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With Lights, Bill King
& Garth Hudson

2009

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WEAPON

BEAST



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Vol. XXXI No.4



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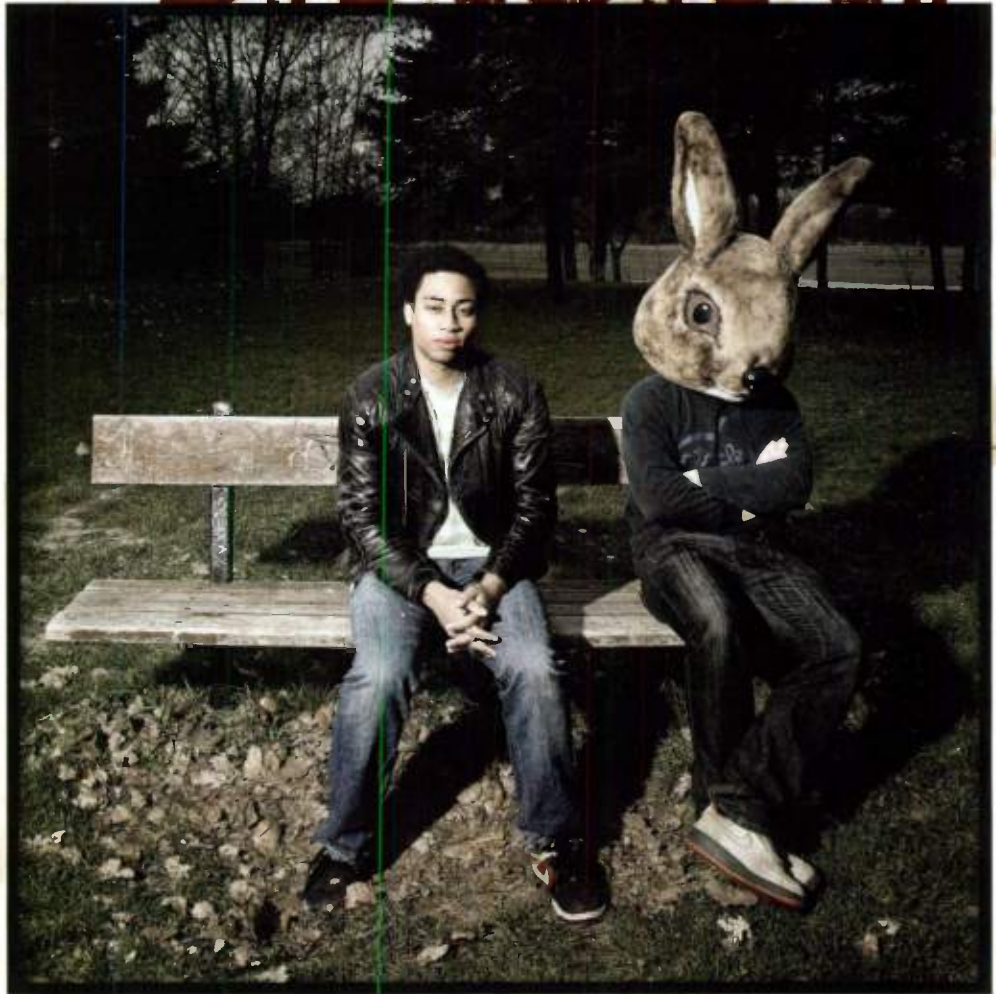
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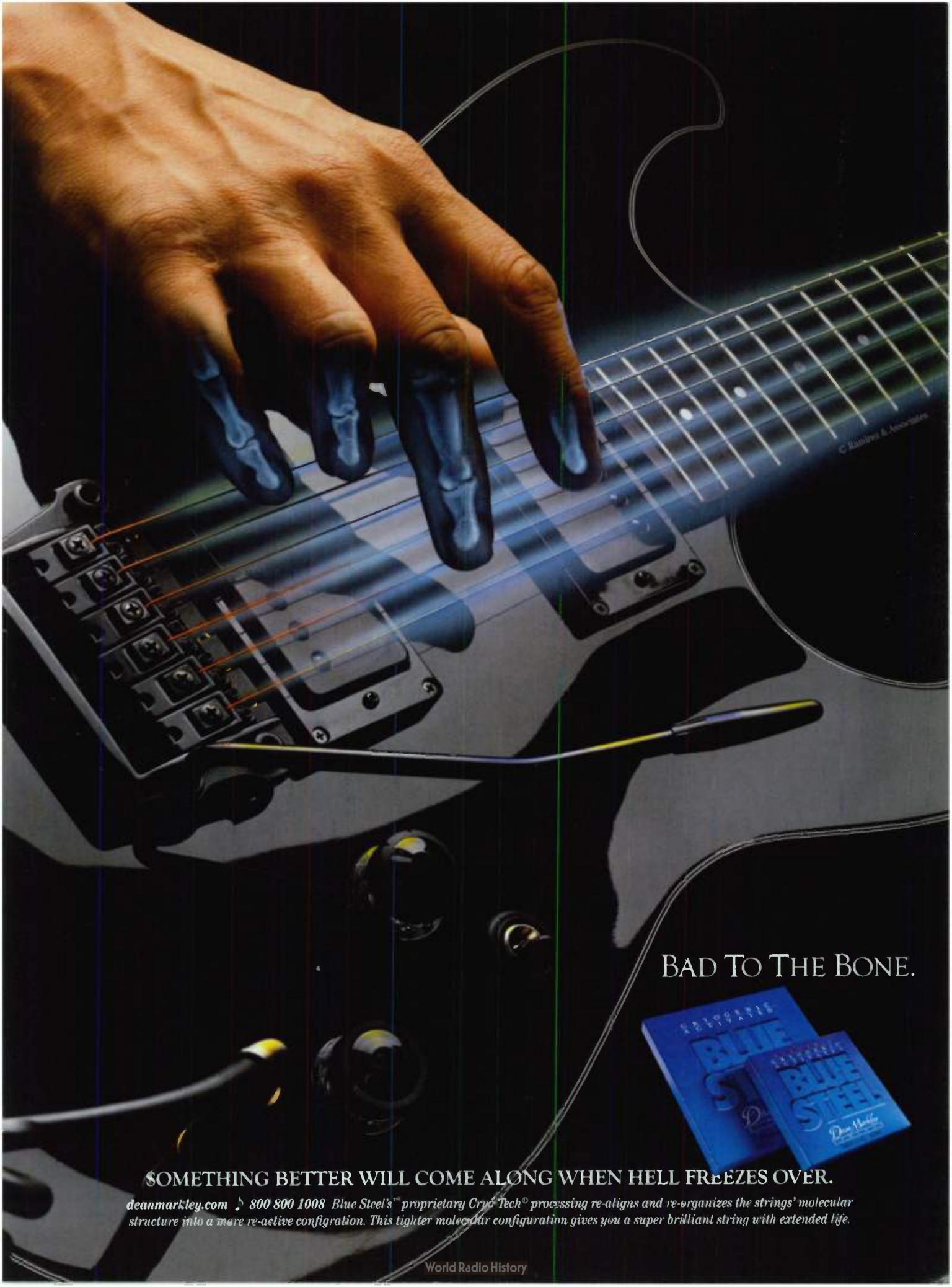


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Looking Forward

by Andrew King

Welcome to the July/August 2009 issue of *Canadian Musician* – my first at the helm. It's more than an honour to have the opportunity to captain such a reputable and respected publication on a course for the future. I'm really looking forward to bringing some new ideas to what we do here at *CM*, while also further developing the content that's made this publication great for the last 30 years.

This magazine is truly for you – the Canadians making the music and making it in the music business. Our content aims to further your progress as musicians, regardless of where you are on your journey. We'll continue to bring you these goods, as well as more content and contributions from recognized industry figures and musicians across the country.

One of the things I really want to encourage is a more open discourse between you and our team. I welcome any and all feedback – ideas, comments, questions, or criticism. After all, we're here to make this magazine as great as it can be for you. Have a suggestion for a killer Bass Column? Is there an artist that you think we need to feature? Did we really miss the mark with one of our Road Tests? Tell us about it.

In the meantime, you can expect us to grow at both ends by building on what we've done successfully in the past and introducing some fresh and creative new components.

I hope you enjoy this issue. I, for one, am excited to have Alexisonfire grace my first cover as Editor, and look forward to hearing from you down the road – right here on this page.

Andrew King
Editor
aking@nor.com

Getting Prepped To

by Andrew King

In the mainstream media, the demo is perhaps the most oft-referenced (and subsequently mocked) element of the independent music scene. Countless films and TV shows will parody the up-and-coming band just "trying to get its demo into the right hands." While that same independent music scene has progressed quite significantly over the last decade, the demo – as indicated by its recurrence in such media to date – is still a significant aspect of career development for independent artists.

The demo has taken on a more ambiguous definition of late. No longer simply a two-track cassette ambitiously mailed out to radio stations and record labels, demos can now be anything from tracks you lay down on a handheld recorder for internal band scrutiny, through to pre-production recordings for future releases, right on to the traditional definition that we'll adopt here: a recording of a few key tracks that's shopped around for the purpose of attracting industry attention and strengthening your support group.

GETTING IT TOGETHER



"You're definitely going to want to go with your strongest material, and you probably don't want to go over three songs," advises Josh Hogan, who's been on every conceivable end of the demo exchange as Founder of Diminished Fifth Records and Hogan Media Relations, and also the vocalist of Halifax-based metal band Orchid's Curse. Once your songs are selected, it's time to make those songs as good as they can possibly be.

"I don't think it's ever a bad idea to be

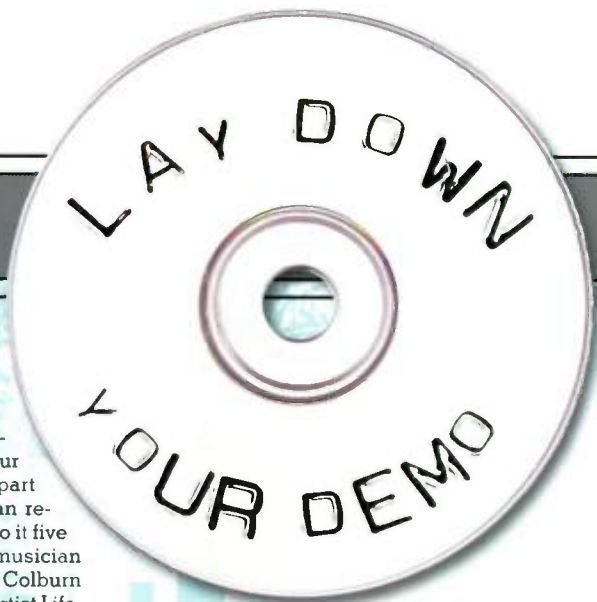
overly-prepared," says Hogan. Before spending a dime on professional studio time, make some low-budget recordings yourself to get your ideas down, and then pick them apart over and over. "As an artist, you can record a song and then completely redo it five times," explains Jesse Colburn. A musician himself, the last few years have seen Colburn recording demos for bands like The Artist Life, Protest The Hero, and newcomers Stereos out of his Toronto-based studio, now working with producer and engineer Gavin Brown (Billy Talent, Three Days Grace, Cancer Bats).

The individual you've chosen to record your ideas for your demo may be able to help during this process. Before working with an artist, Colburn will ask that some rough recordings be sent his way so he can get familiar with the music ahead of time. "I want to take it in and look at what the song is, but more importantly, what that song can be." It might also be helpful to have those ears when it comes to whittling down to your two or three best tracks.

CHOOSING YOUR CREW

"Back when I was recording demos with Closet Monster, we'd meet a lot of different bands and would ask them who did their recordings if we liked what we heard," explains Colburn. "It's tough because these things don't just fall into your lap – if you're a smart band, you've done a lot of touring and networking, and hopefully spoken to others who can discuss who they've worked with." You'll want to get all the details from other artists or contacts you have in the industry. This is a big decision, considering a significant amount of money will be invested in a product that may ultimately decide where your career is headed.

"It comes down to having an active role in everything you do," offers Hogan. "A lot of bands expect people to come to their shows, but won't go to other bands' shows.



You never know who you're going to meet at other shows or industry events." This is a decision best not reserved for Google. "Make sure you're working with someone that you trust – either with a proven track record or someone really dedicated to your band and what you're doing," Hogan continues.

That's a big factor in your decision. There are several big-name engineers and top-quality studios where you can pay big bucks to record, and you'll most likely come out with a great product. On the other side of the coin, though, is the fact that – like your band – there are many up-and-coming engineers and producers looking to make a name for themselves in the industry that may have the goods. The latter option becomes even more attractive when you can get someone to really get behind your project.

"If a band comes in with a certain budget, and yet I really believe in these songs, I may donate some time to the project," explains Colburn. "Coming from a punk rock band with little money, I know it's hard to afford a good demo. When I'm recording, I try to really get involved with the songs as opposed to just manning the board. I try to make the best demo I can with the band I'm working with."

If your capital is really low, but you're certain your band is at this point, Hogan offers a few tips for saving money without sacrificing too much quality: "You're going to at least want good drum production and good vocal production, so I know bands on a budget that have done drums and vocals



T T T I P S F R O M G G G A R T H

"This is a scary moment for all bands – getting ready to record demos," shares Garth (GGGarth) Richardson, the Vancouver-based producer and engineer who's been at the helm of records by Rise Against, Chevelle, Nickelback, and others. He shares some tips that artists should consider:

- Make sure you have a song that is worth record-

ing. Most bands have riffs, and nothing more. A good test: the song should stand on its own when played on an acoustic guitar.

- Put together a budget of how much you have to spend and stick to it. Don't expect champagne for beer money.
- Nothing should ever get in the way of the vocals. I hate to be the bad guy here, but drums and bass parts do not sell a song; it's the singer and the

Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.



professionally, and then tracked guitars and bass elsewhere." Maybe not the ideal choice, but if you do venture down this road, be wary. Adds Hogan as the bottom line: "Nowadays, there's no excuse for a shitty recording."

MAKING THE MOST

So you've got your final product in-hand (or on your hard drive) – now what? "Even if you're only planning a short order of deliveries, I'd recommend having your demo professionally pressed,"

says Hogan – and for a lot of reasons. Why spend so much time and money on a product when the packaging and presentation might turn someone off?

Also, if you've got three tracks professionally done in a nice-

looking package, you could also have a commercial EP on your hands. "There's no reason you can't use that demo as an EP and try to raise some capital," suggests Hogan. You could also put those tracks up for digital sale on iTunes and the like.

Before you start sending your music to the bigger fish – labels, publicists, mainstream media, and so on – get a bit of buzz behind it first. "Even if it's just some press clippings or a 'toured with' list," says Hogan, "it'll hold a lot more weight than a burnt CD in a jewel case. Once you have some credible press quotes or are getting some play on campus radio, that's when you can start really sending it out."

So there's a bit on how it's done. Before you even begin considering doing some professional recording, you need to know if you're ready for that stage of your career, but how? "I'd say you're ready for a professional demo when you've done every

other possible thing you can do on your own to advance your career," says Hogan, quite directly.

If you've built up enough buzz, reworked and filtered your material to the point of perfection, and are ready to make your next big move, start looking into where you're going

to get your demo done – ask around and keep an open discourse with your industry contacts. Going in without all of the goods will leave you in a position much like that of the ridiculed indie bands in the mainstream media that are "just trying to catch a break."

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Changes

NXNE EXPANDS NAME EXPANDS IN ALL DIRECTIONS FOR 15TH ANNIVERSARY



Mark Berube & The Patriotic Few

PHOTO BY JEN MORDEN

Over 200,000 local and international music fans took in over 625 acts at over 725 shows during this year's edition of the North By Northeast (NXNE) festival – making it the biggest one yet. Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the festival ran from June 17-21, 2009 across Toronto, with stages ranging from familiar clubs to Pearson International Airport, Union Station, and several places in between.

The NXNE Film Festival saw 40 films being screened and a 35 per cent rise in total attendance. The NXNE Conference rolled out a pair of initiatives: a new series of networking sessions dubbed the Rivoli Sessions, and NXPO, a music-lifestyle trade show at the Hyatt Regency Toronto. NXPO also hosted the Day Stage, where visitors were treated to performances by several festival acts.

On top performances from high-flying Canadian acts like Feist and Broken Social Scene, Wood-pigeon, In-Flight Safety, Wintersleep, The Cliks, and Carpenter, the festival also hosted international acts like Wu-Tang Clan's GZA, Black Lips, Ninjasonic, Spinnerette, The Sonics, and others. Congratulations are due to York University virtual band GSpot Boyz, who took home \$100,000 for winning the AMP Energy Rock Off following a performance at Yonge-Dundas Square.

NXNE staffers and volunteers totalled over 700 this year – another festival record. The festival has already scheduled next year's event for June 16-20, 2010. Artist submissions will be open from October 2009 through January 2010.

Visit www.nxne for wrap-up content and regularly-updated information on next year's festival.



The Coast rock the Dakota Tavern.

PHOTO BY JEN MORDEN

Canadian jazz pianist Bernie Senensky (pictured) was on-hand for the Roland V-Piano VIP launch event, held at Metalworks Institute in Mississauga, ON on June 10, 2009. Doug McGarry, Executive Marketing Manager for Roland Canada states: "We're very pleased with the positive response to the V-Piano from professional players across the country." For more information, visit www.roland.ca.



War Child Makes A Difference With Music

War Child Canada is a charity dedicated to providing humanitarian assistance to war-affected children around the world, and since its inception, the organization has been using music and the support of the music industry to assist the cause.

"War Child has a history of fundraising through the music industry since its inception in 1999," comments War Child CEO Lisa Zbitnew. "One of the first major events was a Tragically Hip concert in Winnipeg for over 80,000 people in 2000. Many events and charity albums have followed, including this year's *Heroes* CD, which has raised over \$400,000."

The organization helps generate awareness, support, and advocacy for children's rights, and Zbitnew says support from the music community has been continuous. "Whether it's a recording, busking, a concert, or private event, War Child is immensely fortunate to have such universal support from musicians and the music community."

For more information, visit www.warchild.ca.



Drummers march down Toronto's Queen St. W. as part of War Child's recent Drummers For Darfur initiative.



Cherry Beach School Of Music Hosts Open House

The foot of June 2009 saw Toronto-based Cherry Beach School of Music open its doors in celebration of its second anniversary for an open house and student recording session.

"The goal of Cherry Beach School of Music is to separate ourselves from the more traditional music schools by offering students a unique approach to music education and allowing them to improvise and play amongst other musicians," says Carman Guerrieri, President of Cherry Beach School of Music. Visit www.cherrybeach-schoolofmusic.com for more information.



30 Years Of Developing Careers For Trebas

Trebas Institute is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2009, training students to success in the digital media world since 1979. Trebas offers courses in several programs: Audio Engineering and Production/DJ Arts, Entertainment Management, Film and Television Production and Post-Production, and Event and Venue Management.

"I'm always thrilled when I hear about a Trebas Institute graduate who has achieved major international career success as result, in large part, of the career training and education at our college," comments Founder David P. Leonard.

"Of course, we've had several thousand students go through the various campuses since we began over 30 years ago." Graduates of the Institute have racked up over a dozen Grammy and Oscar nominations over the years, while others have gone on to work with major entertainment companies or international touring artists.

For more information, contact Trebas Institute: 514-845-4141, FAX 514-845-2581, infomtl@trebas.com, www.trebas.com.



Planet Waves has entered into a new platform with the introduction of its Scale Wizard and Chordmaster iPhone and iPod Touch applications. Scale Wizard is a comprehensive guitar scale library featuring 10,000 scale, mode, and arpeggio shapes, a left-handed view, and alternate tunings, while Chordmaster offers a library of 7,800 guitar chords, displaying notes and fingerings on a virtual fretboard. Visit www.planetwaves.com for more information.



Brad Mates of Emerson Drive hypes the crowd during 2008's awards.

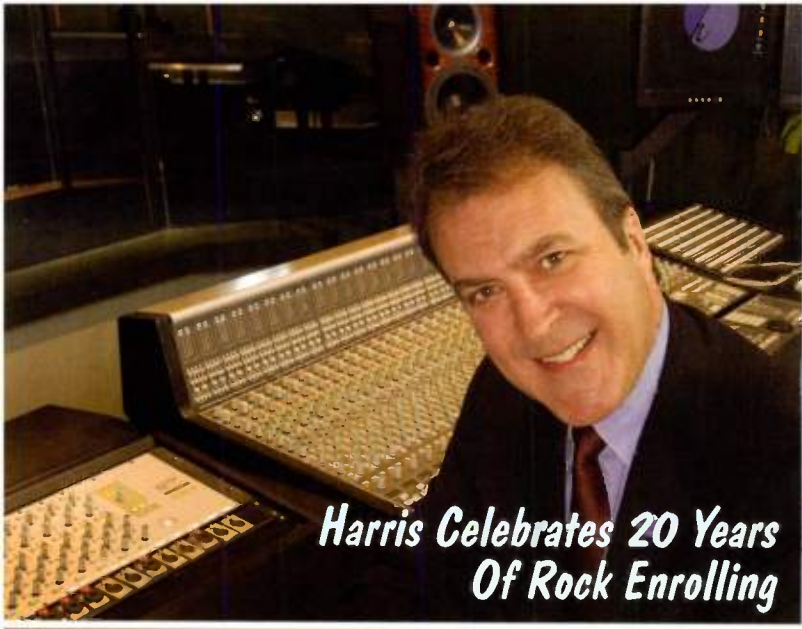
2009 CCMAS Set To Take Vancouver

This year's 2009 Canadian Country Music Awards will be held September 13, 2009 in Vancouver at GM Place, concluding four days of industry events known as Country Music Week.

Country Music Week, held September 10-13, is the annual celebration that brings together the country music industry and its fans for an agenda of educational seminars, showcases, networking opportunities, awards, and musical performances.

Events include the Songwriter's Café, New Artist Showcase, Industry Brunch and Awards, Fanfest, Panels, Great Guitar Pull, and more. Performers for the awards ceremony include Johnny Reid, Doc Walker, and Terri Clark.

For more information, visit www.ccma.org.



Harris Celebrates 20 Years Of Rock Enrolling

Toronto's Harris Institute is celebrating 20 years of music industry and audio education. The first 29 students transformed an empty building into a school and in 1989, the motivated students started studies with an inspired faculty.

"It was like being inside the glow of a Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney movie ... twice!" exclaims founder John Harris. "Our students built two schools and took engagement and interaction to magical heights." Today, the school remains inti-

mate with a limit of 125 students and a faculty of 68 instructors. Over 2,500 students have come from 64 countries and every Canadian province.

"We have far surpassed the high hopes we had for that tiny school in 1989," says Harris, "and we are very proud of the achievements of our graduates."

For more information, contact Harris Institute: 416-367-0178, FAX 416-367-5534, info@harrisinstitute.com, www.harrisinstitute.com.

SOCAN Content With New Satellite Radio Tariff

SOCAN is reportedly pleased with the establishment of Tariff 25 for the communication of SOCAN's musical works on satellite radio from 2005-2009. SOCAN is now able to receive 4.26 per cent of total revenues earned by satellite radio services operating in Canada. "While satellite broadcasters are still growing their business in Canada, creators of music can look forward to royalties growing as well from these important new uses," says Paul Spurgeon, SOCAN's VP Legal Services & General Counsel. Visit www.socan.ca for more information.



Indie Pool Helps Artists Get SMRT

Indie Pool has launched a new service dubbed SMRT (Sustainable Music Release Technologies). For an initial fee, artists are able to have their music sold through over 40 legal digital retailers, catalogued and given potential for on-demand fulfillment to HMV, Chapters, Amazon.ca, and other retailers, bar-coded and registered with SoundScan, entered into Gracenote and All Music Guide databases, and the opportunity to have CDs printed and shipped on-demand for \$2.95 each.

Your audio master and artwork are stored by SMRT, with high-resolution printing done on recycled cardboard digipacks for physical releases. Artists can produce as few as one CD on demand at any time. Check out more on the service at www.smrtherelease.com.



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Guitar Workshop Plus Approaches

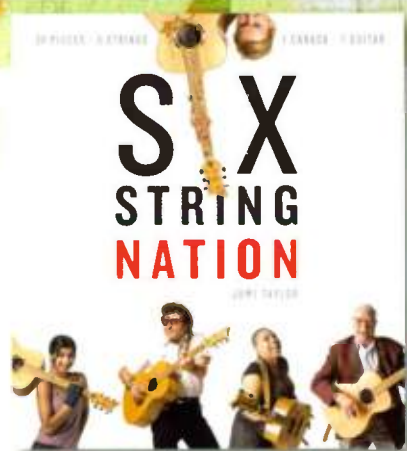
Registration is still open for the Toronto and Vancouver summer sessions of Guitar Workshop Plus. The events will feature session appearances by guitarists like Paul Gilbert, Rik Emmett, Andy Timmons, Don Ross, and more, along with bassist Stu Hamm and drummer Mark Kelso. Sessions are running as follows:

Toronto Session 1: July 19-24, 2009.

Toronto Session 2: July 26-31, 2009.

Vancouver Session: August 9-14, 2009.

"Our sessions have been filled to capacity over the past few years, and we're anticipating being completely sold out once again," says Founder Brian Murray. Interested parties are encouraged to register ahead of time. Visit www.guitarworkshopplus.com for more information.



