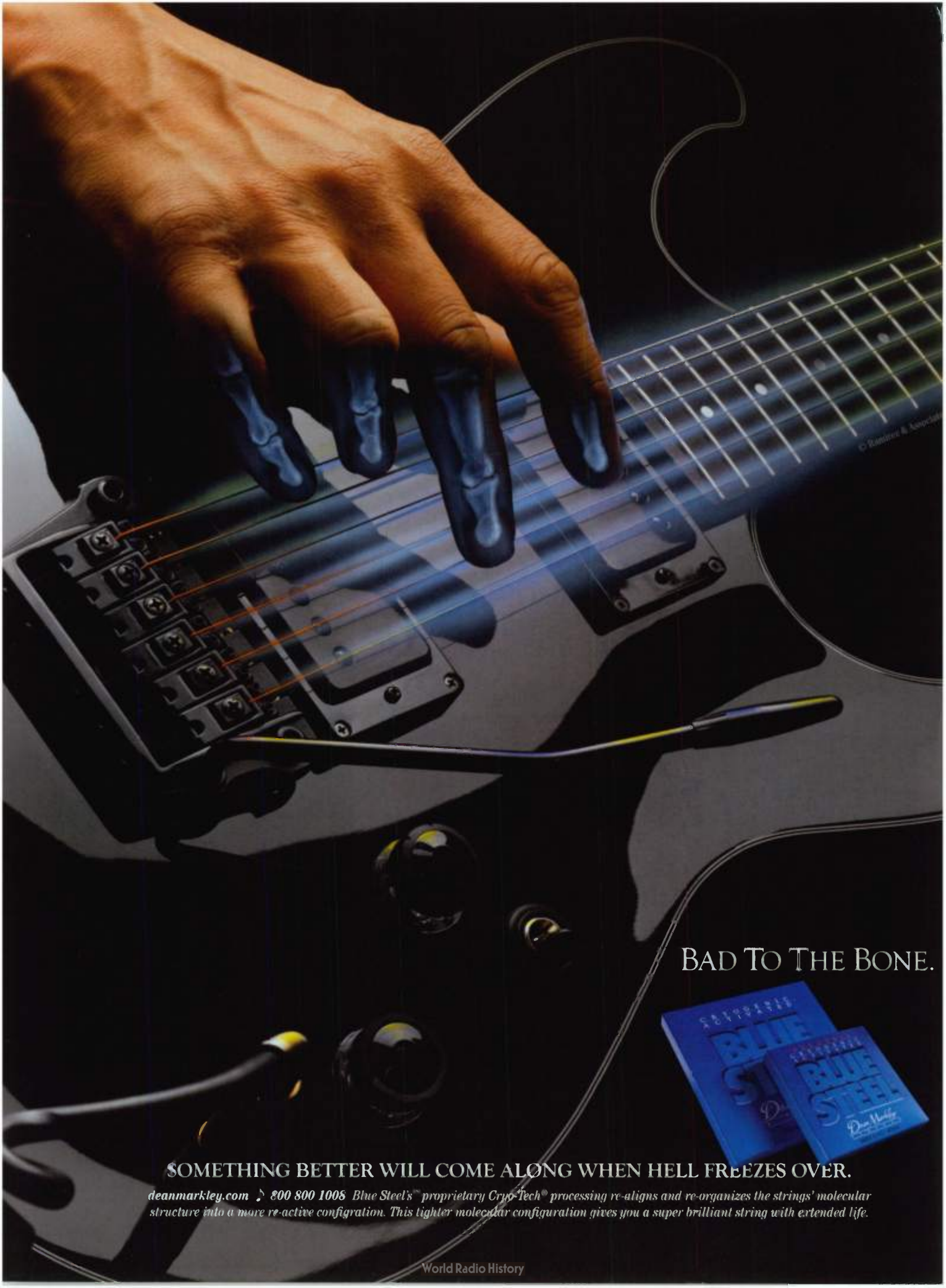
Marshall Amplification is now shipping its entire range of MB Series bass amps, including eight featured models: four combos, one head, and three extension cabinets. These units join the MB15 and MB30 as Marshall's offerings to bass players.

