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Vol. XXXI No. 5



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And Others...

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- Michael Piersante

Robert Plant with his recording engineer, Trebas graduate Michael Piersante.

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# CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009 • VOL. XXXI, NO. 5

## FEATURES

### 34 BILLY TALENT III

by Luther Mallory

The boys of Billy Talent have come a long way since playing to small-towners from a tractor trailer, though they're by no means an overnight success – in fact, far from it. Check out how 16 years of grinding it out from stage-to-stage has culminated with *III*, the band's latest release.

### 38 WHERE THE MONEY IS

by Lonny Knapp

Check out this resourceful feature for a look at the various means of financing your musical endeavors. Cuff The Duke, banjoist Jayme Stone, and others share ideas you can take to the bank.

### 42 VANCOUVER ROAD GUIDE

by Peter Green

The first of a new regular series from *CM*, our Road Guide explores what Vancouver has to offer for the touring musician with Colin Rink and members of Closing Iris and 54-40 as our guides. More cities to come...

### 49 HOME RECORDING 2009

by Kevin Young

Producer Terry Brown, Metric's Jimmy Shaw, and – yes – Raine Maida of Our Lady Peace offer advice for recording musicians, from software sophomores to home studio savants. Happy tracking!

## DEPARTMENTS

- 9 Feedback
- 10 Indie Insider
- 12 Changes
- 19 Events
- 20 Road Test
- 65 Hot Gear
- 69 Advertisers' Index
- 74 Marketplace
- 76 Classifieds
- 78 Showcase

## COLUMNS

- 25 Guitar – Kenny Bridges
- 26 Keyboards – Dave Cohen
- 27 Bass – Hal Jaques
- 28 Percussion – Josh Trager
- 29 Woodwinds – Daniel Schnee
- 30 Brass – Patrick Boyle
- 31 Digital Music – Colin Crowell
- 32 Vocals – James LaBrie
- 58 Writing – Ian Blackwood
- 59 Recording – Ryan Hoyle
- 60 Live Sound – Dave Gardner
- 62 Business – Cristina Fernandes & Jen Cymek

COVER: AARON SOLOWONIUK, JON GALLANT, BEN KOWALEWICZ & IAN D'SA OF BILLY TALENT.  
PHOTO BY DUSTIN RABIN.  
CONTENTS: RAINE MAIDA OF OUR LADY PEACE, WHO TAKES PART IN THIS YEAR'S HOME  
RECORDING FEATURE. PHOTO BY ANDREW KING.