Read About Our Six String Nation

Voyageur, the official Six String Nation guitar, is now the subject of both a new book and collector coin from the Royal Canadian Mint.

The Six String Nation project finds a number of actual pieces of Canadian history and culture from across the nation made into a handcrafted acoustic guitar. "It gives regular folks a chance to hold that history in their hands and it gives everyone a chance to hear that history come to life when the guitar is played," comments Jowi Taylor, who spearheaded the project. "I've witnessed this over and over again and it can be a profound experience. My hope is that it gets people thinking about the links between their own story, their own community, their own experience, and our collective story as Canadians."

The book is 144 pages with over 100 colour photographs of notables with the instrument, as well as several contributed anecdotes and much more. The 50-cent collector coin, shaped like a guitar pick, features a selective hologram of six vibrating strings.

For more on the project, visit www.sixstringnation.com.

DOMENIC TROIANO GUITAR SCHOLARSHIP

The Domenic Troiano Guitar Scholarship is named in honour of extraordinary Canadian guitar legend, Domenic Troiano. The \$10,000 scholarship is presented annually to a Canadian guitarist who will be pursuing post-secondary guitar education in Canada or elsewhere.

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Follow The Sennheiser Sound Tour

This summer, Sennheiser is connecting consumers across Canada and the US with the Sennheiser Sound Tour, a three-month road trip that finds a team of 12 young people challenged to put Sennheiser headphones on as many people as possible. The two teams – guys and girls – will document their antics in weekly self-produced webisodes, which will all be posted at www.sennheisersoundtour.com.



Steven Lee Olsen, Tara Oram, Jason Blaine & The Higgins on the Gibson tour bus.

Canadian Country Artists Busk For Charity

Several Canadian country acts, including Jason Blaine, Tara Oram, and The Higgins, who were all part of the 2009 CMT Tour, stopped at several locations in Toronto on June 8, 2009 to busk for The Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation.

The Gibson Guitar Tour Bus stopped at impromptu locations

throughout the day, including a stop at The Princess Margaret Hospital to raise money and awareness about the Foundation. The hospital runs a reputable cancer research centre, and the Foundation raises over \$70 million annually to support the research and programs.

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eMixIT Before You iTunes It

Piloted by producer/engineer Brian Moncarz and digital marketing executive Lawrence Tepperman, eMixEngine is an online mixing site where customers can upload songs, have them mixed and mastered remotely by professional engineers, and returned within two days.

"The site is very simple to navigate and the purchasing process is extremely easy," comments Moncarz on the site. The Our Work section features a before and after player, which allows listeners to toggle in real-time between samples of unmastered and mastered versions of a track. "We're also developing a community section that has articles, recording and mixing tips, forums, and a blog – all geared towards artists and bands on a budget."

The site welcomes all genres of music for a tailored final mix. Says Moncarz: "Basically, it's easy to use, fast, inexpensive, and sounds world-class." Visit www.emixengine.com for more on the service.



Music Nova Scotia Boosts Online Presence

Music Nova Scotia recently revamped its website, which now offers an easily-navigatable layout and several new sections. On top of familiar menu tabs such as Events, Member Info, News, a Directory, Funding, and Education, the site also includes show listings happening around the province, info on Nova Scotia Music Week, a Downloads section, and information on the Bringin' It Home initiative and Export Development Program. Visit the site at www.musicnovascotia.ca for more information.

WWW.CANADIANMUSICIAN.COM

MusiCounts Opens Call For \$10,000 Grant Applications



The Trews perform during a MusiCounts presentation at Terry Fox Secondary School in Port Coquitlam, BC.

Credit: Jennifer Gauthier

Applications for 2009-2010 Band Aid grants from MusiCounts are now open and schools nationwide are invited to apply. Schools can find more information on application criteria, including downloadable Application Forms for Band Aid grants at www.musiccounts.ca. The applications will be accepted until August 4, 2009.

Each year, MusiCounts provides dozens of Canadian elementary, secondary, and separate schools with a

\$10,000 grant towards enhancing their musical education programs. This year, MusiCounts will add a \$5,000 grant level in order to expand the reach and impact of the program.

"Our grants not only provide access to a greater breadth of musical instruction for young people, but also have a far reaching impact on their cognitive and social development," says MusiCounts Executive Director Srinka Wallia.

Visit www.musiccounts.ca for more information.



Guitarists Unite In Mont-Orford

The 2009 Guita: Summit, hosted August 24-28, 2009 in Mont-Orford, QC, will welcome guitarists for a jam-packed educational program. This year's instructors include Jon Damian, Steve Groves, Jake Langley, and Roddy Elias. Drum and bass instructors will also be joining the fold this year, meaning the performance ensembles will have a full rhythm section. Check out the event at www.guitarsummit.com.



MAKING MUSIC FROM MILES AWAY

A new trend emerging in recording is remote instrument tracking being added to songs from separate studios over the Internet. Collective Soul and Paul Rodgers drummer Ryan Hoyle recently opened Cave Studio in LA, which specializes in custom drum tracks performed by Hoyle himself.

"My concept is to use world-class outboard gear to record and export raw drum tracks," says Hoyle about the project. "It's great to think that with current technology, I can record a drum track for a producer in Tokyo, London, or Sydney and deliver it during a night's sleep." The studio can accommodate those who want to engineer or produce their own tracks, offering both Pro Tools and Logic formatting.

The studio offers an FTP server that will allow collaborations and file transfers. Cave also carries outboard gear from several manufacturers. He's done remote drum tracks for artists such as Carrie Underwood, Deborah Gibson, and David Cook.

For more information, visit www.ryanhoyle.com/thelab.htm



The Stills perform during the 2009 Juno Awards.

Performers Benefit From The Juno Effect

Following the broadcast of the 2009 Juno Awards, which was taken in by 1.23 million viewers, Juno winners and performers like City and Colour, Sam Roberts, and The Stills have seen album sales and digital downloads rise by well over 100 per cent. Data from Nielsen SoundScan confirms significant sales spikes following the broadcast for headlining performers. The 2010 Juno Awards will be broadcast on CTV next year from St. John's, NL. Visit www.junoawards.com for more information.



KoSA Stays In Montreal For 2009

The 14th annual KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Camp, and Festival will be held in Montreal this year, helping to officially open the new KoSA Centre for the Arts. Participants will be able to study with some of the world's top percussionists in an intensive, hands-on class situation at all levels.

The program includes sessions in rock, jazz, classical, Italian, Cuban, African, and more. Meals are catered for faculty and participants to boost the networking opportunities. Each evening concert will feature several KoSA faculty members performing with the KoSA rhythm section and surprise guests.

Visit www.kosamusic.com for more information or to register.

■ Montreal Guitar Show

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

■ 2009 NPM National Convention

Chicago, IL
July 6-10, 2009
240-247-3000, FAX 240-247-3001
www.npm.org

■ 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@rogers.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

■ GMA Immerse 2009

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

■ KoSA International Workshop, Camp & Festival

Montreal, QC
July 30-August 2, 2009
514-482-5554, FAX 514-483-2226
info@kosamusic.com, www.kosamusic.com

■ 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

■ Bumbershoot Festival 2009

Seattle, WA
September 5-7, 2009
206-281-7788
info@onereel.org, www.bumbershoot.org

■ Barrie New Music Fest 2009

Barrie, ON
September 10-13, 2009
info@newmusicfest.ca, www.newmusicfest.ca

■ Canadian Country Music Week 2009

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

■ Western Canadian Music Awards 2009

Brandon, MB
September 17-20, 2009
204-943-8485, FAX 204-453-1594
info@wcmw.ca,
www.westerncanadianmusicawards.ca

■ 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

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

■ Celtic Colours International Festival

Cape Breton, NS
October 9-17, 2009
902-562-6700, FAX 902-539-9388
info@celtic-colours.com,
www.celtic-colours.com

■ 23rd OCFF Annual Conference

Ottawa, ON
October 15-17, 2009
613-560-5997, FAX 613-560-2001
admin@ocff.ca, www.ocff.ca

■ 52nd College Music Society National Conference

Portland, OR
October 22-25, 2009
406-721-9616, FAX 406-721-9419
cms@music.org, www.music.org

■ Montreal Drum Fest 2009

Montreal, QC
October 24-25, 2009
888-928-1726
www.montrealdrumfest.com

■ WOMEX 2009 (World Music Expo)

Copenhagen, Denmark
October 28-November 1, 2009
+49 30-318-614-30, FAX +49 30-318-614-10
womex@womex.com, www.womex.com

■ Billboard Film & TV Music Conference

Los Angeles, CA
October 29-30, 2009
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ The Billboard Touring Conference & Awards

New York, NY
November 4-5, 2009
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ PASIC 2009

Indianapolis, IN
November 11-14, 2009
317-974-4488, FAX 317-974-4499
percarts@pas.org, www.pasic.org

■ Midwest Clinic 63rd Annual Conference

Chicago, IL
December 15-19, 2009
847-424-4163, FAX 847-424-5185
info@midwestclinic.org,
www.midwestclinic.org

■ MIDEM 2010

Cannes, France
January 24-27, 2010
514-660-9724, FAX 514-764-0149
www.midem.com

■ Mobile Beat Las Vegas 2010

Las Vegas, NV
February 9-11, 2010
515-986-3300, FAX 515-986-3344
custserv@mobilebeat.com,
www.mobilebeat.com

■ 2010 International Folk Alliance Conference

Memphis, TN
February 17-21, 2010
901-522-1170, FAX 901-522-1172
fa@folk.org, www.folk.org

■ East Coast Music Awards, Festival, & Conference 2010

Sydney, NS
March 4-7, 2010
902-892-9040, FAX 902-892-9041
ecma@ecma.com, www.ecma.com

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Sennheiser Evolution Wireless 100 G3 Series

by Howard Laurie



EM100 G3 receiver

SKM100 handheld with 835 capsule



SK100 G3 bodypack

Sennheiser's new Evolution Wireless G3 EM100 receiver and transmitters are on the bench today. The EM100 system update has an easy-to-read, brightly-lit orange display. It has the usual RF and AF meters as vertical bars and a battery indicator, which lets you know when you have to run to the stage with some fresh AAs. Through all the tests, they lasted longer than I thought they would – three shows and the indicator still showed two of the three bars! I tested the SK100 bodypack for instruments and ME 2 omni lapel mic, as well as the SKM100 handheld with the 835 capsule.

After a few days of testing, I got a consensus on the reasons that one would go wireless in the first place – mobility and freedom from wires. Go figure!

There is now an infrared transmitter synch function in the receiver, and a counterpart infrared receiver in both the bodypack and handheld. This is used for quick frequency matching. All you do is select your frequency on the EM100 receiver, place the sensor of the handheld or body pack close to the receiver's eye, and push the synch button. In seconds, the frequency info is transmitted and locked into the bodypack or handheld.

There is also a new multi-function switch on the handheld. The device is spring-loaded and defaults to a centre position. Rotating it up or down increments or decrements the value or the position in the menu. Pushing it in selects the value. It is also used for mute function and acts as a cancel function button. The display is backlit, but now in orange with black characters. The bodypack still has the same switch set-up from previous models but the display is also orange with black characters.

Now to the tests: The SK100 instrument system has a sensitivity range of 60db in 3db steps. Tony Campbell, a gui-

tarist in the Toronto reggae scene, used the instrument system connected to a ZOOM PS-02, into a Fender Stage 100 amp. We did a quick direct-to-amp test just to listen to the path of least resistance and compare the signal strength and quality of the sound to the wireless system. There was virtually no difference, and Tony commented that there was a smooth transition between pickup configurations on the guitar and between patches on the ZOOM. Of course, he was also enjoying the mobility that the system offered.

Yosvanni Castaneda, a recently-arrived Cuban violin virtuoso and singer was the next to try it out. He was at Lula performing with Lady Son, an up-and-coming salsa powerhouse. We had his Silenzia electronic violin going direct into the house system. The signal was clean and strong, and with a bit of EQ magic, it sounded remarkably like a violin.

The MMD 835-1 handheld has an input range of 48dB in 6dB steps from -30dB to +18dB. I think an extra -10db sensitivity would be a good option for those singers with massive lung capacity. There was, however, no noticeable distortion even when peaks were frequent. The 835 capsule can be swapped with optional MMD 845-1 or MME 865-1. Overall, the MMD 835-1 is a good sounding mic.

Singer Michael Dunston with Soul Stew agreed to use the 835 instead of his (and my) favourite 300 Series handheld. I have one at the venue, and I'm sure a handful of artists went out and purchased their own after using it at Lula Lounge. After the show, Michael and I discussed the merits of the system. He was totally happy with the performance of the mic.

For the presentation set, which is the ME-2 omni lapel mic and body pack, I

used the mic inside a Brazilian instrument called the Berimbau. This is a musically percussive wooden bow, with a steel string and gourd attached to the wooden part. The string is struck with a metal rod, while the gourd part is placed against the performer's abdomen and moved in and out for a type of wah effect. Percussionist Bola Da Silva, leader of the group Bracatum, was very pleased with the results. The sound was perfect, and allowed him to move around the stage with ease.

The going price of about \$800 CAD for each system is a little pricey, but these are high-quality products for serious musicians and regular venue use. Sennheiser products are reliable, well constructed, and most importantly, sound great. I have been using six 845s for over seven years now, and aside from cosmetic blemishes and scratches, they still work perfectly.

Howard Laurie is the resident Sound Engineer at Toronto's Lula Lounge. Visit www.lulalounge.ca.

Distributor's Comment

The G3 500 Series will be available with the MMD 935 Capsule. This is the same capsule as our e935 mic which is becoming the new industry standard. Also, the 500 Series will be available with the MMD 945 and MMK 965 1" large condenser capsule. Please note that the going street price for the 10C series will be around \$689.99 to \$739.

Nick Mandilaras
Business Director – MI D:vision,
Neumann & Klein + Hummel
Sennheiser Canada

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name of selected track

name of selected module

name and value of selected parameter

names of menus or options selected via softkeys 1 thru 4

list of track names, parameters or current controller assignments

graphical representation of current parameter values

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Steinberg Cubase 5

by Eric Price

Nearly two years have passed since Steinberg has released a major (as in paid-for) upgrade to its world-class Cubase DAW software. Let's take a look at some of the more important changes implemented in the latest release: Cubase 5.

With Cubase in existence for almost 20 years and limited article space, I am going to pass on my customary description of the program. If you are not familiar with Cubase, visit the webpage listed at the end of the article.

The newest feature I was most eager to explore was VariAudio. With VariAudio, Cubase 5 now has the ability to perform monophonic pitch correction – much like Celemony's Melodyne software. Whereas Melodyne works as a plug-in within Cubase, VariAudio is an integrated function of the sample editor.

In the sample editor, the waveform is first separated into segments, which you can then manipulate by dragging them vertically for pitch and horizontally for time. Notes can also be pitch-corrected by using a MIDI device to key in the desired pitches. All this non-destructive editing is done with the pitch transitions between notes being preserved in order to keep the original sound of the track intact.

Furthermore, you can manipulate the segments, altering both melody and timing, thereby creating a whole new track.

Lastly, the individual segments can be converted into MIDI notes and assigned to their own MIDI track where you trigger new sounds using your newly-tailored melodies.

It is nice to see this type of feature integrated into Cubase and it's very impressive for its first outing.

For those of you looking for a real-time pitch correction, i.e. AutoTune, Cubase now features Pitch Correct, which uses Yamaha's Pitch Fix technology. The plug-in is used as a track insert and its interface features a 3-octave keyboard. Pitch Correct aligns notes to various harmonic scales, including user-defined scales. Included are settings to control the tolerance of the pitch, speed of detection along with transposition, and a gender option to assign the type of vocalist, which then allows the plug-in to do a better job of detection.



Next, we move on to the loop and drum department. For drums, it is the new Groove Agent ONE – an MPC-style drum sampler that, other than the name, has no relation to the Groove Agent drum machine plug-ins. It features 128 fully-assignable pads (eight groups of 16 pads) to create your own kits, each pad with its own stereo output. There are waveform edit controls to tweak your sounds, it comes with several drumkits to get you started, and yes, you can import your own MPC kits.

Combine Groove Agent ONE with the new Beat Designer plug-in, a beat construction tool that works hand-in-hand with Groove Agent ONE, and you can create monster beats right inside Cubase. Beat Designer is a matrix-style drum beat creator that can also be controlled by a MIDI keyboard. With support for flams and rolls, controls for tweaking individual volumes, the ability to tempo synch with Cubase, and patterns stored in customizable banks, you will seldom need to go outside Cubase for your beat creation needs – very powerful, indeed.

Wait, there's more! Toss onto that the new LoopMash tool and you are just about ready for anything the music production world can throw at you. LoopMash is a virtual instrument that takes whichever loops you load into it, music or beats, and then has its algorithms analyze them. Once analyzed, it then allows you to "mash up" similar loop elements creating entirely new loop variations on the fly! This description here really does not do it justice; this plug-in alone is worth the visit to the website just to see it in action.

Cubase now has a built-in reverb to boast about: the REVerence, a convolution reverb. The new impulse reverb is amazing. A convolution reverb works by

using impulses – samples of the acoustic properties of some of the world's most unique spaces. The reverb then works by recreating these stored impulses, offering up very realistic-sounding acoustic environments.

I am out of space and I have barely scratched the surface of the new features. There is the greatly-improved automation – new to Cubase 5 is the Automation Panel, which is a powerful tool for centrally managing all automation in a project, and is inherited from Nuendo 4. There is VST Expression, an editing control for better articulation of orchestra samples, new Signature and Tempo tracks that let you control tempo and time signatures and open up inside the project window, next-generation VST3 plug-ins, 64-bit Vista compatibility, and a whole lot more!

You really need to visit the website and see all the new features for yourself, as there are great demo videos. As for recommending the new upgrade, I believe this latest revamp is well worth it! Check out www.steinberg.net.

Eric Price is currently recovering from an overdose of Cubase 5. While he is on the road to recovery, you can contact him about your music software problems at eric@gepconsulting.ca, but be gentle!

Distributor's Comment

Thanks to Eric for a good attempt at summarizing Cubase 5 without running out of space! With many new features, we feel that it is the most significant update to Cubase ever.

David Miner
Steinberg Product Specialist
Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.

Sterling By Music Man AX20

by Adam White

Music Man recently unveiled its new Sterling series of guitars and basses. The idea was to take the design elements of Ernie Ball Music Man guitars and basses, and create more affordable versions offered at a mid-range price. Immediately upon reading this, I thought of the Fender Squire series – the affordable versions of classic Fender models aimed at beginners and offered for considerably less than the real thing. Having played an AXIS by Music Man before (our lead guitarist Jeremy Widerman is a long-time owner), I was fully expecting to pull out and play a third-rate version of a true classic. Boy, was I proven wrong.

The first thing I did with the AX20 was closely examine it to see how it measured up to the original AXIS. The neck shape is very similar, and the frets feel respectably smooth. Unplugged it has that crisp, mid-range-heavy bite often found on new guitars that have yet to be broken in. Components I noticed almost immediately were the locking tuners. Being in a band that tours heavily and re-strings almost daily, this is a definite plus. All of my guitars have been modded with locking tuners, and it was nice to see a guitar that comes with a set.

The next thing I checked out was the price. While the original Music Man AXIS costs about \$2000 (and rightfully so), Sterling series instruments run between \$600-\$1100 CDN. Both guitars are made of basswood with a maple top, and both have maple necks with rosewood fingerboards. The pickups are different; the AXIS has DiMarzio Custom humbuckers, and the AX20 has stock Sterling A5 Zebra humbuckers. Aside from wood quality and place of origin (the Sterling guitars are built in Indonesia), the folks at Music Man seemed to have quality in mind when designing this guitar in an attempt to make it as similar as possible to the AXIS.

We brought the AX20 along to one of our shows and played around with it backstage, plugging it into each of our amps (a Soldano, a Bad Cat, and a Dr. Z) and A/B'ing the guitar with the actual guitar and amp set-ups that we use. We have always been a band that almost immediately replaces stock pickups with Seymour Duncans or EMGs, but I was surprised to hear how killer the AX20 sounded with stock pickups. These humbuckers sound great! The neck pickup

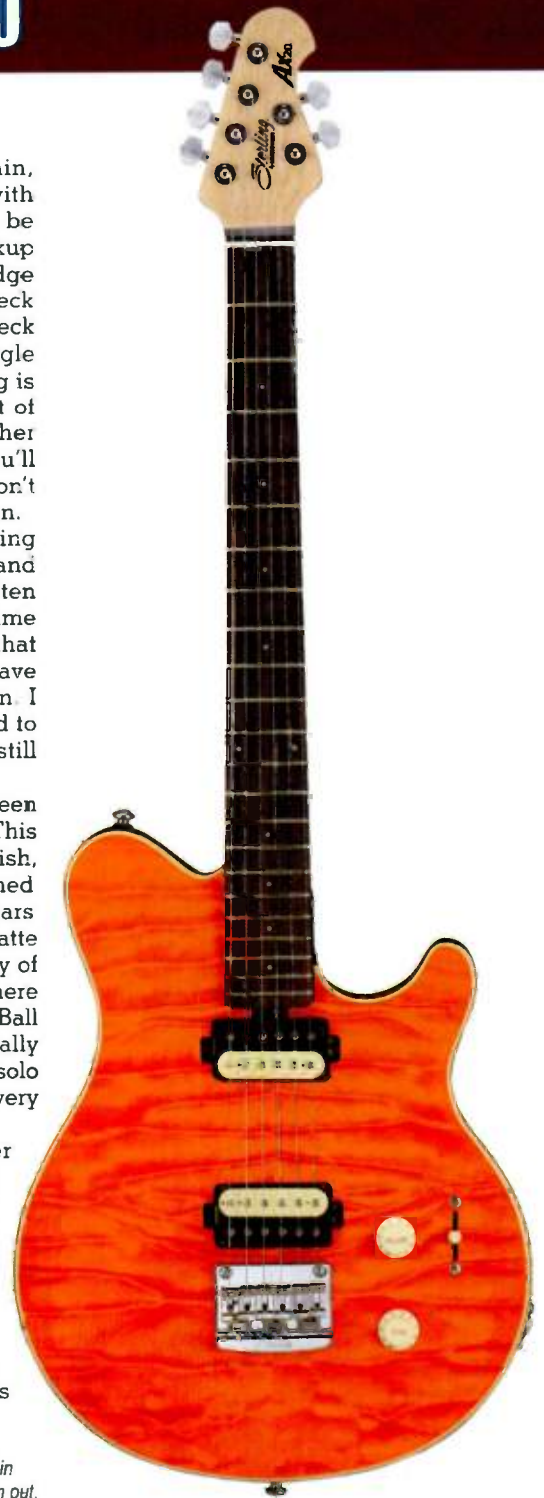
sounded full with plenty of sustain, and the bridge pickup screamed with harmonics. One thing that should be noted is that the guitar has five pickup selections: bridge humbucker; bridge and neck (humbucker); bridge and neck (single coil); neck humbucker; and neck parallel (sounds like having two single coils at once). The single coil setting is nice and crisp, reminding me a lot of that classic Telecaster tone. Whether you play lead or rhythm, I think you'll be happy with these pickups and won't be switching them out any time soon.

Since the show, I've been jamming on the AX20 for the past few days, and am surprised at how quickly I've gotten used to it. I have been playing the same Gibson SG since 1999, and thought that the smaller neck and body would have thrown me for a loop. Wrong again. I find myself more and more attached to this thing the more I play it, while still going back to the SG with ease.

I'll admit, though, that I've never been a fan of the classic Ernie Ball look. This one has that transparent orange finish, and I'll tell you now I've never owned anything orange, and as far as guitars go I prefer a classic sunburst or a matte wood finish to bright orange any day of the week. I do know, however, that there are people that go wild over the Ernie Ball design, and I know I would go equally wild if I ever saw EVH ripping out the solo of "Runnin' With The Devil" with this very guitar slung around his neck.

This is a great guitar no matter what the price, and as cheap as it's being offered, it's a steal. Does it measure up to the Ernie Ball AXIS? Not quite. Does it play like one? Pretty much. For the price range it's competing in, the AX20 is definitely on top of its game, better than most other guitars at that price. This is true value for the dollar for beginners and seasoned virtuosos alike.

Adam White sings and plays guitar and keyboards in The Reason. Visit www.thereason.ca to check them out.



Distributor's Comment

Thanks for the review, Adam. Sterling by Music Man offers a lot of the famous Music Man models in its lineup, including the Axis, Stingray, Sterling, John Petrucci Signature, and Silhouette guitar models.

Glen Booth
The Guitar Booth



© PRS Guitars, 2009 Photos by Marc Gungl

Paul Reed Smith

www.prsguitars.com

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World Radio History



by Luke Doucet

Luke Doucet is a Canadian singer-songwriter and guitarist. Visit www.lukedoucet.com for more information.

VERSATILITY

& Your Own Style Part II

For the issue of whether I learn other people's stuff or try to find my own sound, I think that to try and answer that question before it's time is not helpful. I'm a firm advocate of learning from as many different sources as possible, because eventually your thing will come out. All the greats learned from the people before them.