Each amp features two totally independent, footswitchable channels – Classic and Modern – and a footswitch is supplied with each model. The Modern channel offers a crispness and clarity that is ideal for slap and other modern styles, as well as a built-in, variable compressor. The Classic channel boasts an ECC83 preamp tube and features a Gain control plus a Boost switch, allowing users to dial in exactly the amount of "grit" desired for their tone. To further enhance the tonal versatility of these two channels, the active 3-band EQ on the Modern channel features semi-parametric mid controls while the passive 3-band EQ on the Classic channel features an adjustable, 3-way mid voice control.

Additional features include series FX loop, passive/active input selection, XLR DI line out (pre or post), built-in limiter, CD/MP3 input, and a headphone jack for silent practice. The MB450H, MB4210, and MB4410 models also offer a footswitchable channel blend facility that has controls for both Blend and Volume, giving the user three unique tonal options that are accessible via the two-way footswitch. Combined Speakon/jack sockets further add to the feature set of these three units.

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





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Peavey JSX 50 Guitar Amp

Peavey and Joe Satriani have collaborated to create the new Peavey JSX 50 guitar amplifier head, the latest project in the Peavey JSX Series of signature amplifiers and enclosures designed with the guitarist.

Like the 3-channel Peavey JSX Head and JSX Mini Colossal before it, the JSX 50 aims to give guitar players a new tonal range for different sounds and styles. The amp employs a design that pairs five 12AX7 preamp tubes with two 6550 power amp

tubes and two independent channels with 3-band EQ. Both the Clean and Crunch channels feature master volume and preamp gain controls, so guitarists can adjust the interplay between the preamp and power amp on each channel for an array of gain possibilities. The Crunch channel also includes a boost switch and a six-way attack selector that adjusts the bass response.

On the rear panel, a built-in Peavey MSDI microphone-simulated XLR di-

rect interface eliminates the need for miking by allowing users to route the amp's signal directly to a recording device or mixing console. Additional controls include a line out with level control; active effects loop with send/return level control; impedance selector; and a tube bias adjustment jack. A four-button footswitch is included.

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

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U.420d

Mackie U.Series Production Mixers

■ Mackie has released its new U.Series Production Mixers – the U.420 and the U.420d. Designed for the needs of musicians, DJs, and producers, the series provides flexible connections and a centralized user interface to ease workflow.

Each model features a micro-master section with otherwise full-size qualities such as a prominent master volume knob and high-resolution metering. Channel strips with 3-band active EQ, a built-in DI box, and RIAA phono preamps allow users to plug in for live sound and recording via integrated stereo FireWire I/O. A "loop-thru" routing enables users to mix and record analog and DAW playback with a couple of simple moves. Each offers a stereo aux send, headphone out with pre-main level control, and self-mono-ing outputs.

The U.420 4-channel high-head-

room stereo line mixer offers 3-band

"full-kill" active EQ on each channel, built-in DI box, and RIAA phono preamp. The U.420d is loaded with two mic channels with 30 mm faders, and features 3-band active EQ with mid-sweep, while two high-headroom stereo line input channels include two RIAA phono preamps, 3-band active EQ, a full headphone cue system, and a 30 mm crossfader.

For more information, contact Power Group Ltd.: 905-405-1229, FAX 905-405-1885, sales@power-music.com, www.power-music.com.



SABIAN HHX Raw Bell Dry Ride

■ SABIAN has introduced the 21" HHX Raw Bell Dry Ride, making the Raw Bell Dry Ride available in all four primary SABIAN cymbal series: AA, HH, AAX, and HHX.

With its hot, simmering sound and Tone Projection design, the HHX Raw Bell Dry Ride offers consistently solid stick response and a loud bell, making this modern, dark-sounding model suitable for a full range of music from jazz, Latin, and blues to rock and beyond. The cymbal is crafted from pure SABIAN B20 bronze.

The HHX version of the ride has a large, unlathed bell and a surface heavily textured by jumbo-peen hammering. It offers additional tone projection for its dark, simmering, and modern sound. The cymbal boasts a medium-heavy weight and pinpoint lathing around the bell. It comes in either natural or brilliant finish.

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

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Numark ARC 3 CD Player

■ Numark recently released its latest tabletop CD player for DJs: the ARC 3. The unit is an advanced tabletop CD player that plays standard CDs and MP3 CDs, enabling DJs to fit several hours' worth of music on a single disc. ARC 3 offers easy operation with high-performance controls, including pitch and scratch.

Scratching is made easy using the large, 5" scratch wheel. Two loop banks provide DJs creative flexibility, and seamless looping makes integrating loops in musical fashion easy. DJs can control pitch +/- eight per cent and +/- 16 per cent using an onboard fader. Analog and digital outputs provide users a choice of connectivity for stage and studio mixing.

ARC 3 offers the basis for a starter-DJ setup. Two ARC 3s, mated with an M1, M1USB, or X1USB mixer, and headphones provide a rugged and versatile option for DJs.

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



MXL US-Made V6 Condenser Microphone

■ Engineered with pure FET circuitry and hand-selected components, the V6 US-made, large diaphragm condenser mic from MXL is now available.

Designed and built in MXL's southern California facility, the MXL V6 uses silicon valve technology and hand-selected components that accurately produce the quality of a tube mic. According to MXL, the V6 delivers an ultra-detailed top end, smooth lows, and is an ideal mic for capturing the midrange tonalities of horns and male vocals. The V6 also includes a large-diaphragm, cardioid polar pattern, and a solid-state FET amplifier to simulate true tube ambience.

The V6 condenser mic comes complete with a microphone clip and wooden storage case.

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



Roland AX-Synth Shoulder Keyboard

■ Roland is now offering a return of the shoulder synth with the announcement of its new AX-Synth, the first AX-Series product to offer an onboard sound engine that includes a collection of Roland's synth sounds.

Offering keyboardists similar mobility to guitarists and singers, the AX-Synth was created specifically for performing keyboardists. The AX-Synth also gives musicians real-time controls such as the Ribbon, Modulation Bar, D BEAM, and Assignable Knob controllers.

The battery-powered, wireless unit allows keyboardists to move freely on stages and to create dynamic performances. Featuring 49 velocity-sensitive keys, the AX-Synth also includes a 128-voice polyphonic sound engine with 256 distinct tones accessible from eight bank buttons. It can also send and receive standard MIDI messages to and from other keyboards or sound modules.

The AX-Synth allows for inclusion of visual elements into performances through a dedicated V-LINK button and the included easy-to-use PC software editor gives musicians the ability to design unique sounds and effects.

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

Waves Silver Collection Plug-in Bundle



Waves Audio is currently offering its Silver plug-in bundle, which gathers 16 of the company's plug-ins in one discounted package.

Designed specifically with personal production studios and recording musicians in mind, Silver includes all 10 plug-ins from the Waves Native Power Pack, with another six Native essentials. Silver joins the ranks of Waves premium bundles, which include Gold, Platinum, Diamond, and the all-inclusive Mercury.

Included in the Waves Silver bundle are the following plug-ins: Renaissance Compressor, Renaissance Equalizer, and Renaissance Axx; IR-L Convolution Reverb; L1 UltraMaximizer; C1 Parametric Compressor; S1 Stereo Imager; Q10 Paragraphic Equalizer; MaxxBass; MondoMod; Enigma; TrueVerb; SuperTap; Doubler; DeEsser; and Paz Analyzer.

For more information, contact Waves Inc.: 865-909-9200, www.waves.com.

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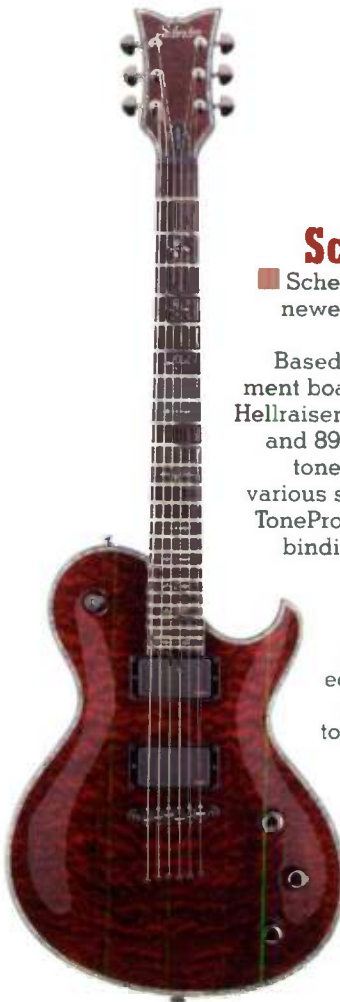
Schecter Solo-6 Hellraiser

Schecter Guitar Research has introduced the newest member of its Hellraiser Collection of electric guitars: the Solo-6 Hellraiser. Based on an offset solo-cut design, the instrument boasts all of the same features as the other Hellraiser models. Armed with EMG Active 81TW and 89 humbuckers, which can be split via the tone controls, the Solo-6 offers versatility for various styles of music. Other features include a TonePros locking Tune-O-Matic bridge, abalone binding, GraphTech Tusq nut, and Schecter's newly-designed locking tuners.