The Dick Dale Surf Sound

In my world, it's all pick. In fact, arguably the only reason I still use a pick is when I want to hit the low E and A strings and make them really sing the way Dick Dale would. To capture that sound, play as far back towards the bridge as you can without getting in the way of the bridge plate or back pickup. I find single coil pickups are almost essential for this sound, although I'm using a Gretsch, which technically has humbuckers, though they're low-output humbuckers.

As far as effects go in terms of surf, the only thing you want is reverb. I know people will use a snapback echo sometimes, though I think in terms of

tonalities, a dry amp with a snapback echo, like somewhere between 100 and 160 milliseconds, is really great for rockabilly, whereas for surf, a Fender amp with a spring reverb is the way to go.

Maintaining Your Tone On The Road

I do a lot of gigs where I fly and I'm using back line gear, and my request is a vintage or reissued black-faced Deluxe Reverb, but I can make due with just about any amp that has reverb. I don't use effects. What I want is an amp that has tubes in it that's small enough that I can turn the volume up past five or six, so that it's just on the cusp between clean and dirty. When I play light, it's clean, and when I hit it hard it breaks up a little bit.

I used to carry around a pedal board with delays, tremolos, compressors, and all the bells and whistles. Now, the central component to my rig is the Tonebone Switchbone, which enables me to switch between amps. The great thing about the Switchbone, especially when using single coil pickups through amps on the brink of breaking up, is that it has a clean boost function where you can either boost it 5dB or 10dB. It's just a question of adding a second amp when I want a bit of oomph.

Writing Around Leads

I do play acoustic guitar a lot and I write a lot of my stuff on acoustic guitar, but because I've spent so much of my life as a side player for other people, I'm pretty quick to take a song that's got whatever shape of chords and completely rewrite it or transpose it into

something different. Doing this, I can formulate electric guitar parts to something fairly quickly.

If the song is written with a capo at the fifth fret and I'm playing in C, which up there is in F, I'll play the electric guitar part in the first position and I'll write something around that. Then, when I sing the song live, I'll probably perform it as a lead guitar player in a sense that I'll perform it in standard tuning even though it was probably conceived with a capo or something to that effect.

When I do write with the electric guitar, which is not uncommon, it's usually because I've written some kind of a riff or some kind of a hook and the song springs from that. I think it's a really integral component to the song – at least with the kind of music that I love, which is largely rooted in classic rock. By classic rock, I mean country, blues, rock, and folk rock. Those are the things that I like and so most of that music has some kind of a hook. I mean, you listen to "Paperback Writer" and there's this unbelievably fantastic hook. I think it's key.

Sometimes the hook is lyrical, sometimes it's a vocal melody, but I try and find an opportunity for the guitar to play a hook. I don't just mean so I can solo – I mean so that I can have a singable melody. When I go back into the guitar melody of a song like "Emily Please," which is from my second solo record *Broken (And Other Rogue States)*, people respond. I can feel people in the room responding because they recognize the hook. It's more fun to play hooks than it is to solo, so I'll often base my songwriting on those special hooks.



by Ron Davis

The Worth Of A MUSICIAN

How much are you worth?

I ran into a pianist I know one Saturday evening not long ago – great player, stellar credits, plenty of mileage under his fingers. He was off to a private gig in a pricey part of town, in a million-dollar house, for a multi-million-dollar man.

Cool. Should be a decent gig, I said, with a decent paycheque. "\$200." \$200? How long's the gig? "Four hours." Four hours? Four hours for \$200? But you're (name omitted to protect the well-known innocent). You deserve five times that! "Yeah... but the whole idea is to play."

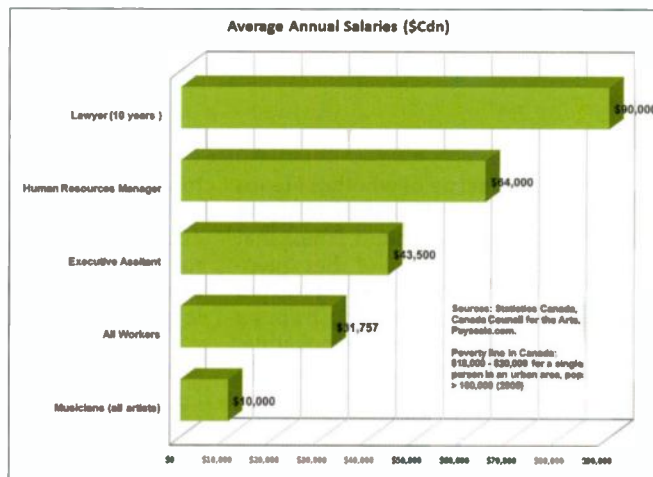
Really? Is that why we become professional musicians, only to play? I'm sorry, but the answer is no. Playing is only part of the idea, not the whole one.

Let's begin at the beginning. We've gone into the music business. Two words: "music" and "business." Fifty-fifty. Playing is 50 per cent, so what about the business 50 per cent? We can not afford, literally, to ignore it.

We musicians, if I may generalize, are a business-challenged lot. Society, in turn, doesn't help. People routinely undervalue us unless we've become famous, usually abroad, and not always for the music. Then they overvalue us. The bottom line, to use a business expression, is this: How much are we worth? The answer is simple: more. We musicians need to believe this. We need to put confidence into our value.

Talk about value leads to talk about pricing. Value is the handmaid of pricing, but pricing is a fussy baby – a mystery child swaddled in an enigma. Set a price too high, it's prohibitive. Result: lost sales. Set a price too low and there is excess demand, or consumers shun the product as cheap. Result: lost sales. Even skilled business folk shipwreck on these shoals. Imagine how difficult it is for the average musician to negotiate them. Still, difficult though it may be, we musicians have to make a run for it, and better price ourselves.

Many musicians, too many, feel they're either not worthy, or not entitled to be paid real money for playing. Real money. The money you pay when you go to see a real professional. The \$200, \$300, \$800, or \$900 (I'm not making this up) you pay a lawyer for their hour, or an accountant for theirs. Yet we're professionals. We've studied for many years. We've practiced, as much as any lawyer has practiced law. We've absorbed centuries of learning; we've perfected our skills. We work to improve, and serve our clients. Why, then, do we live on average on poverty wages?



Why do people nod sternly when quoted professional rates for others, but laugh when it's for us? To stop the ha-ha-ha, we have to heave-ho the prevailing perception of a musician's value. Start with higher pricing scales. Get people thinking, reflexively, that if they hire a musician, they're going to pay professional rates. Plus, travel time, sound systems, special planning – these should all cost extra.

There are always exceptions. Clubs can pay less, because public performance has private benefits. If it's Aunt Indira or Uncle Wally's birthday potluck party in the basement, and they really want our music but can't afford the full ticket, well of course we can come out for a few hundred bucks. But, if the disease of the month is having its annual gala, with 1,000 people paying \$1,000 a meal, with flowers and ice sculptures for all – sorry. No freebies here.

There are risks. The more we charge, the more we will encounter resistance, but we have to learn to live with "no," secure in the knowledge that many a "yes" will follow. We might end up playing less in public, but we will play better. I subscribe to the view that if you're not losing a gig a month because your price is too high, then your price is too low.

Make no mistake: this is not about money. It's about value. And values. It's about our value as musicians, and the cultural values of our society. Remember, culture has an \$84.6 billion annual impact on the economy, according to the Conference Board of Canada. That's 7.4 per cent of the GDP. We're contributing mightily to the economy. How about giving some of it back to us?

No one demands wealth as a right, but we are right to ask to live without privation, and raise families if we wish. Money is not the value of a musician, but the value of a musician is reflected by the money one pays for the music. Besides, we're not exempt from paying rent, utilities, and grocery bills.

So to my friend who went out for \$200 that night, I wish you continued musical excellence, lots of playing, and paycheques that reflect your true value.



Tom MacDonald plays bass in Hedley, who you can check out at www.hedleyonline.com.

BASS

by Tom MacDonald

Keeping Your BASS **IN SHAPE**

I was doing carpentry before I joined Hedley, so I have a lot of carpentry analogies. As any carpenter will tell you, you have to keep your saw blade sharp and ensure it's cutting straight. Your tools are as important as anything to any trade – including music. Over the years of playing bass, I've played every style and every kind of instrument you can play, and keeping them in shape is a huge thing – especially physically.

Your Axe

Don't fret too much about perfectly intonating your bass. Really, it's impossible to intonate a bass perfectly from the first fret to the twelfth fret. You'll find while recording that if you're trying to record and keep every single note in tune, you're going to have to tune multiple times to get a track properly in-tune. Any tech worth his salt will tell you if you intonate a bass to your twelfth fret harmonic, you're still going to be out a little below the fifth fret.

Also, if your guitar is left to the elements – getting cold and then getting hot, and getting sweat on and then getting frozen, your action's eventually going to come up and your intonation's going to go out. If you don't take care of this, all of a sudden your action's an inch high and you find yourself digging in and overcompensating, making your hand hurt and likely putting your bass out of tune at the same time. That's where having your action set properly and being properly intonated comes in.

I did a tour once with Quiet Riot of all bands, and their bass player, Rudy Sarzo, is a legend. He was in Quiet Riot, Ozzy, Whitesnake – he's seen and done it all. Every single night, this guy would pull out his basses and intonate them properly, set the action, polish them up, and make sure that they were just waiting for him to go and terrorize them. It was inspiring.

The other thing to learn is soldering. Soldering guitar electronics is so simple that it becomes invaluable when you drop your guitar one night on stage and you break your input jack or break your cable and you find yourself with two pieces of cable and a jack end. A \$15 soldering iron and a little bit of solder and flux puts you back on the road and it doesn't cost you \$50 for a new cable.

Your Amp

If you have a good power conditioner for your amp, it'll show you how many volts you're getting to your

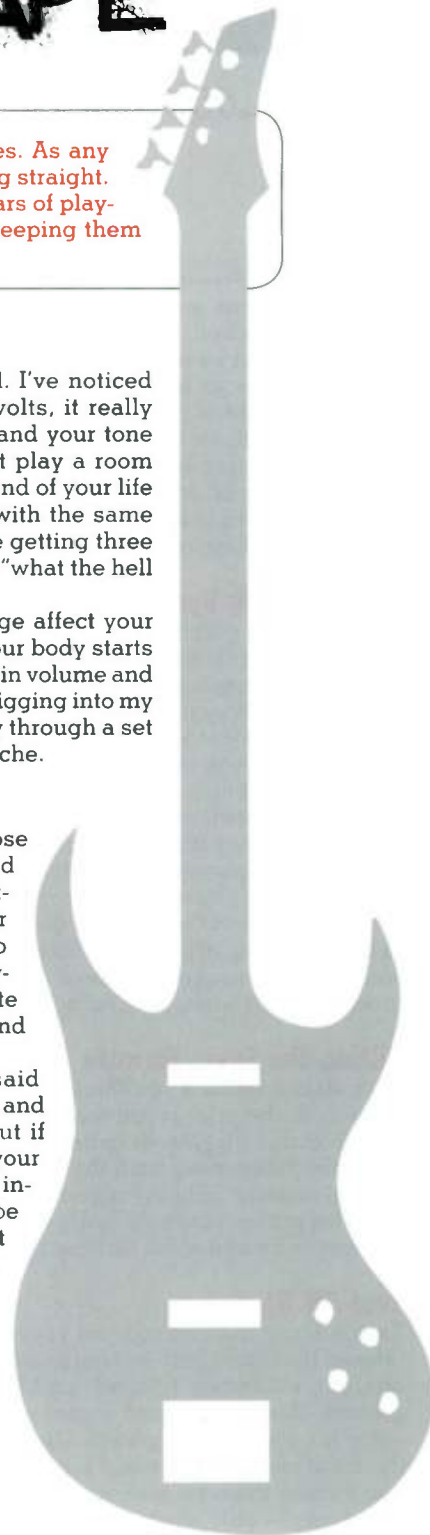
amp at any time from the wall. I've noticed if you're dropping below 120 volts, it really sucks the life out of your amp and your tone or volume will fade. You might play a room one night and have the best sound of your life and then play the same room with the same set-up the next night and you're getting three quarters of the volume. It's like, "what the hell is happening here?"

Not only does a dip in voltage affect your amp, but if you don't catch it, your body starts to overcompensate for your drop in volume and your drop in tone. I find myself digging into my strings a lot harder, and halfway through a set my arm or fingers will start to ache.

Your Playing

If you're set up properly, as close as you can to being intonated and your action's where it's comfortable for you and you hit your strings too hard, it's going to push you out of tune. As a player, you really have to concentrate on hitting your strings evenly and consistently all the time.

There's something to be said about dynamics, bringing it up and bringing it down in volume, but if you're just slamming away on your bass, you're going to push your instrument out of tune. Sure, maybe the average Joe can't notice but it really makes your band sound smaller. When everybody's completely in-tune and your instrument is in top shape, the sound of your band is going to be so much bigger.





by Chris Lesso

NEW-SCHOOL DRUMMING

Looking Forward To The 21st Century Rhythmartist

The drums are still a very young instrument. Before you read on, can you guess how old? I was surprised to learn even after a few years of playing that the drumset as we know it is still less than 100 years old. This instrument is constantly evolving; I want to be on the cusp of new ideas, not just mindlessly recycling the past. This is an investment into your future; changes you make today will pay off in time. Try some of these ideas in this article, and then make up your own. Think outside the box. Remember: "there are no rules, only possibilities."

Ambidexterity/Open-Handed Playing

Open-Handed playing: a style of playing drums where you don't cross your hands. This is the future of drumming! First, look at how crossing the arms evolved on the drumset, then ask yourself: Why do drummers still do this? Does it make sense? When I was starting, I never asked this question; that was just "how you do it." Question everything!

You've probably heard the saying "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link," or to us drummers, the "weakest limb." If you play one bar of an eighth note rock groove, you have just played eight right hands and two left hands. (And that's only one bar, never mind an entire song! Or set of songs! Or tour! Or... you get the point!) That ratio of eight to two is way out of balance, and will only make your already weaker hand worse over time. So many possibilities and ideas open up when playing open-handed.

Tilting The Snare Forward

This makes sense if you think of the drum as a natural extension of the arm. If you look at African djembe players, Cuban conga players, or Indian tabla players, they all have the drum tilted away from the body. This allows for a more natural rebound, which expends less energy when you play and also makes rimshots really easy to execute. This is becoming more and more common. Try it!

Your Set-Up

This is about making your set your ally. First, find the most relaxed (but energized) natural position for your body – spine straight, shoulders relaxed, and forearms parallel to the ground. Use mirrors and a great teacher to get feedback – this is necessary for growth. Close your eyes and imagine the most comfortable place for the pieces in your kit, then place them there no matter what it looks like. There is no "right way" – only what works best for you.

Attitude: Your Mental State

More and more drummers are getting into meditation and yoga, or reading books like *The Secret* and getting positive thoughts and energy running through their hearts and minds. Remember, the kind of person you are is the kind of artist you'll be. If you are positive and have lots of energy, this will come out through the drums. Think of the drums as a character mirror.

Try playing the simple grooves of Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" or The Black Crowes' "Hard to Handle." Get inspired by the original, record yourself, and hear how much attitude comes shining through your instrument.

The World Beat: A Melding Of Styles

More than ever, drummers today need to know all styles – from disco to drum and bass. Getting the most from any language will lead to maximum creativity; the more words we can draw upon, the more we can express. Here's an open-handed groove I came up with that's a mix of funk and hand-drumming styles:

NOW AND ZEN

CHRIS LESSO TRANSCRIPTION

BY TONY SPONBERG

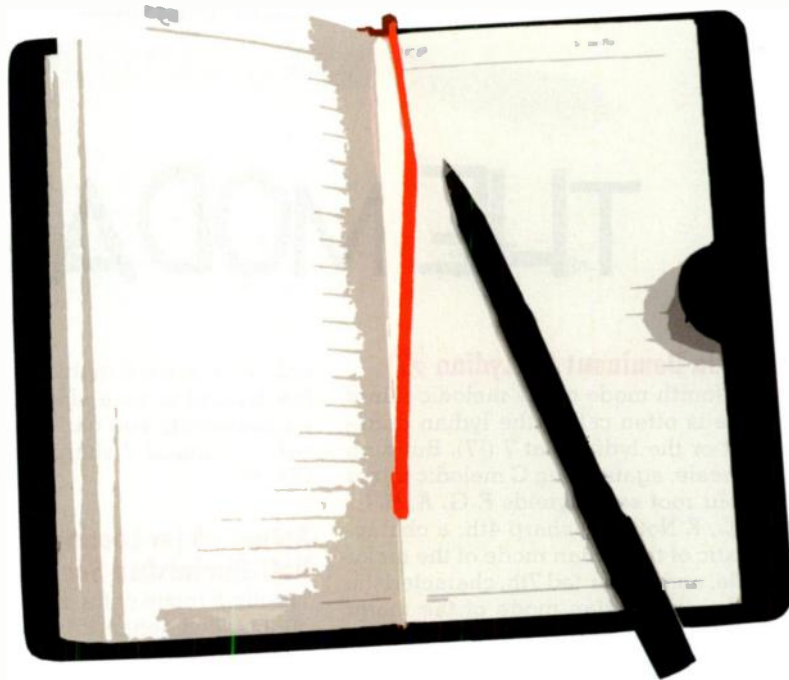
In the words of Bruce Lee, "take what is useful and discard the rest." Try one or all of these ideas, and incorporate into your playing whatever you find useful. This is all about stealing ideas from the best, and pushing this art form forward. Work hard and keep it fun!



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.

by Daniel Schnee

Keeping A Practice JOURNAL



With all of the “how-to” books on scales, technique, chords, standards, and such circulating in print and online, you’d think we would all be a bunch of Coltranes, Adderleys, and Jarretts running around creating masterpieces around the clock!

Thankfully, we are humans, and will always be prone to aging, varying levels of talent, opportunity, and motivation, disease, falling in love, and all the things that make life worth living, or at least clinging to tenaciously (Go Leafs!). I have found one activity to be very helpful in keeping track of the swirling continuum of activities and feelings, though – the act of keeping a multi-topic practice journal.

A practice journal doesn’t have to be a scientific study of every aspect of your playing, but the closer attention you pay to your playing and associated lifestyle, the closer you will get to finding your voice and style. You must know exactly who you are if you are going to be “someone.” Here are some areas to consider when starting to record your musical activities.

It is vital to use a metronome, and it is very important to keep track of the various tempi that we use for the scales, arpeggios, and patterns we practice. By writing them down, you make it clear to yourself where your limits are, what tempi you aspire to in which areas, and can make wiser choices concerning the material you compose and perform for yourself and others. I know for myself that I can play certain things at high speeds, but can play them much more musically at slower tempi. I know this because I have tested the threshold of my abilities, and there is a physical limit to how fast my big ole’ fingers can fly. This knowledge also helps other musicians with arrangements and set lists if they know your particular traits and habits in a measurable sense.

And how often do we have a killer idea for a song or title and then promptly forget it? Having a practice journal around puts you in the habit of always having paper, pens, a cell phone, or laptop around to keep track of your possible genius. Even if you end up not using it now, you may end up liking it a few years later upon rereading your entry on the subject.

Many people keep practice records for a couple of weeks, but then it devolves into merely a to-do list of things their teacher wants them to work on. Your opinion counts, especially to you! Putting those feelings down can help you get over procrastination and boredom, especially if you can explain how you feel to your teacher.

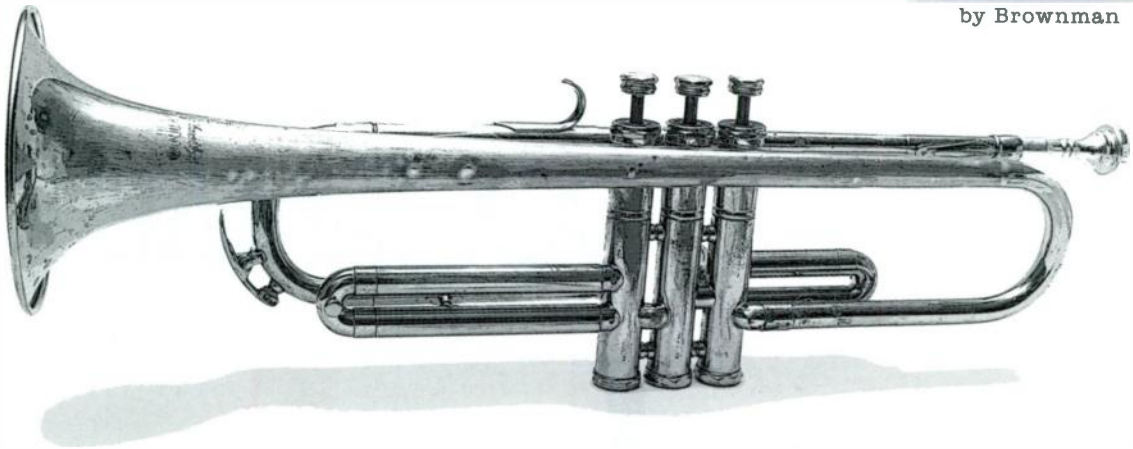
If you work hard and efficiently, and wisely manage the opportunities you get, you will undoubtedly travel to foreign lands to perform, and the cultural events and opportunities available to you will be greatly expanded. Why not capitalize on that? Keeping a journal before, during, and after such a time gives you the opportunity to record networking info, addresses, interesting bits of information, new travel vocabulary, and such during times when the phone or the laptop is shut off or back in the hotel.

A key tip is gathering a few interesting greetings, toasts, and local colloquialisms to help you integrate into the scene a little easier, and show the locals you are aware of their regional differences. If I had done so on my second trip to Japan, I might not have taken a rather large swig of liquid dish soap that I mistook for Gatorade. And lest you think you are immune to such mistakes, my bass player, who laughed the longest and hardest at my predicament, ended up doing the exact same thing an hour later!

You don’t know where you are going if you don’t know where you have been. Looking at your collected practice journals years later is a mostly pleasant experience. You can see your progress, laugh at your folly, and reminisce about the good old days. And surprisingly, many of the “bad” days will be remembered in the future as rather good days. A practice journal can be used many different ways, and I recommend you explore as many of them as possible.



by Brownman



THE MODAL Continuum Part III

Lydian Dominant (or Lydian $\flat 7$)

The fourth mode of the melodic minor scale is often called the lydian dominant or the lydian flat 7 ($\flat 7$). Building the scale, again using C melodic minor as our root scale, yields F, G, A, B, C, D, E \flat , F. Note the sharp 4th, a characteristic of the lydian mode of the major scale, and the flattened 7th, characteristic of the mixolydian mode of the major scale. This mode feels and tastes essentially like a mixolydian mode with a sharp 4th, giving it a very unique sound for improvisers to explore over dominant 7th changes. This sound was widely explored in the bebop era, and many boppers garnered criticism for such non-traditional textures. Thelonious Monk's "Raise Four" features a prominent raised 4th in the melody. Improvisers will find much use for this mode over a dominant sharp 11. For example, the above scale would provide interesting improvisational options over F7 (#11). Bebop musicians occasionally called this a flattened 5th – writing the chord as F7 ($\flat 5$) – but this chord symbology has come to imply the diminished scale over time.

Mixolydian $\flat 6$

The mixolydian $\flat 6$ scale is the fifth mode of the melodic minor scale and is used most often over dominant seven chord changes. (The mixolydian $\flat 6$ mode is also referred to as the mixolydian $\flat 13$). Although you don't hear this sound very often, it is a strong choice for creating interesting lines over dominant

chords. The flat 6 in this scale can also be thought of as a sharp 5 note, and subsequently you can play this scale over dominant 7 sharp 5 chords, like G7 (#5).

Aolian $\flat 5$ (or Locrian #2, Half-Diminished Scale)

The sixth mode of the melodic minor is often called aolian $\flat 5$, since it is actually the aolian mode (of the major scale) with a flattened 5th. A stock A aolian mode is A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, using C major as our root scale. Building the 6th mode of a C melodic minor gives us A, B, C, D, E \flat , F, G, A, thereby explaining the name convention for this mode. This mode is also known as the Locrian #2. To see why, let's build an A locrian scale. This would be the 7th mode of B \flat major, yielding A, B \flat , C, D, E \flat , F, G, A, B \flat . Sharpening the 2nd note of this scale yields the same note sequence as the 6th mode of the melodic minor scale, and hopefully makes clear why the name Locrian #2 is also used for this mode.

Altered (or Locrian #4, Super Locrian, Diminished Whole Tone)

The seventh mode of the melodic minor scale is often called the diminished whole tone scale, because it combines elements of both the diminished and whole tone scales. To understand how it gets its name as "altered," let's first build this scale, again using C melodic minor as our root scale. This yields: B, C, D, E \flat , F, G, A, B. A close examination

of each note in the scale will reveal a flat 9, a sharp 9, a flat 5, a sharp 5. In other words, all the possible alterations in a 9th chord are included in this scale. This makes it a strong choice over B7alt, noting that B7 (#5, #9) can also be used here, as well as B7(#9). All three chord change nomenclatures imply that use of the seventh mode of the melodic minor scale for improvisation would be an apt choice. The sound of the altered scale is a complex one, as is the chord it implies due to all the alterations, but is one of the most important sounds in post-bop jazz.