The guitar has a mahogany body and three-piece mahogany neck with a 25.5" scale. The rosewood fingerboard is loaded with 24 x-jumbo frets and adorned with gothic cross inlays. Two volume knobs, a tone knob, and three-way switch round out the onboard control options.

All of the guitar's hardware is finished with black chrome. Available finishes include Gloss Black, Black Cherry, or Gloss White.

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



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TRS Custom Drums Short Stack Fusion Series Kits

■ TRS Custom Drums has introduced the new Short Stack Fusion series drumkits, available from the Road, Studio, and Savant Series lines.

The Road Series utilizes wrapped finishes in standard and custom finishes. Special glues are used to tightly bond the material to the shell, making sure the drum resonates with a pure tone and isn't choked out. The Studio Series consists of hand-rubbed lacquer finishes in satin

or high-gloss. The shells are finished in a choice of stains or custom burst or fade finishes. The Savant Series models are an extension of TRS' inlaid snares. They boast hand-fitted inlays and custom burst finishes.

The drums are crafted one at a time, with all shell interiors finished with a five-step process utilizing special oils, lacquers, and sealers. TRS' Shell Resonance Factor (SRF) is designed specific to the wood type

to add clarity, resonance, and warmth. All bearing edges are hand-cut, sanded, sealed, and waxed to their specifications for the shell's thickness and wood type.

The kits are available in a variety of ply and size options. Custom variations are available upon request.

For more information, contact TRS Custom Drums: 905-773-8305, info@trscustomdrums.com, www.trscustomdrums.com.



Dunlop 1976 Vintage Dyna Comp Reissue

■ Dunlop and MXR Custom Shop have brought back the '76 Vintage Dyna Comp as a reissue, designed to tighten up guitar signals to raise the volume of quiet notes and level off peaks for rich sustain.

Carefully researched and crafted, it features the exact same circuitry used in the original 1976 Dyna Comp, identical in its component layout, silkscreen, and handmade wire harness. The key component is the old school CA3080 "metal can" integrated circuit (IC), which yields quieter operation, greater transparency, and increased dynamic range.

These ICs have been out of production since the '80s, but MXR has tracked down a stash of them – enough to produce a limited run of these compressors. The unit features Switchcraft jacks, Carling switches, and CTS pots. Output and Sensitivity controls round out the onboard control options. The housing is crafted of lightweight aluminum – a throwback to the original model. Finally, the same red design and MXR Script logo of the original adorn the pedal.

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

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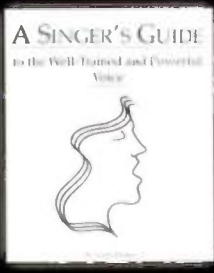
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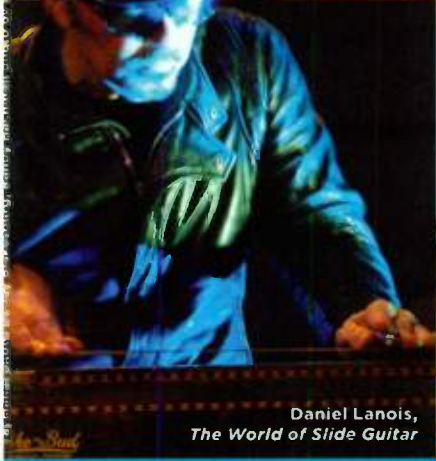
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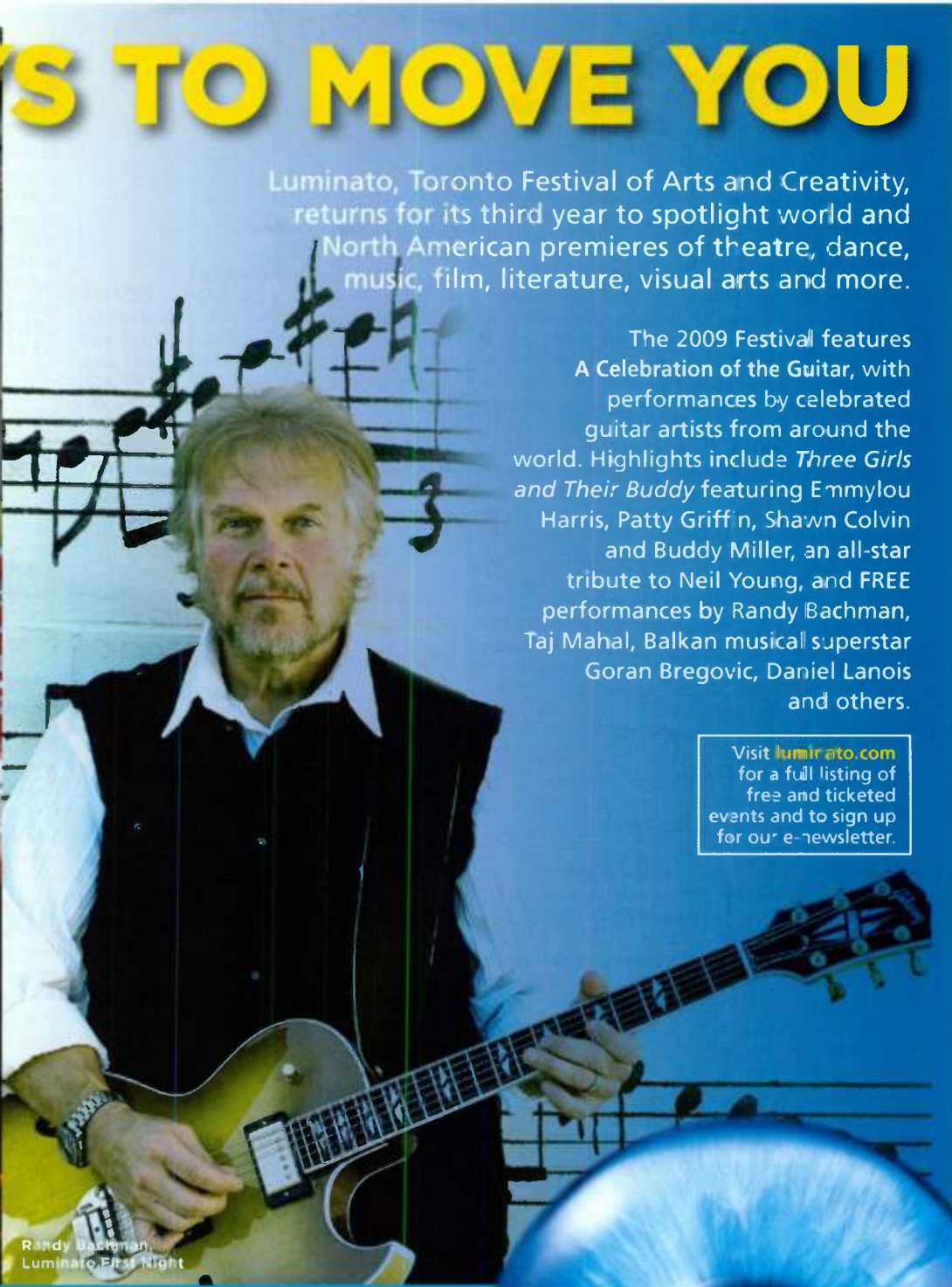
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by Doug Gallant



DALANNAH GAIL BOWEN

For bookings contact: Kristie Schneider, kristie@paulmercsconcerts.com, Paul Merce Concerts, 604-683-8763.

She's opened for B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, and Taj Mahal, and she's worked with Willie Dixon, James Cotton, and Walter "Shakey" Horton. She has a truly spectacular set of pipes and a most commanding stage presence – but chances are that unless you frequent Canada's major blues festivals or tune into blues radio, Vancouver's Dalannah Gail Bowen may still be an unknown commodity to you.