Practice Tips

As a horn player, learning to deal with how these modes sound will be paramount, but doing this in the proverbial vacuum of the practice room may be difficult, and I highly recommend having a piano close at hand. There's a fantastic book called *Patterns For Jazz* by Jerry Coker that contains hundreds of patterns designed to help horn players practice navigating commonly-used jazz phrasings and patterns. It's innocuously simple looking, but this book is designed to help the improviser get many permutations and variations of jazz phrasing under their fingers, over multiple chord changes. Highly recommended.

So – don't forget to practice your modes, put to use some of the tools available to you (like *Patterns For Jazz*), and I'll see you back here next time - in the Continuum.



Morgan Pottruff is an instructor at Metalworks Institute, Humber College, and has authored several top-selling tutorial DVDs for ASK Video (www.askvideo.com). He also performs as electro-acoustic singer-songwriter Morgan David.

by Morgan Pottruff

ReWire SLAVERY

I've often found Ableton Live to be bit of dark horse with my audio production students and colleagues alike. Most of them have little familiarity with it, often thinking of it as some kind of DAW for laptop-carrying techno geeks, and certainly not something that's going to distract them from their ongoing love affair with their "normal" DAW, be it Pro Tools, Logic, Cubase, or whatever. (Discussing DAWs is like comparative religion but that's another article!)

Fortunately it's not an either-or scenario though. Live is the only program out there that is a DAW (ReWire host) and is also a ReWire slave. So today, I'll give you a couple of examples of how we can use Live as a ReWire slave to do tweaks on loops that would be difficult or downright impossible to do in your "normal" DAW.

First off, lets talk about stutter FX. You hear them everywhere on today's production on pop vocals and drums. Oh sure, you could do them manually in your DAW - cutting, chopping, and crossfading your life away or you can give Live's Beat Repeat plug-in a whirl, which I guarantee will be a whole lot easier and a ton more fun.



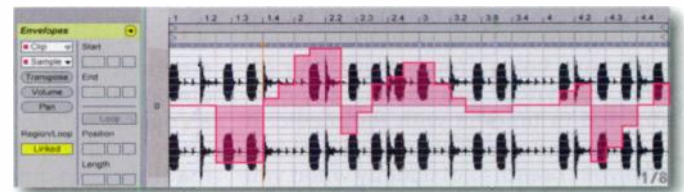
LIVE'S BEAT REPEAT

Using Beat Repeat is a no-brainer. Just put the plug-in on the track with the loop you want to tweak out, and the plug-in spits out lovely bits of chaos with minimal fuss. Just set the interval, which governs how often Beat Repeat samples the beat and begins repeating it. The stutters come out tempo-synched as governed by the grid command (quarter note, eighth note, etc.). From there, it's easy to route the track output to an adjacent track and make perfectly-cut loops filled with glitchy stutter-effected goodness. Since there is a good amount of randomization that's involved here, I like to record a number of loops and wait until something cool happens - you'll know it when you hear it.

If we really want to go the extra distance, we can process

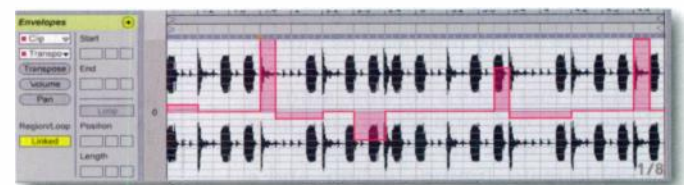
them in real time with some of Live's effects. You can assign real-time control using your control surface or keyboard controller. If you click on the MIDI button, it's a simple click of the loop, and put them wherever the fills should naturally be.

In Live, you have something called clip automation. It's kind of like track automation like you'd have in another DAW, but it allows you to do tweaks on the loops themselves over and above what might be happening at the track level. As you can see, draw-in changes in the offset (the place where the sample begins playback) and that will effectively scramble the beats.



TWEAKING SAMPLE OFFSET

Also, because Live is all about time stretching, we can make tiny pitch changes on each transient to add some chaos to our loops. This is also cool to use if there happens to be a melodic part of a sample that isn't perfectly in-key with your song! This has definitely taken some of my loops or samples out of the "pretty cool, almost works, but not really" column into the "I can actually use that" column. Instead of a pitch curve, we can also use volume to turn down sections of the sample to change the feel and give us a new-sounding loop.



FUN WITH CLIP TRANSPOSE!

So there are some examples, but they're just the tip of the iceberg. There are literally hundreds of other things I could have mentioned in this article. Be sure to check out examples on YouTube, which show what you can do with this program, not to mention tutorial DVDs you can pick up on the topic (like mine)! Remember, it's not just for the dance music crowd. I've introduced Live to many heavy metal guys who have gone on to discover an inner Trent Reznor they never knew they had, and felt much better off for it.



by Paula Shear

SINGING

The Lyric & Emotion

More than anything, the thing that dictates choices in interpretation is singing the lyric. The meaning of the words should be the inspiration for the sonic approach. You are telling a story with your voice. You are playing off what the lyricist has so carefully constructed in tandem with the music. It is conversational. This means that you take your breaths not usually when you run out of air, but where it makes sense to the phrase. This will influence your rhythmic choices on words.

Of course, phrasing choices are also influenced by the style of music and voice type, but when you're going for a certain sound, style, or category for radio and so on, while you're developing it's a great idea to listen to singers both in and outside of your own genre.

Some singers stand out as role models for everyone. Tony Bennett, the singer that Frank Sinatra cited as "...the best singer in the business" is a great role model for just about any aspiring vocalist. Just listen to him singing "Come Rain or Come Shine" and hear a master at work. He incorporates impeccable taste, timing, feeling, and a great sense of crescendo. He is completely connected to the lyric.

The other pivotal thing you'll hear in his phrasing is the element of "surprise." This creates what I call the "ah" factor. It's the thing that elicits an emotional response from the listener. He most effectively employs contrasting peaks and valleys. His approach is extremely conversational, and if you watch a performance and note his facial expressions, the reflectiveness and the thought behind the words convey intelligence and nuance. The sounds

he chooses are spontaneous extensions of that thoughtfulness and feeling; they are precise colour expressions of those pools of emotion. At times, phrases may seem almost spoken; at others he soars with an openness and exquisite richness.

Now, the vocal technique that is so readily at his fingertips frees him to swoop and soar, or pull back the reigns in contemplation. He's not going through the motions; he's living it. This is compelling to watch as well as listen to.

Looking at the opening stanzas for "Come Rain or Come Shine" and the brilliance of Johnny Mercer's lyrical composition, we can deconstruct and analyze the rhymes and alliterations that could and should influence the accents that might be applied. No singer worth his salt would not take this into account.

*I'm gonna love you, like nobody's loved you
Come rain or come shine
High as a mountain, deep as a river
Come rain or come shine.*

*I guess when you met me
It was just one of those things
But don't you ever bet me
Cause I'm gonna be true if you let me.*

Notice in the opening line, the word "I'm" is sustained but is punctuated with a defined "m" that is reprised in the word "come," repeated twice in the title and again in the next line with the word "mountain," with the title repeating again. The very style


of the lyric where words are repeated calls out for extra emphasis, and this is heightened by the play of matching consonants (alliteration).

In the following stanza Mercer again repeats "m" in the words "met me," "bet me," "I'm," and "let me." These matching consonants allow the singer to interpret with extra definition, or, depending on the intensity, "bite" with the consonant. Sinatra particularly liked to hang onto the ending consonant, savoured like a slow, dissolving sweet in his mouth.

Now, in the same stanzas, there are several times "n" is utilized in words. Additionally, in the opening line, "love," "like," and "loved" are repeated with matching sound for urgency.

It should be noted that Harold Arlen's beautiful music is essentially a torch ballad, which certainly allows for bluesy treatment if you are so inclined. Certain lush words could naturally be played up and sustained, like the jubilant use of "high" in "high as a mountain" and the drop implicit in "deep as a river." If you were doing a vocal bend on the word "deep," it might make sense to bend under the written note. This is not a hard and fast rule, but is a smart embellishment. Of course you can always sing the note as written straight.

It's always the sum total of what's going around a phrase that influences where you go. Reprising the song a second time around allows for more liberal improvising. Become adept at back phrasing, and if you sustain longer notes, the following lines might well use phrases that are sped up. The use of the triplet is particularly effective. It always helps to know the words like the back of your hand. Lose yourself in the lyric, soar with the melody, and the singer becomes the song.





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THE BOYS TAKE AN ATTENTIVE INTEREST IN THE RECORDING PROCESS.

BY KEVIN YOUNG
PHOTOS BY VANESSA HEINS

Alexis

Right off the top of Alexisonfire's new record you can hear the band actively reinventing its sound. While they haven't gone off the deep end, the album is definitely leaner and more focused than past efforts. It's a natural progression, says guitarist/vocalist Dallas Green, and though he's hesitant to use the word "mature," he maintains the band is growing, individually and as songwriters, and becoming ever more tightly focused as a unit. Not to mention busier...

Beyond the huge amount of interest here in Canada, Alexisonfire have built up a rabid following in Europe, the UK, Australia, and the US. While still on *Cine Alone* in Canada and *Vagrant* in the US, a new European deal with Roadrunner Records will allow fans there to get their hands on the new record more easily and help the band match the success they've found in major markets, like the UK, in less-travelled corners in continental Europe. Now, the impending release of *Old Crows/Young Cardinals* finds them tending those growing international markets in advance — gearing up for German summer festivals, warm-up shows in the UK, and their slot on the 2009 Warped Tour. When we spoke, however, Green was in Calgary, doing press — as are all the members of ADF from various parts of the country.

Now that *Old Crows/Young Cardinals* is in the can, Green is unequivocal. "I love it," he says. That doesn't mean the members never second-guess themselves though, and he admits to wondering how fans will react to the record. "We all went through a period where we weren't sure. We'd just finished mixing and I just wasn't sure. George wasn't either, but we hadn't told each other that, and he said, 'I've been listening to it, and I think we're going to be okay. It's a good record.'"

Living up to some label they've worn previously isn't what drives the band, he says bluntly. "We put pressure on ourselves to make records we feel good about and write songs that we love — that's the pressure that drives us." Doubt is part of the process, Green explains. "You've listened and analyzed so much, you just don't know if it's good. I think I just don't have that much faith in myself to believe that what I do is great. I need reassurance." It's a point he personally gets to with both Alexis and his solo project, *City and Colour*.

Having two successful bands operating with back-to-back album cycles involves some juggling of schedules, but in addition to offering Green enviable freedom as a songwriter, *City and Colour* also provides songwriting therapy, he explains. After touring *Crisis*, he says, "I didn't have an Alexis record in my head

at that point. I had nothing to offer. The fact that I was able to make (City and Colour's sophomore effort) *Bring Me Your Love* allowed me to come back to the table with a wealth of ideas. It was almost like a switch going off in my head."

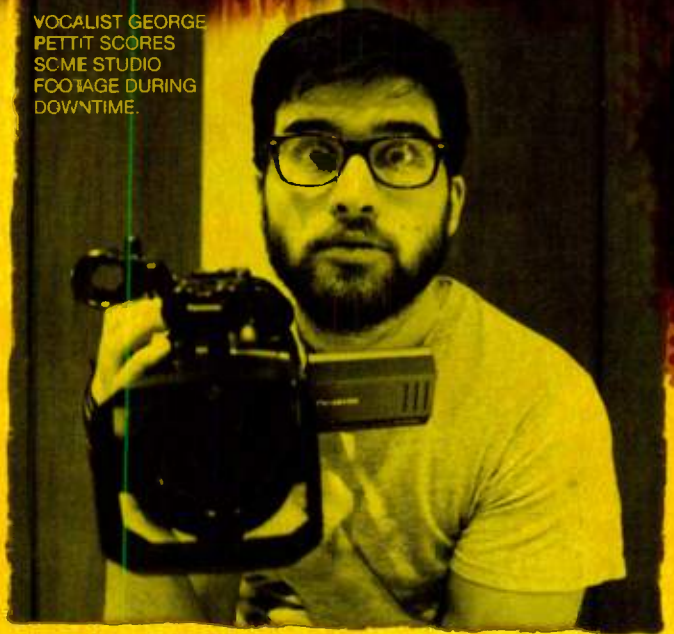
Green isn't the only band member with multiple irons in the fire – vocalist George Pettit has likewise been busy, taking on a project that finds him inhabiting a distinctly different role behind the mic on www.aux.tv's music/interview show *Strange Notes*. "It was something I started because I was fed up with watching good bands get interviewed by big media and getting to say nothing," Pettit explains. "You see a band that probably has a lot to say and they end up talking about their beards for five minutes."

Then there's guitarist/vocalist Wade MacNeil's side project, Black Lungs, which sometimes includes Pettit, and sometimes Alexis' Chris Steele, on bass. Between the last AOF record and now Black Lungs, MacNeil has ventured across Canada and Europe. It's now on hiatus, he says, in anticipation of a year full of AOF shows.

Obviously, saying the band likes to keep busy is putting it mildly, but rather than detracting from Alexis, their side projects help fuel their creative reserves, driving the band to progress. While occasionally that progression may meet opposition from fans, AOF rarely fail to present a united front once they've chosen a creative direction. "Alexisonfire is team," says Green, "fully-democratic. If four of us are happy with a part and one of us isn't, that part doesn't get put on there until everyone's happy. There's definitely those situations where we yell at each other and tell each other to fuck off, but when the five of us are all very happy it makes for a better song."

The first sign that this is a somewhat different Alexisonfire than you're used to is evident on the album's lead track, "Old Crows." "It's a mission statement in a way," says Green. AOF are in no way shy about setting a new tone

VOCALIST GEORGE
PETTIT SCORES
SCME STUDIO
FOOTAGE DURING
DOWNTIME.



with the chorus lyric: "We are not the kids we used to be." For them, it's about growing up, incorporating the effects of living a nomadic lifestyle on the road, and sharing the new influences they gather along the way. As much as it's an emblem: their long-time fans can wear. "It's also for those people who complain that we don't sound like we used to," he adds.

One of the big differences is screamer Pettit's vocals. "He's developed this new style; he's singing now," Green says. "It's almost got kind of a Lemmy

Sons of Fire



GUITARIST/VOCALIST WADE MACNEIL GETS SET TO TRACK.

vibe to it – still rough and aggressive but there's a little bit more melody." That enables Green and Pettit to sing together more often, rather than trading off as with past efforts.

MacNeil also gets more time at the mic. "Wade and myself have never been able to harmonize that well with one another, our voices being so completely different," offers Green. The harmonies they pull off on *Old Crows/Young Cardinals* weren't expected by Green. "Take 'Sons of Privilege,' where Wade sings the lead and I sing the harmony. In a way it doesn't sound like us. It's so smooth." Green, too, takes on expanded vocal duties, singing lower at times – on "The Northern," for example, adding depth to the vocal approach and power to what is undeniably already a powerful sound.

Knowing what to add to, though, was as important as knowing what to take away. MacNeil tells me the process found him stripping down his guitar set-up. "I used a Gibson Junior from 1952 for the majority of my guitar tracking. I brought, probably, twelve guitars with me, but when I got home I sold most of my guitars and bought a really old Junior."

His sound has changed as well – a result of using fewer pedals and less delay. "I think the majority of the effects I'm using on this are different boosts

Alexisonfire

and distortion tones. It's not as ambient. When I first started playing with Dallas, neither of us had played in a band with another guitar player, so we were completely going off the deep end." His playing has improved, he says, as a result of learning to sit back a bit and favour simple, memorable, lead lines over flash. "I think it makes the songs a lot stronger."

Not everyone will be pleased, he hints. "I think the obvious thing that people are going to get bent out of shape about is George's voice — how he's not screaming." Having said that, the tension and raw aggression that makes the band's albums and live show so compelling are still there, along with distinct AOF trademarks like Green's voice soaring high above Pettit's roar. This time out, though, with fewer heavily-effected guitars and the refinement of their three-pronged vocal attack, the result seems somehow sparer and more concise. "It allows more space for the songs to breathe," Green says.

While that's true, listeners who put the album on for the first time might want to take a deep breath early on just in case. "I really like the idea of not giving anybody a chance to relax in between songs," says Green, and the approach taken in sequencing the record bears that out. *Old Crow's Young Cardinals* is pretty much a relentless onslaught from the opening track to the tenth, "Accept Crime." Only "Burial," the album's final cut, approaches anything close to being delicate.

Recorded at Vancouver's Armoury Studios over two weeks in late February 2009, and at Silo Recording Studios in Hamilton, the album brings AOF back together with longtime producer Julius "Juice" Butty, and engineer Nick Blagona. Although Alexis briefly considered bringing in a different studio team, the depth of experience Butty and Blagona bring to the table is a persuasive mix. Put bluntly, "If it isn't broke, don't fix it," says Green. "We have this level of comfort with Juice, and with Nick, you just have such history. When it came time to do

is basically an old plastic guitar that rules. We used an old GBX Bass Amp for 'Old Crow's.' We used an old Gibson Grabber on some songs, an old '50s P-Bass, and a couple Fender Jazz Basses. Those are the main weapons of the bass. Then we used this big, beautiful Yamaha drum kit and a plethora of really cool old amps. I used an old '50s Fender Bassman for a bunch of tunes." The Armoury also sports a beautiful live room, he adds. "All the beds — bass, drums, and rhythm guitars — were done live off the floor, the four of us playing together. When you're playing live you can really hear if the transitions work well — and if they don't."

That process allowed them to rewrite and whittle the songs down on the fly, making for compact arrangements and tighter interplay between instruments. "There were no surprises later," says MacNeil. No "secret bass riffs" to navigate around when tracking guitars. No "what the hell is that note? What do you mean you do that?" The songs that usually go the distance, MacNeil says, are the ones that start simply. "One of us comes in with an idea for a beat or a riff and everyone builds on it. We just play and play until everyone's happy."

Overall, the band is tighter. The last time AOF released a record, 2006's *Crisis*, they signed up Jordan "Ratbeard" Hastings on drums. When people talk about AOF they tend to focus, Green says, on the vocals: "How crazy it is, a guy singing and a guy screaming." That may be a good starting point as a description but Alexis has always depended heavily on a tight rhythm section. Every band does, but Alexis' typically wild arrangements, and their unwillingness to repeat themselves, means a greater-than-average demand on the skills of Hastings and bassist Steele. Beyond the ease with which Green and MacNeil can communicate their ample ideas for groove and rhythm effectively, "Steele and Beard," sums up Green, "they just live in the same mind when they're playing."

The songwriting process also benefited from the fact that the band had more time to write this time out. Going into the studio with an excess of songs for the record is something they've never done before. "And, because we took longer to write," says MacNeil, "we weeded out some of the obscure tangents we tend to go on from time to time."

Explains Green: "Before, we'd take a month to write, a month to record, and go right back on tour. When you write just enough songs for a record, you don't know if there's a couple that, given time, would have grown, or if you would have written one or two more that were better."

One of Green's favourite things about making AOF records is that, while they never have any calculated idea of where they're going, inevitably, where they end up feels like it was planned. Taking the lyrics from "Roll, Jordan, Roll," a former slave work song and part of the original blueprint on which blues, R&B, and rock are based, "The Northern," he says, is a good example. "I sang the vocal line. Then George showed me those lyrics and it worked perfectly. It seems calculated, but it was completely off the cuff."

"Everyone has their own idea of what a song is," Pettit will later tell me. "With *Crisis*, we started talking about what the lyrics were about and tried to get inside each other's heads for inspiration to write the lyrics. Same with this record — if someone was going to add to lyrics, we had to talk about it. With 'Sons of Privilege,' Wade had this chorus, and we all came up with our own thing. We picked this topic and added to it."



JORDAN "RATBEARD" HASTINGS BEHIND THE KIT

the organ parts on 'The Northern' and 'Burial,' I said, 'I want it to sound like Deep Purple,' and, you know, Nick recorded Deep Purple."

Although keeping the same team behind the desk, the band made a conscious decision to change up both its process and the venue for recording. "We wanted to go somewhere else, live with the record, and see what that added to the mix." While Green stuck mostly with his own gear, the Armoury provided a wealth of both vintage and high-end gear to draw on. "For most of my guitar parts I used my Morris custom-built head — from Welland-based Morris Custom Electronics — a '62 reissue Telecaster, my old Gibson ES-335, and an old Harmony Stratotone — which



WADE MACNEIL AND ENGINEER NICK BLAGONA STUDYING IN THE STUDIO

Find more AOF information, tour dates, and media at www.theonlybandever.com.

If there's one thing Alexisonfire do not like to do, it's repeat themselves. Although they've made a conscious effort to progress, their growth is also a function of the groove for, and struggle with, musical complexity. "We have this problem where we always seem to want to do the interesting second verse," Green laughs. "We felt like we couldn't just do: verse, chorus, verse, chorus — done." He references the second verse of "Midnight Regulations": "The original second verse was mental. We recorded it that way and when it came time for me to sing on it, I was like, 'I can't sing over this, this is ridiculous.' We ended up doing the second verse just like the first and now we love the song." It's all part of a process of becoming more discriminating songwriters and players. "It's okay to have a chorus that repeats three times if it's a good chorus. That's what a chorus is supposed to be, a hook



BASSIST CHRIS STEELE AND GUITARIST/VOCALIST DALLAS GREEN.



DALLAS GREEN BEHIND AN AMPLE SELECTION OF AXES.

that attracts people to the song. It took us a little while to believe in that, but I think we really did a good job of not letting that get us on this record."

Now, with a longer than usual break between records, the various members' solo projects, and a growing appreciation for staying in one place for more than a day at a time, the band brings a new perspective to its writing and recording process. That perspective is immediately evident on the second half of the album's title lead single "Young Cardinals." The song originated with Pettit, Green explains. Pettit was watching the news on a particularly sour news day, and, stepping outside to take a break from the steady stream of doom-saying, found himself staring into the branches of a nearby tree only to see a nest full of baby cardinals being freshly hatched. "It's the idea that, no matter how crazy the man-made troubles we've given ourselves get, nature just goes along on its own course," Green says.

While there are themes that pop up again and again in the songs, in no way is this a concept record, Pettit will tell me, but when I catch up with him, birds — or more accurately, the lack thereof — are the focus of our initial conversation. Pettit is talking to me from the deck of his home in Hamilton, waiting for hummingbirds to appear and take advantage of a feeder he's put out. "They're not coming. They were here yesterday, but they're little divas; they don't want to perform for me." Sticking with birds, we talk more about the first track — the mission statement. "Old Crows," he explains, is about letting change happen.

While the band is happy and supportive of his new vocal approach, he recognizes that the quality of those vocals may leave some fans feeling put off. "Screaming has its place, but I wanted to push it in another direction. When we started writing these songs, and I was screaming, it didn't feel right. It felt like I was doing it out of obligation." Eight years on, in some ways, AOF have become elder statesmen in the scream scene, but it isn't a scene they're willing to inhabit forever. "It's just not where our heads are," says MacNeil.

"We had a lot of mixed feelings about scream for a long time," Pettit adds. "When I started listening to what I would call scream or post-hardcore, the closest

things that sounded mildly like our band were At the Drive-In and Refused. Those were influential bands for us at the time. Then, at some point, scream got really big and was combined with this glamour, haircut kind of stuff, and all of a sudden it turned into something completely different. You notice that when you get out on the road with some of these bands, you get the feeling that they're not music fans. You couldn't sit down and talk to them about their decisions as musicians. As much as we are embedded in that scene, we're trying to distance ourselves from it as well."

As for backlash, initially there's no more now than there was after *Crisis* dropped, Pettit maintains. "A lot of the times you'll go online and read 50 comments by kids that are enthralled with it. Then you'll read one comment by a kid that's like: 'This is shit and I hate your band now. I have an Alexisonfire tattoo and you guys have changed.' Even after you've read 50 comments by people who are very supportive, that one from some 'loudmouth' calling you a sellout is the one that really hangs with you."

While the album is more focused, it's no less aggressive, he says. "It's not like we've taken a step toward becoming a radio rock band. I think your parents are still going to hate it. I want parents to take away our records from their kids. I'd like that. I encourage parents to try and censor us."

The foundation for each new record is the last record, he explains. *Old Crows/Young Cardinals* is the result of having toured excessively, gathered a variety of influences and ideas, and wanting to share them. "That's part of being a group of artists that doesn't want to repeat themselves. We don't want to put out the same record 10 times in a row. Asking us not to change is asking too much." ■



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

"I've basically lived here my whole life," states Edmonton's Roland Pemberton — aka Cadence Weapon — about his native city. "I've always drawn influence from human nature — people, places, and why people do certain things — just trying to understand what it is to be a human being. But that's always shaped by the context of being from Edmonton." Indeed, for many accomplished writers, the home city takes the shape of a lens through which the world is taken in, understood, and spit back out, and Edmonton, like almost any other Canadian city, offers an entirely unique perspective unto itself. "It always comes back to Edmonton in the end."

BY ANDREW KING

As Cadence Weapon, the 23-year-old Pemberton is an ambitious hip hop artist with two full-lengths in his catalogue, both of which have been showered with accolades from cred-oozing critics. Under his given name, though, and as of July 1, 2009, Pemberton is serving the first of his two years as the city's official Poet Laureate. Originally nominated by local filmmaker and friend Trevor Anderson, Pemberton was at first unfamiliar with the title or what it would entail; however, after researching the role rather extensively, the young poet realized the responsibilities were quite akin to what he was already outputting through his lyrics and likeminded works.

"It's the idea of chronicling events in Edmonton, talking about Edmonton, or discussing what affects people from here — basically being a voice for the people as a whole," he explains. Those familiar with the regionally-rooted lyrics from either 2005's *Breaking Kayfabe* or 2008's *Afterparty Babies* can easily understand why Pemberton would be comfortable with the title and its tasks. "It's very exciting for me because the city is basically acknowledging my existence and what I'm doing."

A fair amount of Pemberton's rhymes focus on his city, or at least are based on some of the events and experiences that come from being one of its residents. It seems Pemberton possesses a good understanding of what being an Edmontonian entails, even at its most fundamental level. "I feel like people from Edmonton are different," he offers. "People have this sense of desperation. It's easy to feel sorry for yourself sometimes." Still, as is common among skilled writers or lyricists, Pemberton seems to have a love/hate relationship with his city — perhaps leaning more heavily towards the positive side. "When things are going well," he explains, "the city has such a good spirit, and it's really infectious and has infiltrated my work that way."

Of course, a young MC with a youthful, unapologetic take on his surroundings like that adopted by Cadence Weapon is bound to receive some vocal criticism from the more reserved and traditional literary community. He's heard that what he does isn't poetry, but Pemberton offers a different, and perhaps more enlightened perspective on his art. "First off, what is poetry anyway?" he asks rhetorically. "Secondly, what if their perception wasn't my intent? It's creative writing. I do things for certain reasons, and if you don't understand those reasons or aren't open to them, you can take things out of context."

Though he's grateful to have received such an honour from his home city, it's clear that music is still his main focus as an artist. Undeniably a rapper — and

a quite good one at that — Pemberton insists it takes a much rounder definition to describe what he's about as a musician. "When I got into music, I wanted to be like rappers that I liked and create these worlds within the framework of rap," he says of his roots. "But as my music has changed and evolved, I'm less interested in the label of being a rapper, where you have to adhere to certain rules."

That said, he still acknowledges his place within the Canadian hip hop scene as a whole — and is quite proud of it. "I think Canadian rap in general is a very strong enterprise," he offers. "It's very diverse, and I think it has as wide a creative spectrum as you'll find anywhere."

Cadence Weapon, along with other Canadian artists like Buck 65, k-os, and K'naan make up a unique division of hip hop in general, all offering a sound rooted in rap but that seemingly isn't bound by any limitations of the genre — and is that much better because of it. It's something Pemberton attributes to the Canadian definition of hip hop, or perhaps lack thereof in terms of clear-cut confines. "In the States, you need to have Busta Rhymes on your remix to get someone to pay attention to you. Here, I feel like there's not really a specific precedent set for what our hip hop is supposed to be. It's like we're forming our own identity as we go along, and that leaves it more open-ended for people to accept what we're doing."

Nowhere is his creativity as a musician more evident than his most recent release, a pay-what-you-choose mix tape dubbed *Separation Anxiety*. More of a collage representing Cadence Weapon as an artist than an "album," the release features a number of remixes, re-imaginings, covers, and demos, many of which are collaborations with fellow Canadian groundbreakers like Chad Van Gaalen, Final Fantasy, The Cansecos, and plenty others. These artists all seem to ride a similar wavelength within their respective genres as far as the boundaries they'll willingly ignore for the purpose of creating real art.

"I think, to a certain degree, we're aware of where we fit into our different worlds as something we have in common," says Pemberton of the company he keeps on *Separation Anxiety*. The fact that such diverse artists are able to mesh within these collaborations represents the magic that is music as a whole. "When I started DJing, I realized that all music is the same," explains Pemberton. "It rises and falls, there are choruses and bridges, there are structural similarities like tempo and time signature..." Realizing that, regardless of genre, music is meant to come together made him question his identity as simply a "rapper."

CADENCE

"Classifying something makes people more comfortable with it, but collaborating with different people from different genres lets me see there's no limit to what I'm doing," he attests. "There might be a weird stigma for other people, but for me, those classifications don't affect what I do."

"What he does" as an artist is constantly evolving, each release or project more open-ended than the last. As for where he finds himself currently the young musician has quite a bit on his mind at the moment, including the in-the-works follow-up to *Afterparty Babies*. "The logistics of doing this new

record are kind of mind boggling and are really stressing me out," he says frankly. This time out, Pemberton is writing with live instrumentation in mind for both the studio sessions and supporting performances. "I think if I can pull off what I'm trying to do, it'll be something really special. There are strings and horns and all kinds of weird beat things, so it's pretty adventurous."

The record will be titled *Roquentin*, named after the protagonist from Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*. "The whole album has a theme of existentialism and being alone too much, but it still maintains my consistency with regionalism," he explains. While in the past, Pemberton has done the vast majority of



WEAPON

his own production, this time out he's doing most of the basic arrangements, though his local musician friends will be called into the studio to record the bulk of the instrumentation. Synching up with this approach, he's also putting together a touring band with drums and bass in order to better represent his material on the road. "I'm moving away from the solo thing to something more expansive," he says of his live component.

"I feel like what I'm doing is more open-ended and not really classifiable anymore," says Pemberton of his current output. Funny how a man recognized for how well he manipulates words refuses to be pinned down by the n.

Whether he's playing the part of producer or poet, rhymesmith or writer, critic or collaborator, Pemberton is a man of many artistic dimensions. Perhaps the only way one can truly get an idea of Cadence Weapon as an artist is to fully immerse oneself in his art. ■



Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.



Beast

BY KEVIN YOUNG

Since Beast's self-titled debut came out in Canada, released jointly by Pheromone Records and Vega/Avalanche in November 2008, the band has made quite an impression. Admittedly, there has been more excitement in Quebec, but the rest of Canada is catching on.

Acts like Beast don't come around often. Equal parts trip hop, rock, rhyme, and rage, with just a wisp or two of gospel and smoky jazz hanging in the air, the band's music is not only unique, but performed with the same kind of absolute commitment by singer Betty Bonifassi and producer/drummer Jean-Phi Goncalves onstage and on record.

It's a rarity for English Canada to pay much attention to Francophone artists who make an English album. Though Beast are, in many ways, a core Francophone project – in that both principal writers are originally from France, now working and living in Montreal – the record is so undeniably powerful that it's pretty much impossible to ignore. That's not to say Beast are setting the world on fire yet, and there's no guarantee they will, but they're making inroads, garnering

critical acclaim, received a 2009 Juno nomination for New Group of the Year, and possess a loyal and wide-ranging fan base. After one song, whether you hear it live or on record, you'll understand exactly why.

Well before seeing them live, Pheromone Records' Founder, Kim Cooke, was already sold. "It was one of those epiphany moments – they don't happen that often. I took one listen and thought, 'Oh my god, this is great'. Everybody loves Betty's voice, that's a slam-dunk, but the overall approach spoke to me immediately, on the first listen. I made my commitment way before seeing them live. That's a big risk to take, but I was so enthralled with the music, if I was going to be a serious suitor, I had take the leap of faith."

Both Goncalves and Bonifassi bring years of stage and studio experience to the table. A student of languages, with a deep interest in world music and an acclaimed performer in her own right, Bonifassi contributed to the 2003 animated hit *Les Triplettes de Belleville*, and can claim the distinction of having performed a song from the film at the 76th Academy Awards. More recently she's leant her vocal talents and

extraordinary live presence to another Montreal success, DJ Champion. Gonçalves, too, brings ample studio and live chops to Beast, known for his production work and percussion/drumming with his own band, Plaster, former Fugee Lauryn Hill, as well as Quebec-based acts like Pierre Lapointe and Daniel Bélanger. But what makes the Beast record stand out isn't just the talent the two bring to it, but the balance they achieve between showcasing those talents, serving the needs of their songs, and managing the interplay between a variety of electronic and organic instruments, elements, and musical styles.

Throughout, Bonifassi and Gonçalves manage to imbue the record with high drama without being overdramatic. While Gonçalves' choices for guitar tones and instrumentation vary song to song, the result is always cohesive and clean, never fragmentary or cluttered, maintaining an essential urgency and drive without ever overcomplicating the groove with unnecessary ear candy. Whether the arrangement is huge and lush with deep vocal arrangements or orchestrals set against Bonifassi's raps and primary melodies, or suddenly spare with just a beat or a delicate piano line, they clearly serve both the song and the story. The sound can be astonishingly delicate one second, then, just as suddenly, heavy and raw with massive beats underpinning Bonifassi's raging vocal delivery.

When they began recording in 2006, however, their intention wasn't to build a cohesive body of work at all. Originally Gonçalves simply wanted Bonifassi to lay down some vocals on a composition demo he was putting together. "We didn't expect to find what we found," Gonçalves says, "but it was so convincing, we had no choice but to do more."

Within two days of the original sessions, they decided to make a record together. "It's something we did very instinctively. We didn't analyze it, we just did it and we got what we got. That's it." What they got immediately began to garner attention from people in the industry like Cooke, but for audiences, it's Beast's ability to equal the impact of the record live that seals the deal.

It's not uncommon for a relatively new band, even with a strong record and individually impressive live resumes, to have trouble putting together a good show. Toiling away on your record in the studio, with little to no idea of the mechanics and flow of what makes a great show, can be a trap. In Beast's case, from studio to stage, nothing is lost in the translation. It's no exaggeration to say that Beast's live set is stunning.

"We had a good basis for the show," says Gonçalves, citing their pride in the music, their passion to get it to the stage, and the fact their collective stage experience is so extensive. Still, it's rare that a relatively new project gels so seamlessly onstage out of the box. "We figured out how to do as accurate an interpretation as possible, and to change how we approached the songs."

While the live show has all the sonic depth of the record, it comes across even more like a rock project than listeners might initially expect. Gonçalves has a fair bit going on behind the kit — running samples, triggering sequences, drumming, and also singing live. The singing wasn't in his plans, he says. Vocals he'd laid down as scratch tracks, which were originally to be sung by guest vocalists, were kept on



record at Bonifassi's insistence. "I gave her that," he says, "and now I find that I have to sing them live. I enjoy it, but it's something new to me, and I've got to work on it."

Onstage, Beast is rounded out by Serge Pelletier on guitar and Jonathan Dauphinais on bass/keys, or, more appropriately, the KeyBass — Dauphinais' bass has a MicroKorg strapped to it. Beyond being an interesting touch visually, the KeyBass lends depth to their live sound. "It was the perfect project for Jonathan to develop it and it's still evolving," says Gonçalves. "He's experimenting, with little details that will make it sound better. And he can play both — with the left hand on the bass and the right hand on the keyboard."

What truly knocks the audience on its collective ass, however, is Bonifassi. She stalks the stage, always confident, predatory, and raging one second and grinning the next, never for a second making you doubt her absolute commitment to the material and the show. "In this project it's the first time I'm writing all the lyrics, finding all the vocal melodies and hooks, so it was quite a challenge," Bonifassi says.

For her, it was important to tell a story over the course of the record, and to do so in English. Though she studied languages in university in her native France, English, she maintains, is not her greatest strength. So, to translate that story effectively, Bonifassi collaborated with Simon Wilcox in a series of seven- to ten-day stints in Montreal, working and reworking the lyrics to the point where both were satisfied they'd achieved the maximum emotional impact. At first, says Bonifassi, Wilcox was surprised by her work. "She came and she had that idea that she was going to help a French girl, you know?" That impression, however, was short-lived. . .

To say the collaboration was a rewarding one is to put it mildly. "We had nights not sleeping, just writing and having a blast. We were very connected."

The story, she says, stems from deep sadness, but the delivery is anything but morose. "It was therapy for me," she explains. "All my family was in Serbia during wartime. I didn't see them for ten years. I concentrated all of the . . . not the sadness," she says, searching for the English word. "Melancholy," she offers, but even that doesn't quite define it. "All the people I love the most on this planet were there, suffering, and I could not enter the country."

Her writing draws on a fairly extensive literary vocabulary developed during her studies and her own experiences. As the sadness was channelled through the recording process and performance, the story became something else entirely. As dark as the lyrics are at times, there's an unfettered joy to Bonifassi's live presence that's remarkable. "It's a new freedom, and I love that. I had really been in the shit, in a deep mess, you know? Then to clean that and turn the page, that's the beauty of that experience." Now that she has gotten it out and moved past it, she's able to see the story as both an expression of her personal pain as well as recognizing more communal, universal themes in her imagery. "That's a real release, feeling the darkness and then everything leaving you."

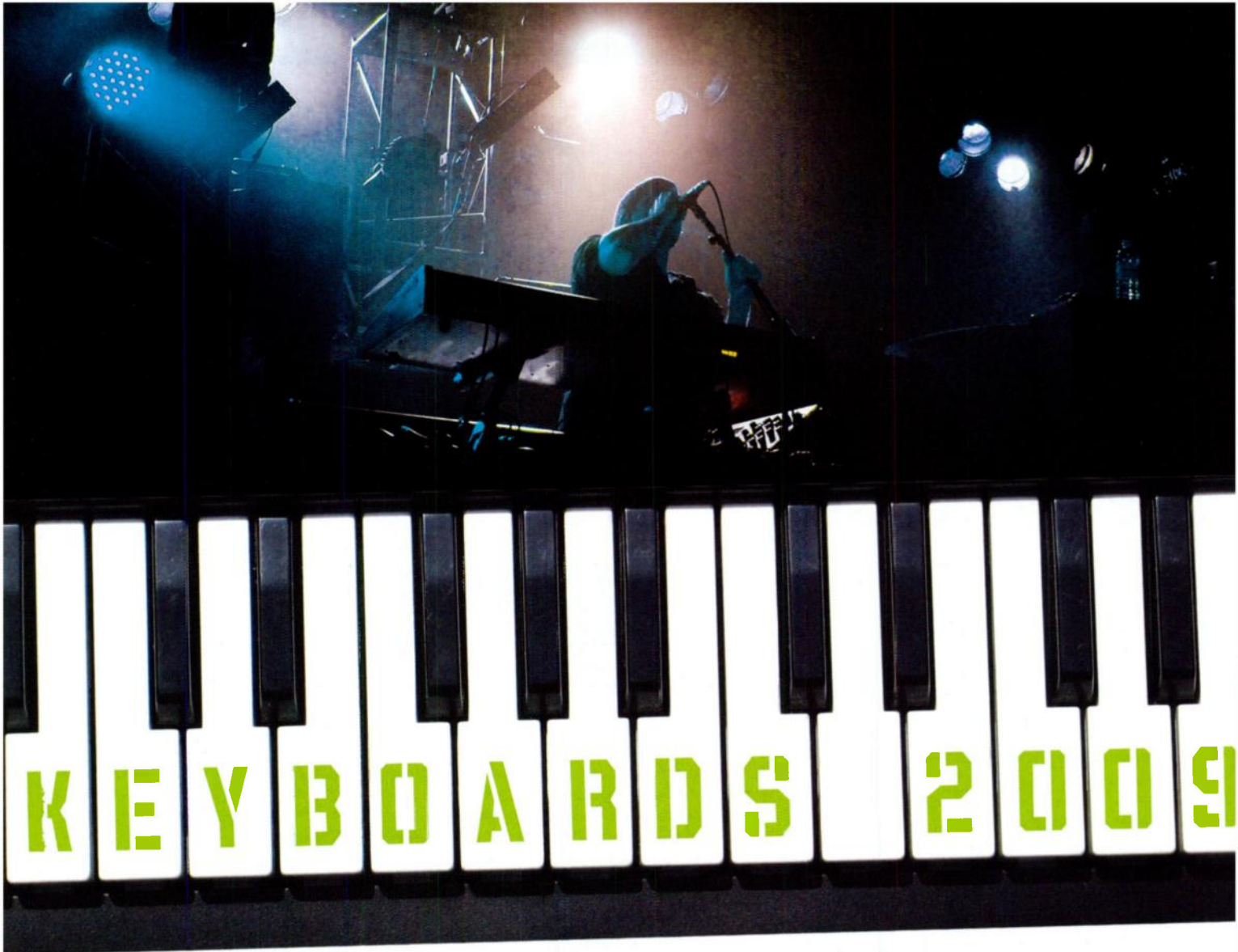
Bonifassi has a variety of projects in mind for the future, including one that will rely heavily on French songs from the period immediately preceding World War II, but she's also looking forward to continuing the adventure with Beast. Now that the album is out in the US on Verve Forecast, hopefully she'll have plenty of opportunity to do so. Beast are also looking beyond North America, planning European tour dates to support upcoming autumn releases in the UK and France.

My recommendation, for what it's worth: buy this record, then, at your first opportunity, go see this band live. If the record doesn't convert you, chances are good that the show will. If not, at the very least, you'll get a valuable lesson in showmanship watching Beast whip up the crowd. ■



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

For more information, visit
www.beastsound.net.



BY KEVIN YOUNG

We might not think about it on a day-to-day basis, but regardless of our individual focus – performance, arranging, songwriting – we all follow a unique road map to find our way as both players and professionals. As rare as it is for us to analyze our own personal development, it's even more rare to get a candid glimpse into the development of a keyboard player as influential and widely recognized as Garth Hudson.

Best-known for his work with The Band, Hudson has kept some pretty fascinating musical company over his career – Ronnie Hawkins, Bob Dylan, and Leonard Cohen, just to name a few. After studying music at the University of Western Ontario and spending some time with London, ON's Paul London and the Capers, Hudson joined Ronnie Hawkins' backup band, The Hawks, in 1961. Both of Hudson's parents were musicians, and in order to not disappoint them, he allegedly joined The Hawks on the condition he was given the title of music consultant, ostensibly so his family wouldn't think he was wasting years of study on rock and roll. Clearly he didn't.

The Windsor, ON-born keyboardist and composer has been inducted into both the Juno Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and received a Grammy Lifetime of Achievement Award, along with the rest of The Band, as well as receiving the Canada South Blues Society Lifetime Achievement Award and numerous other accolades. But he's not content to sit on his laurels. At 71, Hudson is as innovative, imaginative, and dedicated to and fascinated by the study of music as ever. He continues to keep up a busy schedule, recording and performing with a host of artists in recent years – Los Lobos, Martha Wainwright, and Daniel Lanois among them, as well as lecturing at schools and playing gigs around the globe. Maud Hudson, Garth's wife of 30 years and a singer in her own right, tells me that even when they're taking a holiday, he still likes to work – sitting at the desk in their hotel room, headphones on, writing.

When we have the chance to speak, the couple has just returned to their home in the Catskill Mountains, near Woodstock, NY, after a month of recording,

writing, and producing a project in Toronto. Over the next two hours, we'll talk the history of keyboard technology, the history of rock and roll, and delve into some of the specific influences that have had, and continue to have, an effect on Hudson's evolution as both a player and recording artist. While it's not quite the same as attending one of his master classes, it's an education in itself...

Hudson is certainly no stranger to the role of teacher. "I have stood up or sat down at a keyboard, in front of 30 or 40 hotshots, from time to time. They have great questions," he says, laughing. "The questions are probably more fun than the actual dissemination of facts," he adds.

True, particularly when Hudson defaults to providing the answers with the keyboard itself, a tendency some past interviewers have referred to as "piano language." Happily, it's something he'll also do several times over the course of our conversation. "As a piano player, of course, I have to be real careful. I don't want to kill 'em," he says, laughing again. "Just kidding," he calls out. But in some cases, he explains, it is the best way to answer a question, to illustrate his point, or – another chuckle – "to prove I know whereof I speak." His concern right now, however, is what we're going to discuss.

Whether that's to be the genesis of his style, his incendiary technique on the Lowrey organ, or the various artists and instruments that have played an integral part in his musical life, what he is primarily concerned with, he explains, is "skin on ivory."

When Hudson's skin touches ivory, the results are routinely amazing. Over his career, Hudson has broken considerable ground. Take the signature Clavinet bit on The Band's "Up On Cripple Creek." You might not think of the wah/clav combo as being particularly cutting edge, but then again, you weren't the person who had the idea to put the two together in the first place. Hudson is. To be fair, he reminds me, the verdict is still out on whether it was actually he or Stevie Wonder who was first out of the gate, but it doesn't diminish the fact Hudson's deft use of the sound aided in its becoming a mainstay in rock and funk in short order.

"I like treatment devices," he says simply. You can almost hear a modest shrug, but to be clear, Hudson is widely regarded as a bona fide genius, not just by fans, but by his peers as well. His fondness for experimentation, his style, his relentless fascination with sound manipulation, and his remarkably diverse melodic sensibilities are evident in equal doses in his work with The Band as well as his solo efforts: *The Sea To The North*, *Our Lady Queen Of The Angels*, and he and Maud's live record, *Live At The Wolf*.

Hudson's playing is a rare combination of technical grace and a deep and abiding knowledge of genre and form, coupled with that intangible x-factor that makes it impossible to take your eyes and ears off of a performer. He has a way of weaving complex melodic movement into an already dense track without detracting from the dialogue between other players, or from more prominent melodies. Watching past clips of shows, he does so wearing a look that's almost serene, playing seemingly effortlessly – even when he's ripping up the Lowrey Organ at top speed.

His grasp of the Lowrey, his main axe with The Band, was so comprehensive he was able to coax sounds and textures that sounded remarkably like polyphonic synthesizers that were then still long from being staples on stage. His use of pitch bend in "The Genetic Method," the extended keyboard intro to The Band's "Chest Fever" is a great example of this. He can make the instrument scream with distortion one second and sound like a mellotron or orchestral winds the next.

When he talks about that style and how it developed, though, he tends to speak little of himself, instead explaining by way of the contributions of others. "Supporting characters," he says, detractors and influences alike, "who pointed this way or that, who leant me LPs, gave me advice, or," he says wryly, the laughter never far from the surface, "who didn't like me playing rock and roll at a casual in 1954. I remember every man who put me here. Period."

I'm wondering who some of those men are, but I'm also wondering what drew him to the Lowrey over the more ubiquitous B3, and about 40 or 50 other things as well – like what it feels like to have played on a stage with Dylan when people were yelling that he was a traitor for going electric, about laying the signature piano part on "The Weight" to track, or about how it feels to be responsible, in part, for one of the top 10 records of all time, *Music From Big Pink*. In the end, I opt for the Lowrey question.

"That's a good place to go," he tells me. "But I have to give you the history first. In the early fifties I worked for an electronic organ company, Minshall, in London, ON," he begins. "It was a division of a company that made pipe organs, reed organs, and melodions, which takes me back to the three or four melodions that my dad bought – one for the cottage, one for the back porch, and one for the dining room, made in Canada," he adds – part of a community of pipe organ builders centred near Guelph, ON. "Piano was my first instrument, then the melodions I mentioned, and then I got to play a Hammond Organ, and wow..." He pauses. "Lowrey consciousness didn't arrive until later. My dad had a shop in the basement. I learned how to use basic tools. so I repaired the Dorothy, then the Bell, and this other instrument I still have. It has a bass reed section with 4" or 5" reeds – an incredible bass sound.

"I worked in the factory testing the Minshall. It was a tube organ, so they had to be tested. We went to the fairs and exhibitions, the Western Fair in London and the Toronto Ex, and I'd go and man the booth, then go around and listen to the various makes." This included the Lowrey, which had a fundamentally differ-

ent sound and interface, he explains. "What was different about the Lowrey was it had this glide pedal. Also there was the difference in which the sound was created. The Lowrey employed the Format system," he explains, "and the Hammond, what was then called synthesis, where you pull out eight or nine sine waves and mix them together, resulting in a sound that was identifiably Hammond."

While playing with The Capers, Hudson only played tenor sax, but well remembers going to see a band with a Lowrey one night off in Detroit. "This guy had some grit in the sound," he says. With nothing in the way of monitors and limited sound reinforcement in general, "in order to compete with guitars, you want a little grit." By playing with the settings on the preamp and cranking his 145 Leslie wide open, he says, "you'd get grit."

Many players of the time were defaulting to the B3 almost automatically, but not Hudson – his playing technique, coupled with the depth of musical styles and sources at his fingertips, gave him a command of the instrument so complete he could coax sounds reminiscent of other electro-acoustic and acoustic instruments from it as readily as he could make it sound like a synth. But, as extraordinary as his use of the Lowrey Organ was, his development and exten-

sive musical vocabulary owes something to a larger community of instruments: the saxophone, cornet, trumpet, slide trumpet, alto horn, and the accordion. "I'm still developing that – experimenting with external devices with the accordion," he says, "to both subtly and radically manipulate the instrument's sound."

His experience as a horn player, he tells me, greatly impacted his piano playing. "Glissandi and ornamentation became a concern early on, and still are. The study of ornamentation like glissandos, trills, mordents, and acciaccaturas is important in the development of style. You have to give this person, whoever it is, something to focus on when they're listening rather than just dreaming through it." While The Band were all multi-instrumentalists, Hudson is generally thought of and critically lauded as being a force that elevated their music. I comment that, in a way, he was "the orchestra" for The Band. He laughs: "The Accordion is an orchestra unto its own. There

are many fine accordion jokes," he adds, pausing again, "but you get hardened to it, you know?"

But it was the players he listened to, played with, and emulated – "the men who put him here," as he said, that appear to have had the greatest impact on him.