That's because Bowen only released her first blues CD, *Mamma's Got The Blues*, in November of 2007. Since then there has only been one other offering: *I Just Want To Talk To You*, a limited release featuring remixed and remastered versions of some of her favourite jazz songs.

Bowen, who's been honing her craft now for over 40 years, has one of those voices that lays claim to part of your soul the first time you hear her and never lets go. One listen to her version of the Booker T. Jones/William Bell classic "Born Under A Bad Sign" sold me on Bowen. I suspect I'm not alone.

That scenario kept repeating itself over and over again all the way through *Mamma's Got The Blues*. Tracks like "You Can Take My Husband (But Please Don't Mess With My Man)," the album's title track, and her cover of Jimi Hendrix's "Up From The Skies" kept me going back for more.

It's that voice. Smokey. Earthy. Soulful. Powerful.

At various times she reminds me of Billie Holiday, Etta James, Big Mama Thornton, and former Loading Zone lead singer Linda Tillery. But it's not just the voice – it's what she does with it. So much emotion. So much control. That she likes to mix things up is also a big plus. One minute it's a blues standard, and the next an original blues treatment of a non-traditional blues song. Turn your head and she's mining a jazz vein.

Bowen tours with an all-star west coast blues band that features Harris Van Berkel on guitar, Michael Creber on piano, Brian Newcombe on bass, Chris Nordquist on drums, Dave Say on sax, and Jim Salmon on percussion. Catch them if you can.

JENNIFER MEADE

Contact: SAMJAM Music and Entertainment, Samuel "BIKS" Bikai, 514-878-8195, samuelbiks@yahoo.ca, www.myspace.com/jammeade.

Jennifer Meade is all about the positive.

The Montreal soul/R&B singer has a big, full contemporary sound that carries a message and that message is one of hope, love, faith, and building on inner strengths.

Her music has been described as inspirational R&B. Those words tend to send shivers up the backs of some radio programmers – unless of course you happen to be programming gospel music – but at a time when so much negativity abounds, perhaps an occasional injection of something a little more upbeat wouldn't hurt us.

That being said, the lyrics aren't the first thing that caught my attention with Meade. It was the voice.

This woman's got a major league voice – the kind A&R guys from Stax, Motown, and Atlantic used to go crazy for: silky smooth but with a lot of muscle behind it.

Meade, whose influences include Kirk Franklin and CeCe Winans, recently released *Divine Conversations Vol. I* and *Vol. II*, a collection of more than two dozen new original songs that blend R&B, soul, hip hop, funk, gospel, and pop.

She's described them as a series of conversations with the Holy Spirit. Some might find her music a little preachy, but preachy or not, it's heartfelt and it's hard to ignore what she can do to a piece of music.



NAJUAH

Contact: najuah.music@gmail.com, Management: Chairmanb@gmail.com, www.myspace.com/najuah

Energy. Enthusiasm. Edge.

Those are the first three words that come to mind when trying to describe Toronto's Najuah, a six-piece pop/rock act fronted by sisters Juliet and Hanifa that also features the talents of drummer Jeremy Kleynbans, rhythm guitarist Brian Seligman, guitarist Neil Whitford, and bassist Ben Miller.

The band's current stock and trade is a zippy, club-friendly mix that draws from a host of influences ranging from '70s punk music, '80s alternative rock, and ska to power pop and contemporary soul.

If you put Blondie, The Specials, and En Vogue in a blender, threw in a dash of The Walkmen and added a snippet of Exene Cervenka, you might come up with something resembling Najuah's sound today.

Screaming guitars are married to big dance beats, big bass lines, and thundering drums and share space with the kind of organ sound The Doors and Strawberry Alarm Clock used to go for.

And on top of everything are these two over-the-top voices. Juliet and Hanifa have energy to burn and they burn up a lot of it on tracks like "Pablo," "Manhattan," and "Someone Else."

The bandmembers are writing good material, they're pumping a lot of juice through it, and they're going for big production values, the latter with the help of producer Malik Worthy (Esthero, k-os, Molly Johnson) and Grammy/Juno Award-winning mixing engineer Jeff McCulloch. Good people to have in your corner.

Najuah have caught the ears of industry players like MuchMusic, MTV Canada, BET, the Canadian Music Network, and *Billboard* magazine, and even bigger things are, I expect, looming on the horizon.



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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