"There was a character in town – and this is important – a collector who would lend me albums by people that had become great in the early '40s, and that's where rock and roll and R&B began. For example: I go right back to a compilation with McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Claude Hopkins, Fletcher Henderson, Andy Kirk with Mary Lou Williams, and Duke Ellington, of course. Start with McKinney's," he directs me. "Listen to Don Redman, alto saxophone. He also sings and delivers the message. Listen to his voice, the inflections, the ornamentation, and the sincerity of his delivery." Also, he says, the banjo that shows up on the lion's share of their work.

"And what else do you listen for?" He continues. "Do you know anything about western swing? That's a whole other list, and it's glorious and light hearted – the great Bob Wills, Billie Jack Wills, Spade Cooley, and Asleep at the Wheel. They took a couple songs from McKinney's Cotton Pickers, songs that were popular in '28 to '32," he adds.

There are guitar players as well, he tells me, on whom horn players had an impact: BB King, Billy Butler, and Mickey "Guitar" Baker, who Hudson played with in 1958. "The tenor saxophone player was boss and maybe the tenor players heard banjos and delta blues music and gathered what they could from it..."

All these players, as well, clearly play a part in Hudson's development. "Yes," he says, "and Ben Webster, Johnny Hodges, and Coleman Hawkins were fearless players. You can't leave out Jimmy Dorsey. His staccato pieces are amazing – the guy kills you. And Lionel Hampton, his version of "Flying Home" – the first one, with Illinois Jacquet on tenor saxophone.

"What else do you search for? This is going back a bit, to McKinney's. In



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that band was a trombone player who played flawlessly in the language of the time. Keyboard players solo, and there's always an intent to achieve perfection, we always listen to the masters, and I'm telling you, listen to that trombone player."

Then there are the keyboardists. "If I was to give two recommendations: Milt Buckner, probably the hottest of the swing organists, and I have to mention Wild Bill Davis, magnificent on the Hammond — the tag on "April In Paris." I heard these guys. I played tenor. I heard the tenor player and Milt Buckner and how they fit together — how Milt would be influenced by the tenor saxophone phrasing and ornamentation of the time."

His enthusiasm is tangible, even infectious. I tried to find that trombone player right away. I haven't, yet, but kicking around the corners of Hudson's musical influences, beyond giving me a better sense of how his style developed, like our interview, is a lesson in itself.

"I got inspiration from all the instruments, all the great players." That goes well beyond jazz and R&B. "I admired the uilleann pipes, the Irish bagpipes — the vibrato was *very* interesting," he says. All these influences, the sounds and styles, sing through in his command of the piano, the organ, and the tenor sax. You can hear it on "The Weight," in the ornamentation of the parts on "Acadian Driftwood," and the interplay between the slide trumpet and the melodica on "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down."

Thinking like a horn player clearly had an impact on his approach to melody. "Of course," he says. "Everything goes in. I encourage the young person to derive from everything that's played that's good," he says. "It puts them ahead to go back and listen, even to those well outside of their own style. Listen to perfection," he says simply.

When deriving ideas from various instruments, players, and types of orchestration, transcription is big as well, he cautions. "Everybody should explore that — find something you think will contribute to your style and write it out."

BILL KING

Any role involving a creative dialogue with other players is impacted by our style. Over his career, keyboardist, producer, and composer Bill King has had the good fortune to work with a number of fine musicians. Early on, he was a musical director for Linda Ronstadt, Janis Joplin, and Martha Reeves and, more recently, is guiding and helping hone the talents of younger artists including Sophie Millman and Shakura S'Aida. King is also the founder of the Jazz Report Radio Network and Magazine, Radioland Records, and a recording artist in his own right, his most recent effort being Bill King's Rhythm Express' *Beat Street*.

His style as an MD, he says, has changed dramatically over time. Being a perfectionist by nature, he was initially very strict. "I really didn't have the knowledge of how to work with multiple players — some weaker and some stronger than others." Some players would later tell him that he'd petrified them. "I'd put the glare on them, you know? It wasn't intentional. Sometimes people would read it wrong. I was just so serious." That changed when he worked with Peter Matz, of *The Carol Burnett Show* fame. "He wore a smile constantly. He would look over and say, 'I think I heard this note, but I need this note.' Now, he knew the guy played the wrong note. He was just incredibly diplomatic."

As both an MD and producer, offering guidance is a huge part of the gig. "It's hearing the sound of the voice, knowing the temperament of the singer, and if they can tackle certain material." And that's probably easier to do if you don't terrify them...

"I knew I had to relax a bit — look at the big picture — but, also, hire the *very* best players. It lifts you up. Your playing advances, and your writing and arranging can be more experimental." Over time, too, he's developed a large memory file of powerful songs and an expansive musical internal that helps him develop and enhance the talent of the young musicians he works with. "You hear, assess, and study the very best," he says.

"Listening is the key," he says. Beyond his experience as a player, with so many years as a music journalist in print and radio, he's done an inordinate amount of listening. It seeps in and helps you grasp subtle, subjective elements of making a recording, arrangement, or performance better: "Listen to arrangers — go back and start studying scores." As a teenager, King would head to the library and bring home Beethoven, Shostakovich, and other scores. "When I first started looking at them it was hard to read, but then I started flipping the pages as quick as the music was going by."

King is clear on how being a piano player has certain benefits, both in terms of his work as a MD and a producer. "I am the orchestra. I have a cinematic approach to everything — there's got to be a bit of drama in songs. With keyboards, you cover it all." Essentially, you can be a walking library of style, genre, and feel, so that regardless of the tone of the piece, you can offer up a palette of complementary colours for singers to draw on in their performance.

"Get down, get records, and play as much as you can with them."

That's how King learned the blues initially, starting with the Junior Mance tune "Smokey Blues." "I learned his licks — memorized all his licks. Then the next guy came along and I learned his. Now, when I'm playing today, I don't know what I'm playing, but it's all connected and rooted in the things I picked up through the years."

King, like Hudson, talks about perfection — the singers, the players, and the people who walked into the studio, got up in front of the orchestra, and nailed it. Constantly building up that internal library helps to continuously update and enrich your style, and expand your vocabulary. He talks specific players: "Oscar Peterson, McCoy Tyner, who had all the modal stuff, Bill Evans' romanticism, Keith Jarrett, who brought in the funk, and Herbie Hancock, who brought in all those dissonant colours that work so beautifully. It's a constant process of reinvention," he says. Guiding young artists is an extension of that process. "You have to help people, especially when they're really talented. Get them focused on what will give them a career and bring them a certain amount of financial stability. This is something you share with others that you really care about."

But it isn't about cultivating people for stardom. "It's about self-reliance; creating your own work and income. It's really about the joy of discovery — finding yourself, turning a corner, and getting better, and then at 40, 50, then 60 years old, finding yourself turning a corner again. If you can do it at 70, then you've lived an incredible life."



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LIGHTS

I ask if he's ever transcribed any of his improvised solos, like "The Genetic Method." "That's something I'd probably give to a student," he says. "There was one performance where I went on and on. I think it was "Winterland." I used pitch bend a lot in that piece. I hadn't heard it for years."

I think I know the one he's talking about, I tell him, and start furiously searching YouTube. "Was it long, with a lot of glissandos and some Irish in it?" he asks. Yes, and there's some Bach in there as well, I answer. "Yeah," he laughs again. "You gotta get people's attention, you know?"

Hudson has never stopped building up his own internal library of licks and styles. "I hear what the young players are doing," he says. At this point he begins speaking "piano language" in earnest – illustrating some of the elements he wove into "The Genetic Method," playing bits of this piece or that, and then some exercises, incorporating them into a song form...

For the next few minutes I have the distinct pleasure of listening to one of the finest players in rock and roll just play, punctuating the phrases with occasional comments like: "Now, here we go, back into the left hand again," and "here's the bridge," leading me through the form. Again, it's like being given a lesson by remote, and I have to remind myself to keep asking questions.

Even after we've pretty much wrapped up, Hudson chats amiably with me – most often letting the piano speak, but also telling jokes, talking brass instruments, laughing, and just generally being a charming human. He talks about working out on pipe organs, the pipe organ he built for the recording of *Moon Struck One* at Bearsville Studios, when the A room was still being built. He talks about his collaboration with Maud, a bass accordion loaned recently from Toronto-based keyboardist Denis Keldie, the descriptive style and historical subtext of "The Saga of Cyrus and Mulgrew" and "Little Island" from 2001's *The Sea to the North*, other great piano players like

LIGHTS

For Toronto based-recording artist Lights, the road map may be shorter than King and Hudson's, but she's wasting no time on turning some corners of her own. The young singer/songwriter and keyboardist is making an impact in Canada with her self-titled debut EP, and a fresh brand of hook-laden synth-pop that's delivered with undeniable charm. Part of that charm is her willingness to find inspiration in decidedly quirky places and a flair for the fantastic that informs her videos, her stage persona, and her choice of gear.

Put bluntly, the look and persona owe an obvious debt to Wonder Woman, that is, if Wonder Woman played a keytar...

That's right, a keytar. It's an instrument that very few players can pull out without looking absolutely ridiculous – but Lights is one of the few. While she uses a sensible Korg X50 and the slightly flashier MicroKorg onstage, the keytar or, to be more accurate, Russell – she's named it, you see – is her marquis axe. "I love it. I'm getting worried that it'll break down and I'll never find another one."

The day we spoke, she was just on her way into MuchMusic to preview her video for "February Air." It's the song that helped lead her to the style that's resonating with her fans, and the first she wrote that depended so heavily on synthesizers.

With little in the way of formal training beyond that, she's figuring things out pretty much on her own. Along the way, she's dabbled in R&B, pop punk, metal, and the acoustic singer/songwriter thing while on the hunt for a place to focus her talents. A publishing deal with Sony led to a variety of collaborations that helped her begin to hone her songwriting chops and narrow the field, and, over the course of her dabbling, she's become much more in touch with exactly what it was she wanted to hear.

"I'm not doing anything new. I look back at the past 40 years of music, pick out what I like, and put that in my music." While she says there are no limits to what she'll try in the recording process, she explains, she tends to hear the overall texture of a song ahead of time. "I know exactly what sound I want. I'm not technical at all," she explains. "I'll go through a hundred sounds, find the one, put it in, and go through another hundred."

As for what's driving her sound: "I'm really inspired by what New Order was doing, or Phil Collins' drum tracks from "In the Air Tonight," with those super-huge reverb snares – taking things that wouldn't be typically put together. I like abrasive, really '80s sounds, and pairing them with gentle modern melodies. I think that's what makes it fresh."

One listen to the EP, and one look at Lights' site, and it's obvious she tends to gravitate to sparkly things, or more accurately, sparkly sounds. "With synths, you can find or make whatever sound or texture you want to hear – there are no limits. In my mind I hear the way every song should sound and there are 20 layers. This is where I felt like I was the most creative – where I felt like I was home."

Look for a new recording from Lights later in 2009, and go to www.iamlights.com for details.



Chris Schroeder of *What's He Building In There?* goes double-duty.

Art Tatum, Carmen Cavallaro, the Serbian accordionist Krnjevac...

"There are musicians that have astounded us in the past," he says "Art Tatum – Tatum went into the studio for two days and recorded dozens of songs, most of them first takes..."

When I ask if, with all the technology we have available now and our fascination with fixing things, if getting it right on the first take is less of a focus than it once was, or somehow less important, Hudson responds immediately. "It's the goal of every player to get it right the first time, but, when we're underscoring the works of great poets, it's very difficult to get everything on the first take."

Fair enough. Hudson should know. Not only has he performed and recorded with a number of great poets over his career, but when it comes to "piano language," he happens to be one of them himself.

We have access to tools now undreamt of 10 to 20 years ago, thousands of new songs and artists a few keystrokes away, but we also have unparalleled access to past works as well. As much as we need to look forward as musicians, there's something to be said for stepping back in time, revisiting our roots and the roots of the players who influence us. After the conversations I had with Garth Hudson, Bill King, and Lights, I began to think of the amount of time I spend in a dialogue with other players and of how to expand that dialogue – spending some quality time with the work of artists they love I may have little knowledge of and asking more questions of the "where did you come by that and what made you think of playing there" variety. Putting more value on listening in general in an effort to keep turning the corners King talked about, as often and with as much enthusiasm as these three do, is a great way of approaching your journey on your instrument.

Like they all said, listening is key. Granted, sometimes the only dialogue we can have with some musicians is by letting their recordings speak and doing our best to get in on the conversation after the fact. Fair enough. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think I've got some listening to do.



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



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- Cubase AI DAW software included



COMPUTERS

The State Of The Union

SOFTWARE

BY ERIC PRICE

Once again, it's time for me to look into the recent progress of computers and software relating to the music sphere. To help you navigate these often treacherous waters, I trust that this article will help you make intelligent and informed decisions regarding software and hardware, thereby allowing you to make the most of your time and money so you can get down to creating some great music.



I will peer into my crystal ball and see what the future has in store for Microsoft and Apple. I'll be looking at some of the latest offerings from a few of the major software manufacturers, as well as delving into several of the latest hardware developments.

As always, the computer industry continues to charge forward at a staggeringly fast pace and you can't afford to be left behind. These days, you have to work smart. It is no longer enough just to be able to play your instrument well; now more than ever, you are often both head chef and dishwasher of your own career.

Now, I don't expect you to know how to build a computer from scratch, but you do need to have a basic understanding of computers and the Internet if you hope to advance your music career. Consumers (your fan base) are evolving technologically and will expect to connect with you through a computer, and for this reason alone you need to be tech-savvy. Even if you are just making music for your own enjoyment, it is essential that you're knowledgeable about technology and how you can best make use of it.

Needless to point out is that any one of these topics could probably fill an entire article or more! To help you more easily digest this potential overload of information, I am going to separate the article into three major categories: hardware, operating systems, and programs. Let's dig in and get started.

HARDWARE: THE RISE OF THE MACHINES

I will do my best to not get too technical in my descriptions, but I am going to assume you have some working knowledge of computers and are familiar with most of the terminology. More CPU cores, not faster clock speeds, drive performance increases in today's processors, and multi-core CPUs have become standard. Two-, three-, or four-core CPUs are plentiful now and even more cores will be available cheaply before long. Be advised: you will need to own the newest operating systems to take full advantage of these multi-cores – Windows 7 for PC and Snow Leopard for Apple. Both of these new operating systems have been specifically tailored to take full advantage of the multi-core CPU's abundant horsepower, the only issue being that they won't be available for a few months yet.

On the memory front, DDR2 RAM is currently selling for around \$20 per 1 GB piece – crazy! This means there is no reason for you to not be maxing out your computer with RAM, the least expensive and easiest upgrade you can perform. Be sure to read the Vista and Windows 7 sidebar for each of the operating systems' maximum RAM support.

One thing I am frequently being asked about is the new SSD hard drives, SSD standing for Solid State Drive. These hard drives are very much like a large flash drive in nature and have no moving parts. They are unlike the traditional platter-based hard drives that we currently use, with no noise, less power consumption, and far less heat.

The first concern with SSDs is price; they are currently quite expensive for their limited capacities. The other troublesome issue with them is that performance and speed degrade over time, with slower and slower write times because of the way the files are stored; however, without moving parts, they are inherently quiet in operation, which is great for recording environments. Secondly, if you are using a computer in a very rugged environment, they may be more practical as they are certainly more robust than their platter-based counterparts.

Most importantly, the operating system needs to be optimized for using SSDs in order to get the full benefit from them and once again, you'll be waiting for Windows 7 and Snow Leopard to be released for that improvement. Personally, I do not feel these drives are quite ready for the media storage market and I am not prepared to recommend them just yet. Having said that, with the ever-changing nature of this industry, I expect they will overcome their shortcomings and be better-suited for the job before long.

Lastly, I will briefly touch on video. HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) outputs and dual-head video cards are pretty much standard nowadays with large LCD panels and LCD TVs being very affordable. An HDMI output from your video card can be used to drive a TV mounted to a wall, saving desk space – not to mention adding the cool factor by giving your studio the look and feel of the bridge from the Star Ship Enterprise!

I can't say enough good things about having your work spread out over two monitors, giving you plenty of screen real estate to work with. There is really no reason, other than limited space perhaps, for you not to be taking advantage of this option.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

Quad-core CPUs, dual monitors, lots of RAM,
and for now, forgo Solid State Drives
until the technology matures.

OPERATING SYSTEMS: THE 64-BIT QUESTION

Windows World

Let us first discuss the frustrating memory limitations of 32-bit operating systems. Windows 7, Vista, and Windows XP 32-bit editions simply can not address more than 4 GB of RAM. This is not a fault of the applications or the operating systems themselves, but is due to limitations with 32-bit code. To add to this predicament, you cannot assign, as standard, more than 2 GB of RAM to any application; therefore, depending on the hardware set-up of your system and despite having more RAM installed, your effective RAM will be limited to approximately 2.8 to 3.5 GB at most.

This brings us to the Windows 64-bit editions where more memory can be addressed and therefore be made available for the newer, increasingly memory-hungry applications. The 64-bit editions still allow you to run a 32-bit software application, which is important, as not every program has been rewritten for 64-bit code. Interestingly enough, 32-bit programs in this environment are often able to use up to 4 GB of RAM as opposed to the typical 2 GB limit, though ideally, you will want to be running the 64-bit versions of your software to take advantage of all that 64-bit has to offer.

This steady march towards 64-bit operating systems is finally beginning to pick up momentum. Most brand-name computers are now shipping with 64-bit versions of Windows Vista, soon to be superseded by the new Windows 7 OS, which I expect to do well. Vista compatibility with Windows 7 is very high, so migration should be seamless without you having to wait for new drivers or program patches.

Notice I have not mentioned Windows XP so far. Yes, I realize it still has many devotees, but it is time to move on. You may have skipped Vista but with Windows 7 and all of its major improvements, it should give you all the reasons you need to upgrade. Windows 7 will be widely available by the end of October 2009, though if you purchase a pre-installed Vista computer now, resellers will be providing you with the ability to upgrade to Windows 7 free when it becomes available. Windows 7 will be available in both 32- and 64-bit versions.

As with Windows Vista, be careful about which version you purchase. I am not just referring to the 32- vs. 64-bit versions but also the edition available to you. In the case of Vista, that means Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, and Ultimate. With Windows 7 you are looking at mainly two SKUs available: a Home Edition and a Professional Edition. It is important to understand the differences between the versions and to purchase the suitable one.

VISTA

FEATURE	HOME BASIC	HOME PREMIUM	BUSINESS	ULTIMATE
Multi-core support	yes	yes	yes	yes
Maximum supported RAM 32 bit version	4 GB	4 GB	4 GB	4 GB
Maximum supported RAM 64 bit version	8 GB	16 GB	128 GB	128 GB

WINDOWS 7*

FEATURE	HOME VERSION	PROFESSIONAL
Multi-core support	All versions support multiple cores	
Maximum supported RAM 32-bit versions	4GB	4GB
Maximum supported RAM 64-bit versions	16GB	192GB

*Some specs have yet to be finalized

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You really need to do your homework before you buy or you could be facing unexpected costs and work stoppage. This happened recently to one of my clients who did not seek out my advice first. He bought himself a spiffy new HP Media Centre Edition PC with Vista Home Premium 64-bit edition and 6 GB of RAM. Trouble was he was using Digidesign's M-Powered Pro Tools 7. Two problems here: first, Pro Tools 7 does not work in Vista. To rectify this problem he then went out and purchased Pro Tools 8, which works with Vista. This was all well and fine until he discovered Pro Tools hasn't yet been ported over to 64-bit! In the end, he had to downgrade to Vista 32-bit, which meant he had to buy a new copy of Vista and perform a fresh install – an expensive and time-consuming misadventure to say the least!

Apple World

Not to be outdone, Apple has some 64-bit news up its sleeve as well. Apple announced recently that its new OS X Snow Leopard operating system should be available around the end of September 2009. Snow Leopard is not so much a replacement for Leopard as it is a refinement as Leopard itself is already a 64-bit operating system. Snow Leopard really ramps things up with what Apple calls Grand Central, a new set of technologies, some of which are: better handling of 64-bit processing, improved performance for SSD drives, and the ability to take full advantage of multi-core processors.

The other interesting note with Snow Leopard will be a breakthrough in the amount of RAM that can be used, a theoretical 16 TB! Yes, you read that right – 16 terabytes of RAM. Now having said that, there is currently no music software that can handle that kind of RAM, nor is there a main board out there that can accommodate that much memory – for now! When that day comes, though, it is going to be sweet. You'll then be able to load all your programs and samples into the RAM making for one blisteringly-fast computing experience.

Lastly, the upgrade is expected to cost well under the \$100 mark for Leopard users. Though Tiger users will be paying more, either way this upgrade is certainly a no-brainer.

PROGRAMS: COMING OF AGE

We are at the point today where music software has truly matured. Software makers continue to refine their programs, fine-tuning them to meet the ever-expanding specifications of newly-developed hardware. We are rarely seeing the paradigm shifts in operations once incorporated into every upgrade. Of course, new and useful features are constantly being added to the programs, thankfully not to the extent where you need to relearn its architecture every update.

This is by no means a comprehensive listing of programs, but rather products with recent updates that caught my eye that I thought I should pass on to you. There are many popular and worthwhile programs that I don't have the space to go into detail with for scope of this article, i.e. Reason, Live, Sonar, Logic, Tracktion, Digital Performer, and Acid Pro 7 to name but a few.



THE CUBASE IPHONE APP.

Let us take a brief visit to some of the players in the DAW and plug-in market and see what their latest offerings are.

Steinberg, now partnered with Yamaha and, if you can imagine, in its 25th year, has recently released Cubase 5 – the new flagship DAW. Cubase 5 is now 64-bit compatible for the Windows world and includes the latest version of the Virtual Studio Technology

FORWARD-LOOKING LINKS

www.harmonycentral.com	Newly-released products, trade show coverage, forums.
www.askvideo.com	A large selection of music software tutorial videos, keyboard command stickers.
www.digitalmusicdoctor.com	Plenty of video tutorials for all the major DAWs.
www.musicbooksplus.com	Thousands of music and audio books, CDs, DVDs, software applications.
www.gearslutz.com	My favourite forum for reading and writing about anything gear-related.



SOME OF THE NEW OFFERINGS OF CAKEWALK'S SONAR 8.

platform VST3. (Check out my Road Test with Cubase 5 featured in this issue.) The company's audio and post-production DAW, Nuendo 4.2, is currently only available in tech-preview for 64-bit, so you will have to stay tuned for the eventual 64-bit release. Lastly, check out this cool iPhone app that Steinberg just released, a remote control for Cubase 5. You can now control Cubase 5 operations from your iPhone while playing live for example – some forward thinking there.

Digidesign is not resting on its laurels either, having just released version 8 of its immensely-popular Pro Tools DAW. Sadly, on the PC side of things, Pro Tools 8 is still not completed for 64-bit Windows, though this should be rectified before long. The Apple version is compatible with Leopard but beware: Pro Tools 8 is not compatible

RECOMMENDATIONS:

When they become available, Windows 7 Professional Edition and Snow Leopard for the Apple, of course. Remember to check to see if your hardware drivers and software are compatible first.

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R-09HR

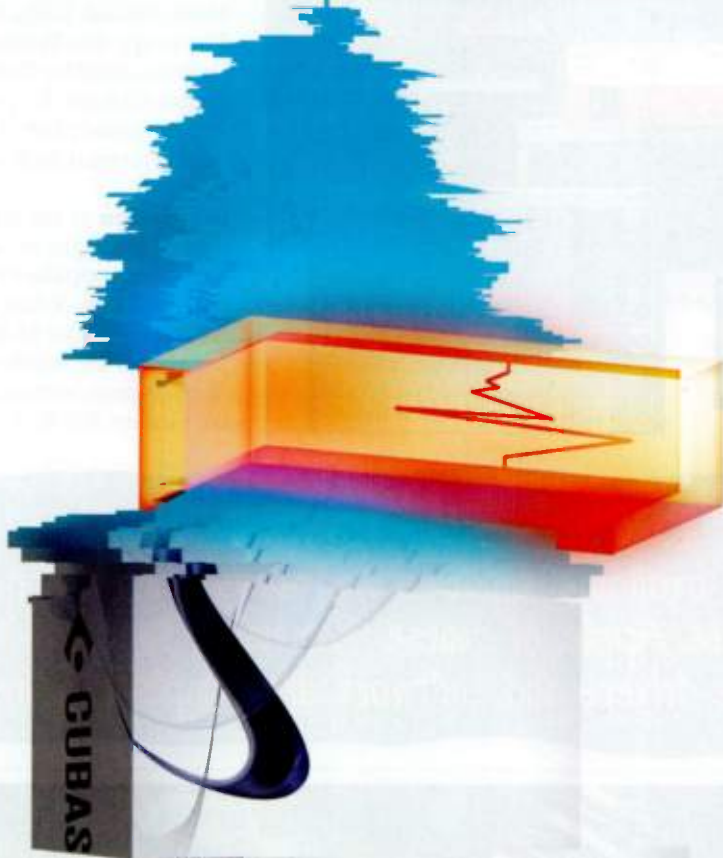
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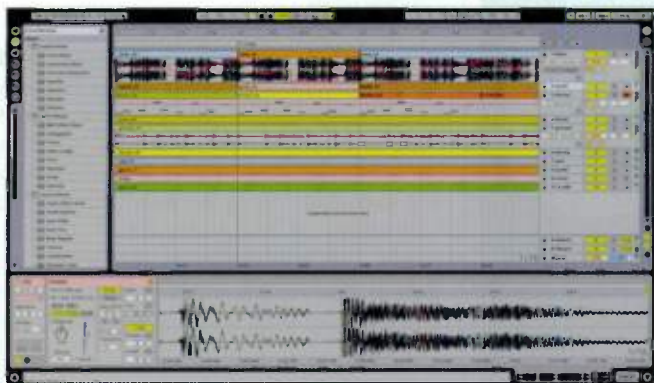


COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE

The State Of The Union

with OS X 10.4 (Tiger) or earlier versions of Mac OS X, so be prepared to upgrade your OS. Pro Tools 8 has some major advances with this version and it is well worth it to upgrade.

Celemony, the maker of Melodyne, a software tool for pitch shifting and time stretching, recently released a version of its program that can now correct notes within chords; the feature is called Direct Note Access or DNA for short. This capability is simply amazing and shows just how far software and computers have come in the last decade. Unfortunately, at this time there is no Windows 64-bit version, though it will run fine in 32-bit mode but with the previously mentioned 2 GB RAM limit. (See Paul Lau's review of Melodyne in the May/June 2009 issue of *CM*).



A SCREENSHOT FROM ABLETON'S RECENTLY-RELEASED LIVE 8.

Waves has recently added a special collection of plug-ins created in conjunction with famed song mixer Tony Maserati to its offerings, giving you access to the Maserati sound heard on so many hit records. Waves has also added some special plug-ins, created by modeling vintage gear from Jack Joseph Puig's private studio collection. These additions continue to make Waves' plug-in series of the most impressive, versatile, and sought-after effects collections.

Universal Audio's UAD-2 plug-in card was released just before the end of last year and its new lineup of cards is nothing short of amazing. These cards, for off-loading effects processing from the CPU, now have anywhere from 2.5 to 10 times the power of the original UAD-1 card. Combine that with almost 40 vintage and new effects plug-ins available, including recreations of famous vintage gear like the 1176 compressor, the Roland Space Echo,

RECOMMENDATIONS:
What are you waiting for?
Get to it!

TIPS, CHEAP TRICKS & PROFESSIONAL SECRETS

By Scott "The Piano Guy" Houston

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THINGS YOUR MOTHER WARNED YOU ABOUT!

Last summer, I wrote a piece about making the most of your computer and software for *CM*. (Check the July/August 2008 issue for the feature.) Keeping your computer clean and running smoothly is as relevant now as it was then. If you want to save time,

trouble, and money, you need to maintain your computer. You do not run your car on one oil change for its entire life, as it will soon be a short one. The same goes for your computer.

Remember to keep your work environment clean and to be cleaning out the dust from your computer if needed. Defrag your data drive regularly and be on top of updates for both your operating system and your programs. Practice regular maintenance to keep your machine running in tip-top form.

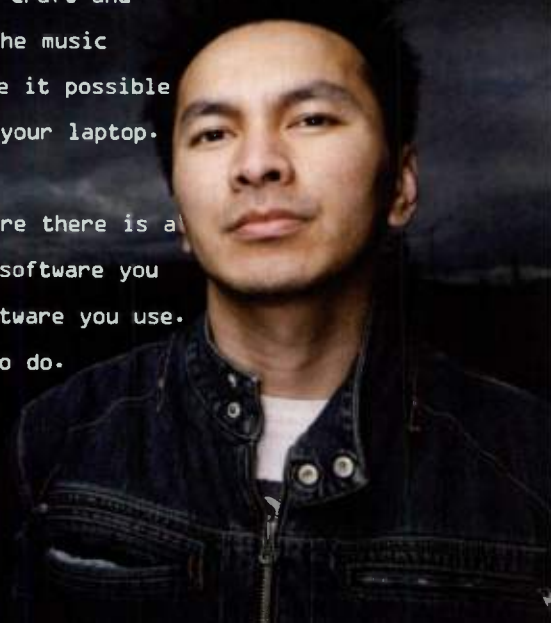
Make use of the software companies' forums, take some courses online, and watch some great tutorial DVDs as there are plenty available. There are even great tips and tricks to be found on YouTube and they are free! There is no shortage of excellent resources available to you nowadays so make the most of them. Finally yet importantly, remember to be doing your backups! You will rarely have the chance to go back if you lose your work.

STILL STEALING SOFTWARE?



Don't bite the hand that feeds you. Respect yourself, your craft and the work of others. The music software community made it possible to record an album on your laptop.

If you want to make sure there is a future version of the software you are using, buy the software you use. It's the smart thing to do.



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There you have it, my summer 2009 look into the crystal ball. Hope you enjoyed it and learned lots of great tips and practical advice. Now go make some music!



You might think all Eric Price does is read. However close to the truth this may be, he also writes and plays music, while occasionally stopping to eat, sleep, and shower. He can be reached at eric@gepconsulting.ca.

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by Ralph Murphy

MURPHY'S LAWS

of Songwriting part II



Song Length

The writer and artist of the longest song on the *Billboard* charts '08 was Alan Jackson, who spends the full five minutes of his record having a "Good Time" (Jackson). At four minutes plus, seven of 26 (or 27 per cent) stood proud at four or more minutes in length. I would assume that sometimes, as at the end of some of these records, as there is 39-45 seconds of instrumental that just plays on with no vocal, the on-air personality probably used it to talk over. Some definitely could have been a lot shorter! The rest of the records were between three and four minutes. Not one squeezed in at under three minutes.

Song Forms

Much as movie scripts follow the same format, there are six basic song shapes that the listener expects. The five that were used in '08 were:

Second Form [verse-chorus-verse-chorus-instrumental-chorus.] The variations on this form are infinite, but the above is what it basically is. The great news for writers is that this form is forgiving and flexible. In rock, it accommodates musical riffs that become a major part of the record (think heavy metal). In folk, urban, hip-hop, etc, it is expandable to include as many verses as necessary to tell the story and is very arrangement-friendly.

Third Form [verse (optional)-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-instrumental-chorus.] Hanging with the comfortable Third Form seemed to be the message carrier of choice with almost 50 per cent (12 out of 26) songs written that way.

Fourth Form [verse-lift-chorus-verse-lift-chorus-bridge (optional)-instrumental-lift (optional)-chorus.] Fourth Form was used in five of 2008's number ones. For those of you unfamiliar with the term "lift," it is also called a climb, channel, pre-chorus, etc.

Fifth Form [the old AABA form] [verse-verse-bridge-verse-bridge-verse (optional)] sent five songs to the top.

Sixth Form [chorus-verse-chorus-instrumental-bridge-chorus etc.] Sixth Form, or rondeau, snuck in almost at years end. Zac Brown and his co-writer Wyatt Durrette bent it a little bit, much like the Oak Ridge Boys used to, and ended the year in fine style.

Repetition

As noted before, as a record gets more airplay, the repetitions get more wearing and create a "burn factor." Repetition was important 30 years ago in order to grind the title into listener's memory, because back then a record got fewer spins on radio. Now, repetition is not always a good thing. Less has become more.

Representing traditional country, Alan Jackson's "Good Time" had 25 uses of title. The closest to that was Blake Shelton's "Home" (Foster/Buble/Chang) with 14. Well over half had three to seven repetitions of title (15 out of 26).

Aside from the repetitions, humour, irony, and detail are major items in a hit song – humour, because smiling and feeling good is apparently not a bad thing; irony, because irony and humor go well together; and detail, because women are detail-oriented and that is country radio's key audience.

Story/Conversational

Ten of the number ones were story songs pure and simple, like "Waiting On A Woman" (Sampson/Varble). Three were mostly conversations with perhaps a little story included for detail and illustration. Thirteen were conversations.

Your Best Bet

As the number one country songs for '08 reflect, humour, irony, and detail rule. So, if you catch the listener's ear with a 4/4 mid- to up-tempo riff or two for about 15 seconds, put some humor, irony, and detail in your story/conversation to get their attention, get the listener to the hook in 60 seconds, then give the audience more story/information in the second verse, after the second chorus hand them a middle eight/bridge that gives them a perspective on the song, with either information not heard in the song before or the other side of the story, then wrap it up possibly adding new information on the way out, and move them to the Burger King commercial in under four minutes, you're a winner!

Conclusion

Craft is alive and well in Nashville. The songs still reach out to the listeners, and work well as they are designed to do. They are "calling cards" that invite the listener to take a closer look at an artist. Perhaps we as an industry have been too eager to pack the whole album with "calling cards" and failed to go a little deeper. In my life, after the initial attraction of the "hit single" I would go buy (yes, I said buy) the album or CD, and listen at my leisure to get to know more about the artist. Most of the time it was just OK. Some of the time it was magical.

Longevity for an artist has always revolved around a song, and that song always has to invite the listener "in." Many thanks to the men and women who invited us in during 2008.



by Brian Moncarz

Brian Moncarz' list of credits includes The Junction, Silverstein, Pilot Speed, and Moneen, plus he's also engineered with Bob Ezrin and David Bottrill. He and Bottrill opened Rattlebox Studios in Toronto (www.myspace.com/rattleboxstudios).

10 TIPS For A Great Mix, Part II

6 Six is something that Bob Ezrin told me and it's something I totally live by: don't be polite. He would always tell me, "You're being too polite. Dig in with that EQ. Don't be afraid to boost 4 kHz by 8dB if that's what you need to do." It took me awhile to get that. I was always like, "I'm doing too much," but really, if it's what's needed and it sounds good, do it.

As long as you trust your ears and have confidence in what you're doing, it's going to be great. It takes a while; it takes time, but if you can master that and live by those words, it's true. Don't shy away from adding that bottom end if it's what's necessary. That's a big one. Once I understood that it changed things for me.

7 Use delays, reverbs, and compression to create depth in your mix. That's something I learned from Dave Bottrill. He's a master of adding the 3D elements to music just by adding reverbs. He's the master of reverbs. That's a huge thing I took away from him, just mixing with him – to not to be afraid to put the reverbs on. As long as you're careful and don't make it sound too wet, it'll actually add that 3D quality to the mix. To me, it goes back to that earlier point about excitement because a mix that sounds really nice, full, and deep is a good mix.

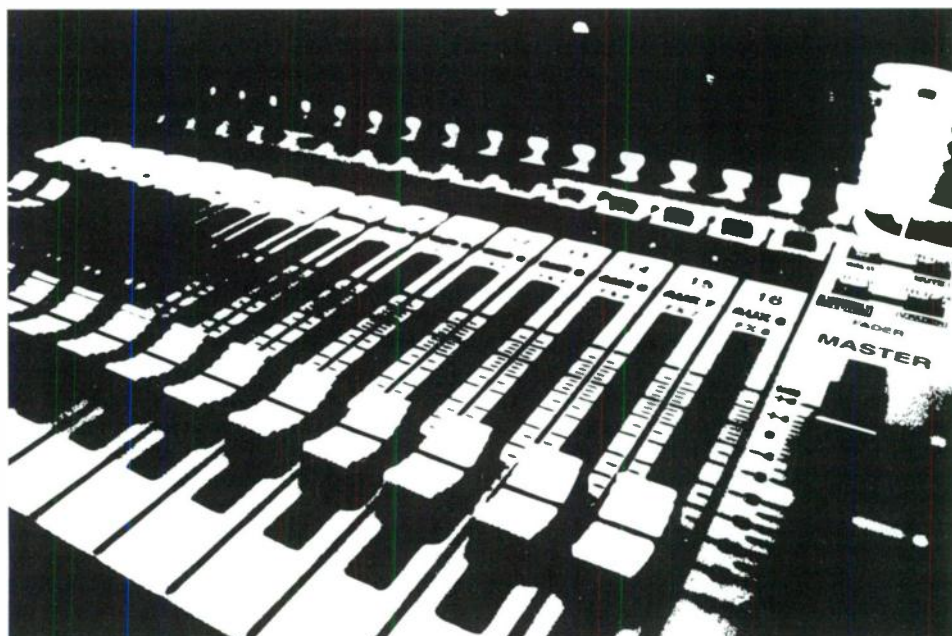
8 This one's just a funny thing, but get rid of all unnecessary noises and cut around your toms. I don't do this for everything, but do it a lot of the time – especially more recently where I've been doing a lot of bigger rock records. What happens is the toms resonate the entire time the drummer's playing the kick drum. It's just inevitable. You find the first transient, make a cut; you sort of let it decay and put a fade in and cut, and do that for all your tom hits.

It can be a little tedious, but it makes a world of difference. Another thing I learned from Dave was to go into the mix and make sure that the guitars aren't left up if they're not doing anything and getting rid of all that unwanted noise. Now if we were doing roots rock, I most likely wouldn't cut around the toms there. That's a nice instance where resonating toms are part of the drum sound. It's sort of genre-specific.

9 Switch it up. Don't get stuck in a rut. Often times what I'll do is I'll download a trial of a plug-in or something or bring a piece of gear in that I'm not used to using, just to do something a little different. If you keep doing the same thing all the time you become so cookie-cutter and boring. You don't grow as an engineer or producer, and I constantly want to experiment with different things.

I come from that school of "let's try this!" Try everything. If someone makes a suggestion for a mix, don't say no. I find because you tried that crazy idea it led you to another idea, and that was the idea that actually made the mix. People are so quick to say, "No, it won't work," but if someone in a band suggests something, I always try it. It makes the mixes better all the time.

10 Trust your ears. It doesn't matter if it's the first project you've mixed. We all listen to music. We've all spent our entire life doing it because we love music so if you know it or not, in the back of your mind you have this wealth of musical information stored there that you can reference at any time. Don't be afraid to bring in albums that you love when you're mixing.





by Cam Leoppky
with Shaun McLean

MAKING THE BEST

of Your Day when You're Not Carrying

PRODUCTION

So your band doesn't have a big record deal, isn't playing the "enormo-dome" to sold out crowds, and you don't have a half dozen people on your crew and two trailers full of the latest and greatest equipment. Nonetheless, you are on tour, people are coming to the shows, and you need to have your act sound good every night, regardless of the situation. Some simple tips for keeping sane and enjoying mixing:

Listen

First and foremost you are the ears, so listen ... to everything! From advancing (knowing what's there before you are there), to the PA (listen even after you look), you are a professional. Figure out a way to make that mess of boxes into a nice-sounding rig. Listen to your musicians, and especially the way the stage sounds (happy musicians who can hear themselves make good music). Pay attention to the local technician, even if all he wants to talk about is when Sonic Youth were there. He's still in that venue a lot more than you are. Finally, listen to the crowd. If they are singing along, they can hear the vocals. Even the shifty promoter has something to say. Then spend a full set every night really listening to the band you get to mix for a living.

Work

If it doesn't sound good, turn the knobs in the other direction! Some days you will walk into a perfectly-tuned room with plenty of PA and everything will go swimmingly. The rest of the time you may need to get creative. That's what you are there for. Again, talking (and listening) to your musicians helps, so when there are no subs in the club, it gets to be the bass player's favourite day ever. Point the cabinet into the centre of the room and turn it up until the frequency range is (somewhat) balanced. Turn your guitar player down, and lift the amp to somewhere it can be heard better.

If the system tech isn't giving you what you need, help – even if that just means holding the flashlight and continuously asking questions until things are working. Walk around and make sure it sounds OK everywhere. You know, do that thing they pay you for as well as you can every day.

Cheat

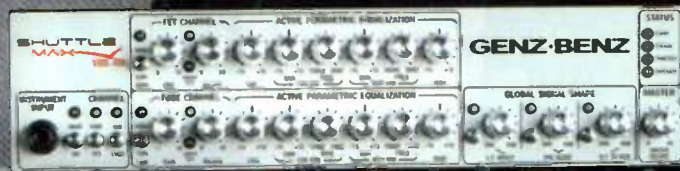
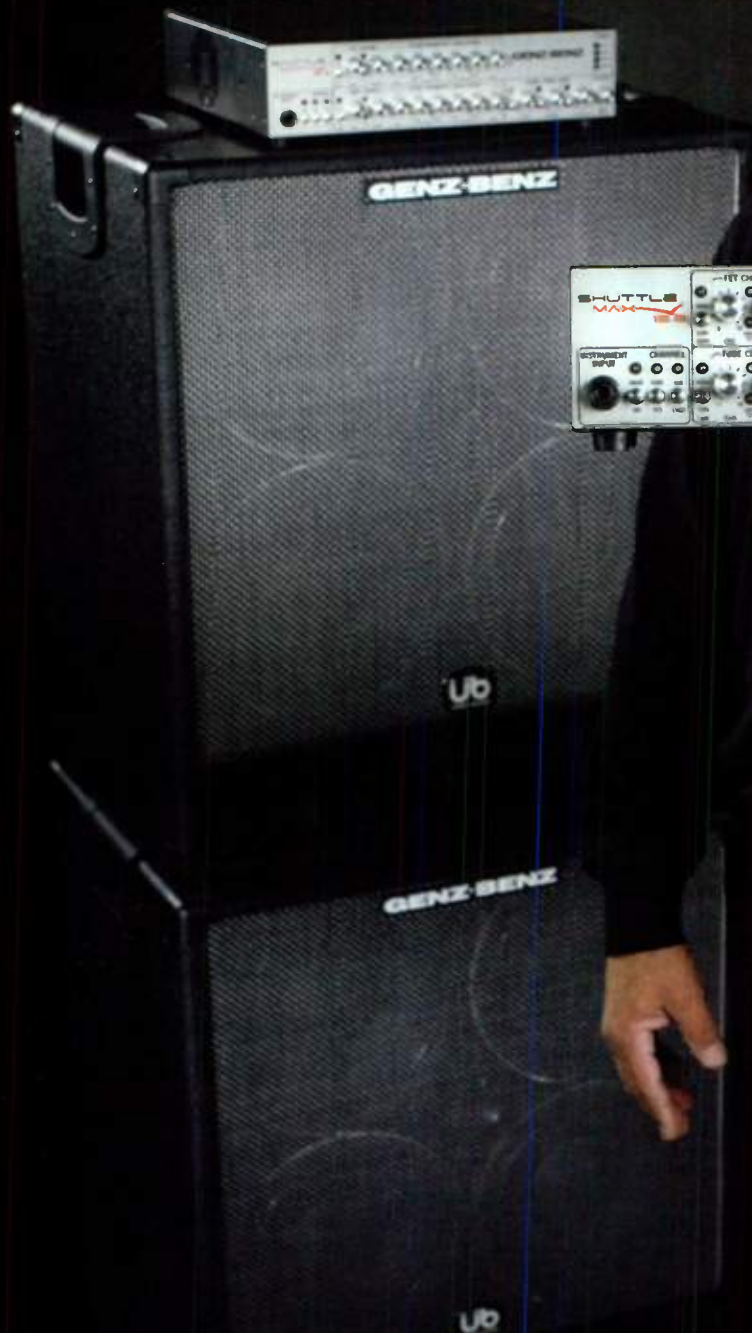
Bring as much stuff with you as you can. A small FOH rack with some dynamics, effects, and, if you can, some form of frequency control will work wonders. EQs are fine devices, but these days having a crossover with you can be a fantastic thing. Get your subs off an aux, and have a delay so the front fills are aligned. Have EQ points and a system comp you can slam your band into so the speakers on sticks make it through the show, or so you can back up a PA to that ridiculously-loud piccolo snare your drummer bought last week. Bring mics that you know work and clams and clips instead of stands, and a few turnarounds, insert cables, phase reverses, and ground lifts can sure help out. A phase checker and a spectrum analyzer can improve your day in a hurry.

Have Fun

If it were rocket science, you wouldn't be there! As much as it will wear you down, test your patience, hurt your brain, mess with your home life (and possibly your bowels...), touring and mixing is a pretty good way to make a living. If the opening acts are good, catch their show or mix them if they have a couple of bucks. If you are the opening act, walk the room for the headliner's mixer. Be creative – stick an effects pedal in a channel on the insert. Pan things. Find a good setting out of any and every effects unit. Also, do the touristy thing where you are that day. Walk around. Remember the record shop, shoe store, gear seller, and good restaurants in town. Tell people about your band. Then remember to spend a full set every night really listening to the band you get to mix for a living - and enjoy the time you get to spend with them.

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World Radio History



by Heather Ostertag with Krista Culp

Applying For FACTOR Funding Online



ten, and then printed out, and then sent in needs to be re-input so it's whole and complete in our database.

So really, prior to us going virtual for being able to apply for funding, it would take our staff about 20 minutes to process an application, and for a juried sound recording program it can take up to four hours for one application. And the thing that people need to really, really understand is the fact that we can't start to actually process forms and get decisions on funding until all the applications from that deadline have been processed. So people are holding each other up and we're spending more and more time having to chase people for materials.

Another point: people wait until deadline day to apply. The system has crashed. We had 52,000 hits simultaneously. Don't do that. We've staggered our deadlines to try and deal with that. The system crashes, and people say, "The system doesn't work." No, it works, but if all of you decide you're leaving it to the last minute, what do you expect?

Our new policy is going to be if the system goes down because of a clogged artery, that's not our problem. Now, we've taken steps to try and prevent that from happening, but if there was one tip that I would recommend to everybody, it's not to wait until deadline day to submit your application. And don't just start putting it together at 9 a.m. that morning, because chances are it's not going to be very good and that's going to translate through to the jury.

Go online; our programs are available with the new criteria. Let's get started. Work on it as you've got the pieces because when you leave it to the last minute, it's not going to be your best. This will also ensure all of the components are there.

Along with encouraging the industry to take up and use our online system, we're also going to start rejecting applications out of hand. If they are incomplete, in the past FACTOR's had a history of trying to be supportive of the industry from the standpoint that, "Oh, well they're busy and they forgot to include this and they forgot to include that but it'll get better," and our experience and our analysis of history shows it doesn't get better – it gets worse. People then begin to expect handouts, and we simply don't have the time or resources to do this.

The online system lets you see your attachments and what you've got going with your application. It can help to ensure that it's all there. We are required because of our agreement with Canadian Heritage to still allow people to submit hard copy applications, but people need to understand the online system is in place to support you – the artists.

FACTOR's online submission system has been created to support artists in being able to expedite their submissions to the FACTOR programs. It will calculate the budgets for you, and will allow you to go in and out as a program. You can start an application, go away from it, and come back at your leisure. If you're confused on something, you can pick up the phone and call the staff, and they can go online and look at it with you.

There are reminders there about what needs to be included with your submission so you're not wasting time. You attach a JPG of your photo, you attach your MP3, and you upload these things as opposed to having to burn them and send them in, eliminating any challenges with burnt CDs – with which we've had a lot of trouble. The MP3 allows us to have your submitted recording available instantly.

It supports FACTOR going green, in the sense that we're trying to become paperless so that everything can be viewed from monitors and heard through computers with great sound systems.

It's a lot harder for the FACTOR staff if we have to sort submissions manually because, as people need to understand, the way the information is gathered from an applicant finds it held in one database and then moved over into our internal database. So all of the information that you've manually writ-



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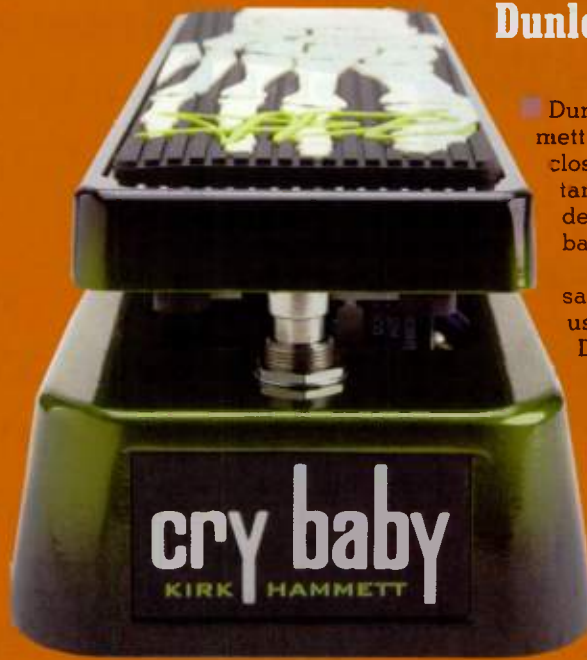
Dunlop KH95 Kirk Hammett Signature Wah

Dunlop has introduced the KH95 Kirk Hammett Signature Cry Baby Wah. Developed in close collaboration with the Metallica guitarist, it has been tuned and tweaked to deliver the wah-wah sound featured in the band's solos.

The pedal was built to emulate the same tone Hammett will dial in on tour, using his DCR1SR Cry Baby Rack Wah. Dunlop's engineers took Hammett's EQ, volume, and tone settings and reproduced them with precision in a more mobile and versatile package.

The Kirk Hammett Wah is even in response as the player moves from heel to toe, with a thick top end and full dynamic range.

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



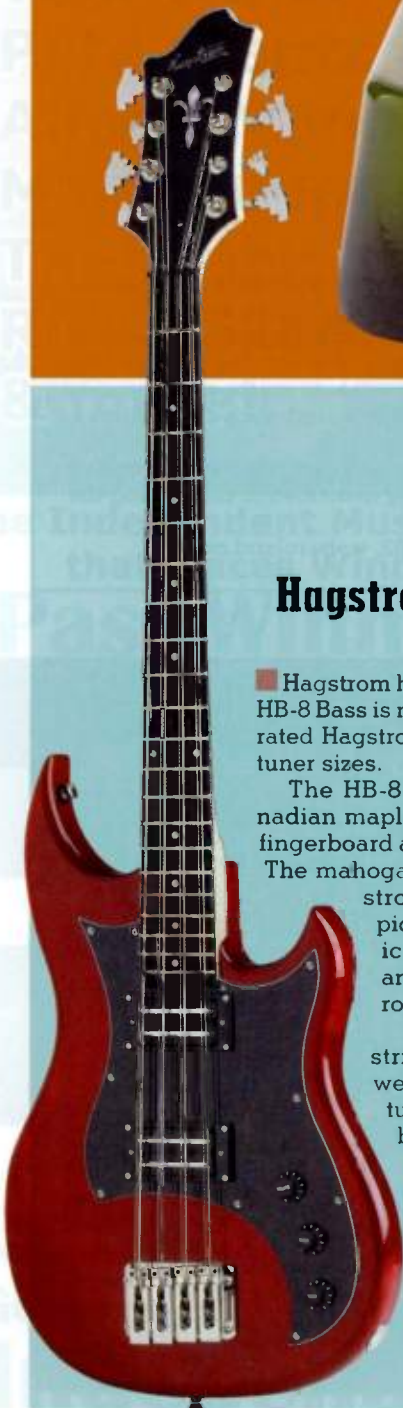
Hagstrom 8-String HB-8 Bass

Hagstrom has announced that its 8-String HB-8 Bass is now shipping, boasting a decorated Hagstrom headstock with alternating tuner sizes.

The HB-8 features a 30.75"-scale Canadian maple neck with a resinator wood fingerboard adorned with pearl dot inlays. The mahogany body is loaded with Hagstrom rail Alnico 5 humbucker pickups, with onboard electronics including Volume, Blend, and Tone controls and a six-way rotary pickup selector.

Hardware includes a BB-208 string-through-body bridge, as well as Hagstrom 17:1 die cast tuners. The bass is available in black, cream, and wild cherry transparent finishes.

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



EMG X Series Solderless Installation Pickups

EMG has unveiled its latest advancement with a range of pickups and pickguards that can be added to guitar rigs with solder-free installation.

Beginning with the company's Pro Series pickguards and its new X Series pickups, EMG will gradually phase in solder-free installation to all existing products throughout 2009. The process is designed to simplify the upgrading process for end users.

The X Series pickups, also available in a standard configuration, offer high output for guitarists and bassists of all styles. A newly-designed internal preamp delivers a more organic tone, and also allows for more gain to emanate from the amp and instrument as opposed to the preamp. The new design provides more headroom and body while still maintaining clarity and response.

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



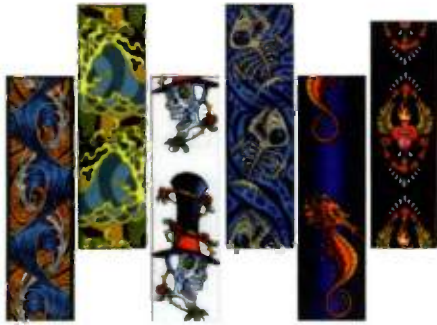
Ludwig Legacy Exotic Drums

■ Ludwig's flagship professional drum line, the Legacy series, has been upgraded in celebration of the company's 100th anniversary year with the Legacy Exotic kits.

The series will feature rare African and Australian hardwoods, chosen for both their aesthetics and tonal qualities, including sumauma, lacewood, and black limba. Ludwig has combined these woods with inner and outer plies of North American maple and a traditional single 1/8"-thick poplar core ply that gives a sonic warmth to the Legacy's shell.

Legacy's trademark rounded bearing edge creates a complement to the 1/4" single-ply maple reinforcement rings. Throughout 2009, four finishes in each of these woods will be introduced.

For more information, contact Conn-Selmer: 574-522-1675, FAX 574-295-5405, www.conn-selmer.com.



MCWHITE SERIES MODELS.

Planet Waves Licensed Strap Collections

■ Planet Waves has expanded its new licensed product offerings with four new strap lines: Woodstock, Alchemy, Al McWhite, and Lethal Threat. Each collection features designs in a combination of leather, woven, and printed styles.

The Woodstock line features artwork meant to capture the spirit of the famous festival, including tie-dyed colours, peace signs, and logos. The Alchemy Gothic line is adorned with darker imagery, such as skulls, crosses, blood, and roses.

Designs from artist Al McWhite bring his vision of surf fashion to the music world in the McWhite line. Famous for his surfboard and skateboard art, McWhite combines bright, contrasting colours for the collection. The Lethal Threat designs feature tattoo art, flames, skulls, and other chopper- and hot rod-inspired images.

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

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Martin 1 Series Acoustic Guitars

■ Martin has announced the return of its 1 Series acoustic guitars. Initially introduced in 1993, the series is comprised of traditional solid wood guitars in the spirit of the Style 15 and Style 17 models.

Constructed from solid tone-woods including a sitka spruce top, bookmatched sapele back and sides, as well as an east Indian rosewood fingerboard and bridge, all four models being introduced feature Martin's modified hybrid scalloped top bracing. Two are purely acoustic guitars: a Dreadnought size (D-1) and an Orchestra Model (OM-1), and two add to the current selection of acoustic-electric models.

The Dreadnought DC-1E and the Orchestra Model OMC-1E are each equipped with a Fishman reinforcement system featuring full volume and tone control and an onboard digital chromatic tuner.

All 1 Series models purchased from dealers in the US and Canada are covered by a Limited Lifetime Warranty. Models from the series come equipped with Martin SP strings as well as a hard-shell case.

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



MARTIN D1



EVH Wolfgang Guitar

■ Fender and Eddie Van Halen have launched the new EVH Wolfgang electric guitar, currently available worldwide. The instruments were produced to the guitarist's exact specifications, with features identical to the Wolfgang guitars he uses to record and perform.

The Wolfgang features a 1 1/2"-thick basswood core and an arched 1/2"-thick AA maple top. The neck is constructed of quartersawn maple, with an AA birdseye maple fingerboard that has a compound radius from 12" to 16". The neck boasts a 25.5" scale, with 22 vintage-sized stainless steel frets.

A Floyd Rose locking nut and EVH-branded Floyd Rose locking tremolo anchor the strings, while the chrome hardware includes EVH-branded Gotoh tuning machines. Rounding out the electronics are two EVH humbucking pickups, controlled by a three-way switch. Two Bourns low-friction control pots sit on the body as well.

Other features include two graphite neck reinforcement rods, a Schaller chrome string retainer, a square jack plate, and EVH D-Tuna. The instrument comes with an SKB case with moulded stripes.

For more information, contact Fender Musical Instruments Corp.: 480-596-9690, www.fender.com.

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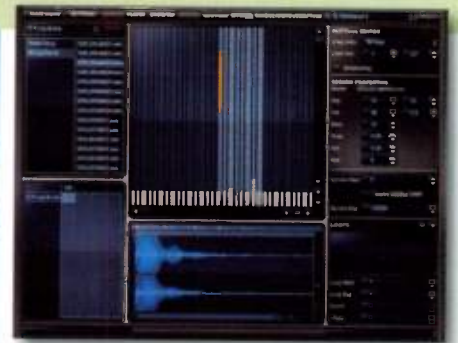
SHURE PG SERIES RECORDING MICROPHONES

Shure has ventured further into the digital realm with the debut of its PG Series of recording microphones: the PG27USB and PG42USB Side-Address Condenser mics, also available as XLR models with the PG27 and PG42.

The PG27USB and PG42USB cardioid condenser mics feature built-in headphone monitoring with zero latency and monitor mix control, enabling users to instantly hear what they're recording through headphones and make adjustments on-the-go, making them suitable for multitrack recording.

The PG27 and PG42 are XLR counterparts to the USB models. The PG27 and PG27USB feature a flat, neutral frequency response for the natural reproduction of a wide variety of instrument and vocal sound sources. The PG42 and PG42USB were specifically engineered to reproduce the nuances of lead vocals. The large diaphragm allows for higher sensitivity to clearly reproduce refined performances. The low-cut filter and external shockmount further optimize performance for vocals.

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



EASTWEST Play Pro Software

Designed to work in conjunction with the company's Play instruments, the editor in EASTWEST's new Play Pro provides user programming and scripting through the included Python programming language. The editor can be used in standalone or plug-in mode so users can gain control over all parameters in the Play instruments.

The editor includes effects like convolution reverb, automatic double tracking (ADT), and more. In addition to having control over Play-based collections, users can import their own samples and create their own instruments with intuitive sample mapping and other editing features.

For easy access, all filters and controllers can be viewed on a single page through the effects and modulators section. Routing options include four effects sends, an insert bus, and side-chaining for each instrument.

The multiple mic positions for instruments such as Symphonic Orchestra, Symphonic Choirs, and EW/QL Pianos can be controlled through Pro. Users can build presets, change script execution order, and develop, modify, and test scripts with the script editor.

For more information, contact EASTWEST: 323-957-6969, www.sounds online.com.



TRACE ELLIOT AH SERIES BASS AMPS

Trace Elliot has introduced three new bass amp heads to its line: the AH1200-12, AH600-12, and AH600-7.

The AH1200-12 and AH600-12 include six footswitchable features: Pre-Shape, Trace Elliot's tone-shaping tool; Valve, to add tube warmth and overdrive (12AX7/ECC83); a vintage 12-band graphic equalizer; Trace Elliot's dual-band compressor with separate controls for high and low bands; a sophisticated effects loop (high-pass/low-pass/full-range outputs, left/right/mono returns, series/parallel switch, loop level control); and an output mute that silences all outputs except the tuner out.

Other features include electronically-balanced XLR DI outputs for pre-EQ and post-preamp left and right outputs, left and right line outputs, two valve/tube driver stages for signal pre-conditioning before the power stage.

The AH600-7 includes four footswitchable features: Pre-Shape, a seven-band graphic equalizer; output mute; and a soft-knee, single-band compressor with adaptive attack and release times.

For more information, contact Trace Elliot: 601-486-2255, www.traceelliot.com.



Numark Total Control DJ Software Control Surface

■ Total Control from Numark is a control surface for performing and producing with DJ software. The layout works like two decks and a mixer.

The two-deck controller sections have large jog wheels and transport controls for easy navigation. The centre of the surface is its mixer section with a smooth crossfader, line faders, deck EQs, and more advanced controls for looping and effects.

The unit comes with Native Instruments Traktor LE software, based on Traktor Pro, and it is pre-mapped to work with both. Because it's MIDI-compliant, it's also compatible with most other DJ software packages. The controller connects to Macs or PCs via USB, requiring no software drivers.

Lighted controls indicate software status for less time needed to look at the computer, and the unit is protected with a Kensington lock slot for theft prevention.

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



SABIAN Vault Collection Artisan Crash

■ SABIAN has added a crash model to its Vault Artisan range of cymbals. The Artisan Crash, a thin/extra-thin model in 16" and 18" sizes, was designed in the SABIAN Vault to produce a dark, traditional tone enhanced with the benefit of modern projection. Constructed with wide-blade lathing and featuring hand hammering by SABIAN artisans, the Artisan Crash offers traditional tonal darkness and complexity.

Hand-crafted from SABIAN B20 bronze, the Artisan Crash features high-density hand hammering for maximum tonal complexity. This is augmented with jumbo-peen dimpling to increase tonal quality and projection. The cymbals are available in a natural or optional brilliant finish. All Artisan models are protected by the SABIAN Two-Year Warranty.

For more information, contact SABIAN Ltd.: 506-272-2019, FAX 506-272-2040, sabian@sabian.com, www.sabian.com.

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Yamaha P155 Digital Piano

Yamaha has announced the arrival of the latest model in its P Series digital piano line, the P155, which joins the P120 and P140 in the series.

The P155 has doubled the polyphony of the previous model to 128 notes. In addition, the sampling quality has been improved to Yamaha's 4-Level Dynamic Stereo Sampling technology. The internal speaker amplification system has doubled in wattage to 12 watts per side, and the piano now incorporates Yamaha's "half-damper" effect for expressive realism.

With two standard 1/4" headphone jacks and an additional two standard 1/4" aux outputs, the P155 facilitates easy connections to personal listening devices or external amplification systems. Available in three colour options (mahogany, cherry, and black), the P155 blends into a home or studio with the optional L-140 stand, or can be used onstage for performance applications.

For more information, contact Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.: 416-298-1311,

FAX 416-292-0732, support@yamaha.ca, www.yamaha.ca.



Swampdonkey Gypsy Guitar Amp Head

Designed with two channels to offer players various clean to crunchy tones, the Gypsy is the latest head from Swampdonkey Amplifiers.

The amp's Normal channel offers variable gain and voicing with a 3-band EQ, while the Raw channel offers medium gain rich in midrange tones and no EQ circuit. Additionally, the Raw channel has an output jack allowing users to cascade it into the Normal input for a four gain stage preamp with tube overdrive. Also included is a three-position global boost control on the output stage for tone shaping.

The amp dishes up 30 watts of amplification from a single KT88 output tube coupled to a hi-fi-grade output transformer to give a wide frequency response and headroom with no negative feedback circuit. Besides the KT88 output, the glass menagerie is completed by two ECC83S preamp tubes and a GZ34 rectifier.

The amp will be offered as a 1 x 12" or 2 x 12" combo and as a head alone. A single-channel version of the Gypsy using the Normal channel topology will be built with a reverb circuit later in 2009.

For more information, contact Swampdonkey Amplifiers: 403-932-4153, FAX 403-540-4311, chris@moose-meadow.com, www.swampdonkeyamps.com.



Propellerhead Record Recording Software

Propellerhead Software has unveiled Record, the recording software that combines a software mixing console with a rack of audio processing gear that builds itself or can be customized.

Designed for musicians, Record features a built-in virtual POD from Line 6 for a range of guitar amps and cabinets. Record's software mixer's sound is modeled after the SSL 9000K hardware with flexible routing, full dynamics, EQ, advanced effects handling, and complete automation. With its dynamic multi-core audio handling, Record uses all of the computer's processing power.

Users don't have to concern themselves with track counts, latency issues, or adding extra reverb or effects. The software features an easily-navigatable interface tailored specifically to musicians.

For more information, contact Music Marketing: 416-789-7100, FAX 416-789-1667, info@musicmarketing.ca, www.musicmarketing.ca.



Zoom R16 Portable 16-Track Recorder, Interface & Controller

Zoom has introduced a new digital recorder with 16-track playback and 8-track simultaneous recording utilizing Secure Digital (SD) memory. The R16 is three production tools in one device: a multi-track recorder, an audio interface, and a control surface, and runs on six AA batteries.

With the R16, users can record up to 32 GB on an SD card, allowing for up to 100 track hours of recording using all 16 tracks. The unit offers 16/24-bit/44.1 kHz linear PCM recording in WAV format. The unit

boasts built-in stereo condenser mics, eight mic inputs and two outputs, high-definition 24-bit/96 kHz recording capability using digital audio software, and over 100 built-in studio effects from DSP which can be used as outboard effects.

The R16 connects to computers via USB, is compatible with many DAWs, and comes with Cubase LE. Rounding out the package are Hi-Z inputs for direct connection to guitars or basses, included preamp with phantom power on two channels, Mackie control emulation via USB, and mastering effects including multi-band compressor, normalizer, and more.

For more information, contact Omnimedia Inc.: 514-636-9971, FAX 514-636-5274, info@omnimedia.ca, www.omnimedia.ca.

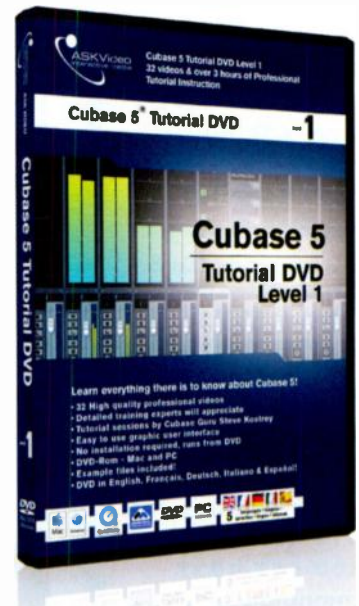
ASK Video Cubase 5 Tutorial DVD

ASK Video Interactive Media is now shipping the first installment of its Cubase 5 tutorial DVD series. In Cubase 5 Level 1, ASK Video CEO Steve Kostrey acquaints users with the latest version of Steinberg's Cubase Music Creation and Production software with more than three hours of video instruction. Users can watch all 32 videos consecutively or find specific topics for reference with the user interface.

Cubase 5 boasts new features such as REVerence convolution reverb, LoopMash and Beat Designer beat creation tools, and new functionality such as VSTExpression, Signature and Tempo Tracks, and advanced Automation, all of which are touched on throughout ASK's DVD series.

Produced in English, French, Spanish, German, and Italian, this first of a series of four Mac- and Windows-compatible DVDs is accessible to a worldwide user base. Its 32 chapters begin with the basics of setting up Cubase, recording, and editing and progress into some advanced concepts like key commands, macros, and workspaces.

For more information, contact ASK Video: 905-231-1692, FAX 905-231-1693, info@askvideo.com, www.askvideo.com.



Los Cabos Percussion Pack

Los Cabos Drumsticks has introduced its new percussion pack. Consisting of one pair of General Tympani mallets, one pair of bell mallets, and one pair of Concert drumsticks, the pack is suitable for a learning drummer and percussionist or multi-instrumental professional.

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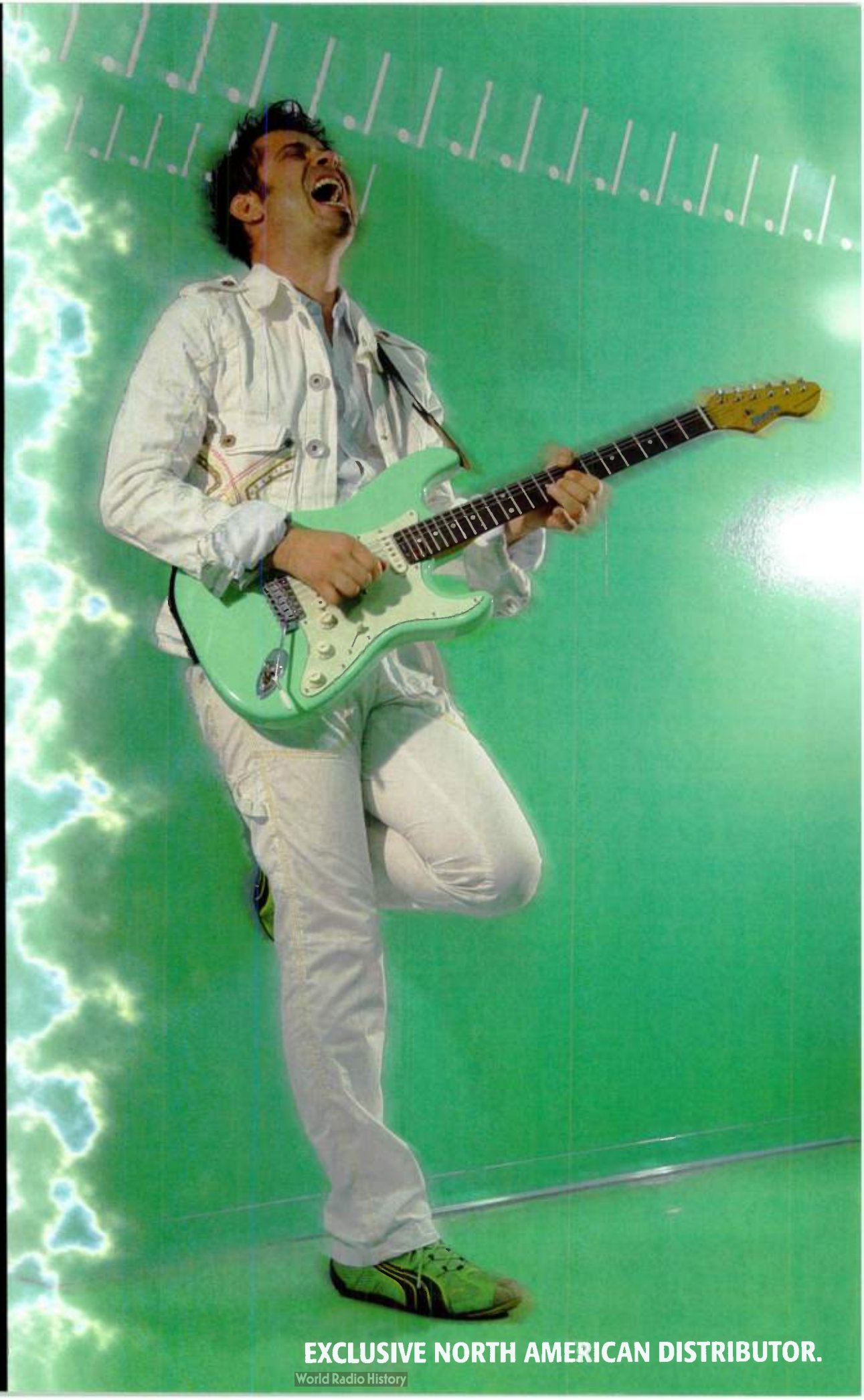
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by Doug Gallant



THE BRADLEY/MCGILLIVRAY BLUES BAND

Where: North Vancouver
What: Blues/Funk
Visit: www.bradmccg.com

The words "overnight sensation" and "blues act" seldom appear in the same sentence.

Many acts who've chosen to follow in the footsteps of the Muddy Waters, the Buddy Guys, and the Stevie Ray Vaughans of the world log a lot of miles together before they begin to experience the kind of success their talents warrant – but those years can make you strong.

A case in point is North Vancouver's Bradley/McGillivray Blues Band, a wickedly good act fronted by guitarist Sheldon Bradley and powerhouse vocalist Ruth McGillivray.

Over the space of some nine years Bradley, McGillivray, and company – namely bass player Paul Freeman and drummer Hoto Parker – have crafted elements of classic blues, jazz, gospel, and soul into a formidable, groove-driven sound with some very original twists and turns.

You can't help but be impressed by a band that takes a country classic like "The Tennessee Waltz" and transforms it into a great slow blues tune – one, I might add, that showcases McGillivray's most impressive pipes to perfection. But this is no one-man band. Talent runs deep in this lineup. If you can shift your focus away from McGillivray's vocals you'll find Bradley to be a very fluid, very natural player, and the rhythm section of Freeman and Parker is rock solid.

Their last album, the Bill Buckingham-produced *Livin' This Way*, was cited by *Real Blues Magazine* as one of the best Canadian blues albums of 2008. Based on repeated plays of several tracks, I'm inclined to agree.



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*.

SOULS IN RHYTHM

Where: Calgary
What: Funk/Soul
Visit: www.soulsinrhythm.ca

Smooth, soulful grooves, melody lines that stay in your head, and polished vocals are the stock and trade of Calgary's Souls In Rhythm, a four-piece band comprised of vocalist/keyboard player Scott Henderson, bass player Caleb Reddick, drummer Spencer Cheyne, and guitarist Craig Newnes.

A buzz has been building in western Canada for this band since the release of their 2006 debut *Can't Fake The Funk*, which caught the ear of music directors at several radio stations and found them opening for Swollen Members, Ivana Santilli, Boyz II Men, and several other acts.

The band's sophomore outing *Funklore*, released last year, showed measurable growth in virtually every area, the end result of two years of hard work. That hard work has paid dividends.

The band has garnered good ink in several publications, albeit mostly in the west at this point. They've won a number of songwriting and showcase competitions, and have played several of the country's larger music festivals and awards shows.

And things should only get better for Souls In Rhythm, who are known by many of their fans simply as SIR. *Funklore*, a highly-accessible and engaging mix of soul, funk, R&B, and pop, has several songs with strong singles potential and as long as they continue to write little gems like "Girl Work," "I Release Me," the slide-guitar driven "Life = Good," and "So I Can Live With Myself," they can expect their fan base to grow.



THE URBAN AESTHETICS

Where: Ottawa
What: Alternative
Visit: www.theurbanaesthetics.ca

Some bands make you reflect on things that matter. Some bands make you get out of your chair, push the furniture out of the way, and dance around the room with something akin to reckless abandon. Ottawa-based band The Urban Aesthetics make you do both.

Founded just last year by singer-songwriter Greg Janssen and drummer Jon Rifkin, The Urban Aesthetics evolved relatively quickly from a compact duo into a six-piece band with the addition of guitarist Mike Braia, bassist Seiji Watanabe-Hewett, vocalist Jen Rouse, and trumpet player Lawrence Pernica, who's since left the band.

In a matter of months they became one of Ottawa's most talked about indie bands, and one of the biggest reasons for that is Janssen, a songwriter of no small talent. His songs suggest a diversity of influences from singer-songwriters like Neil Young (whom he even sounds like at times), Leonard Cohen, and Jeff Buckley to more adventurous pop bands like The New Pornographers.

Janssen also has an interesting voice. On a track like "Dead End/Street Scene," which carries a Neil Young feel, he can be very easy on the head, but he can also be quite jarring when he rips into a number like "You Get Used To It." Jen Rouse's voice also complements Janssen's well, and as a band, The Urban Aesthetics are solid all the way through the lineup.

The future is looking very bright for this band, which plans to record again soon and is looking to expand its tour plans to include a much larger chunk of the country.



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