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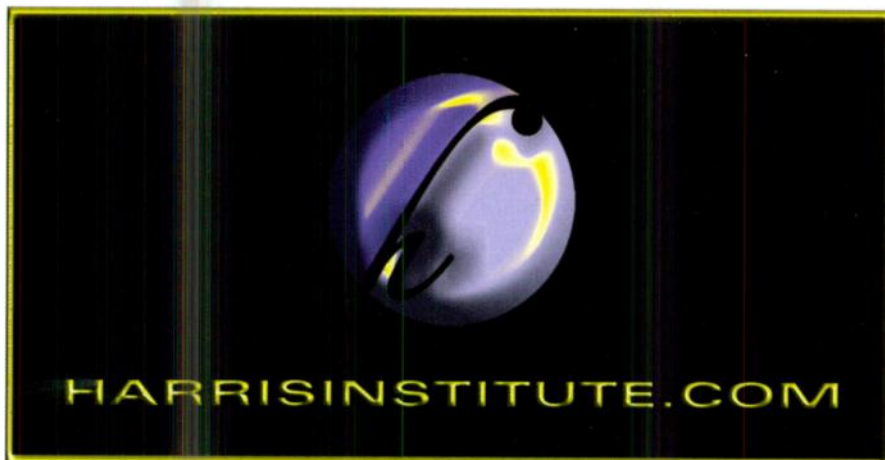
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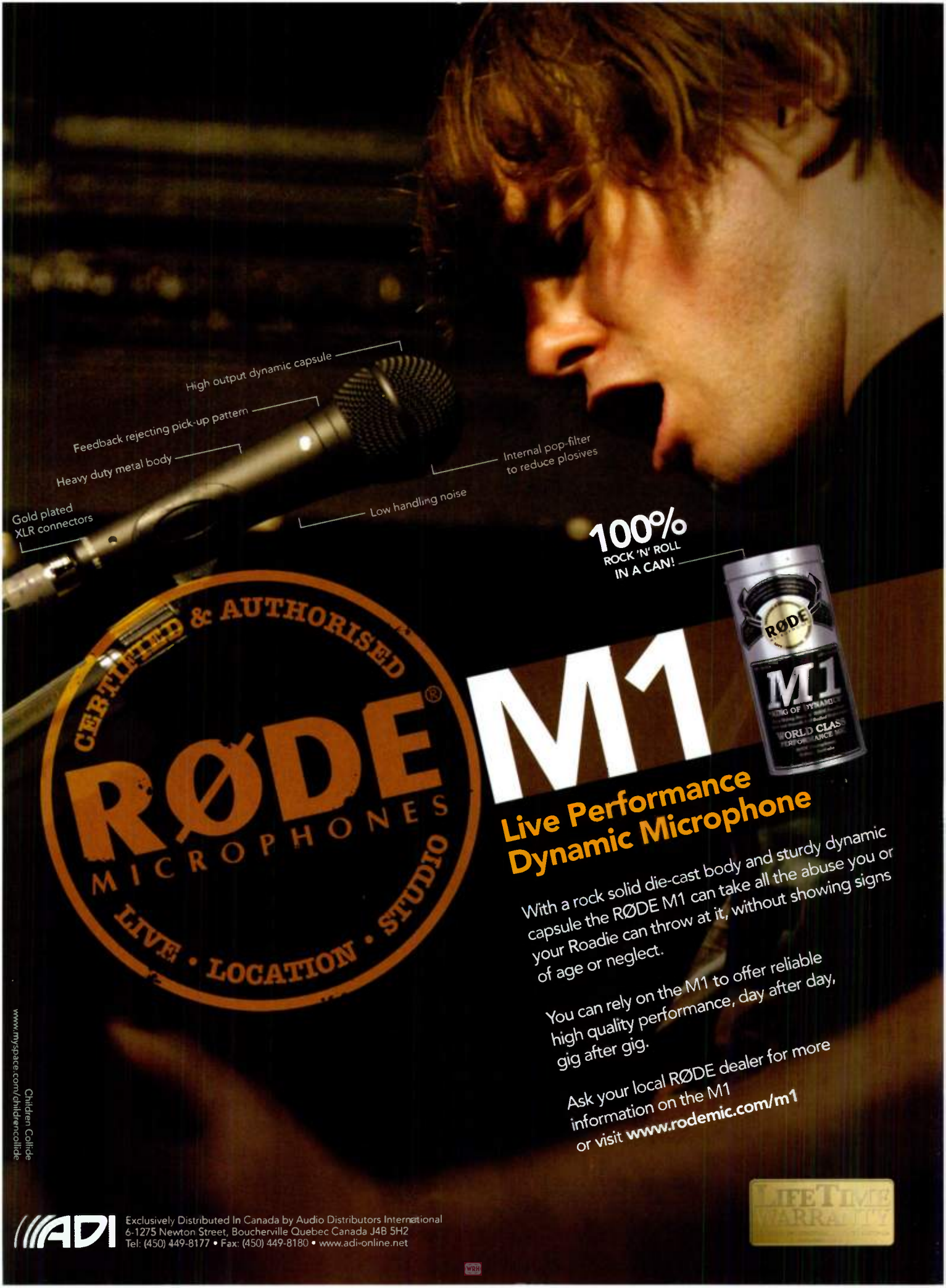


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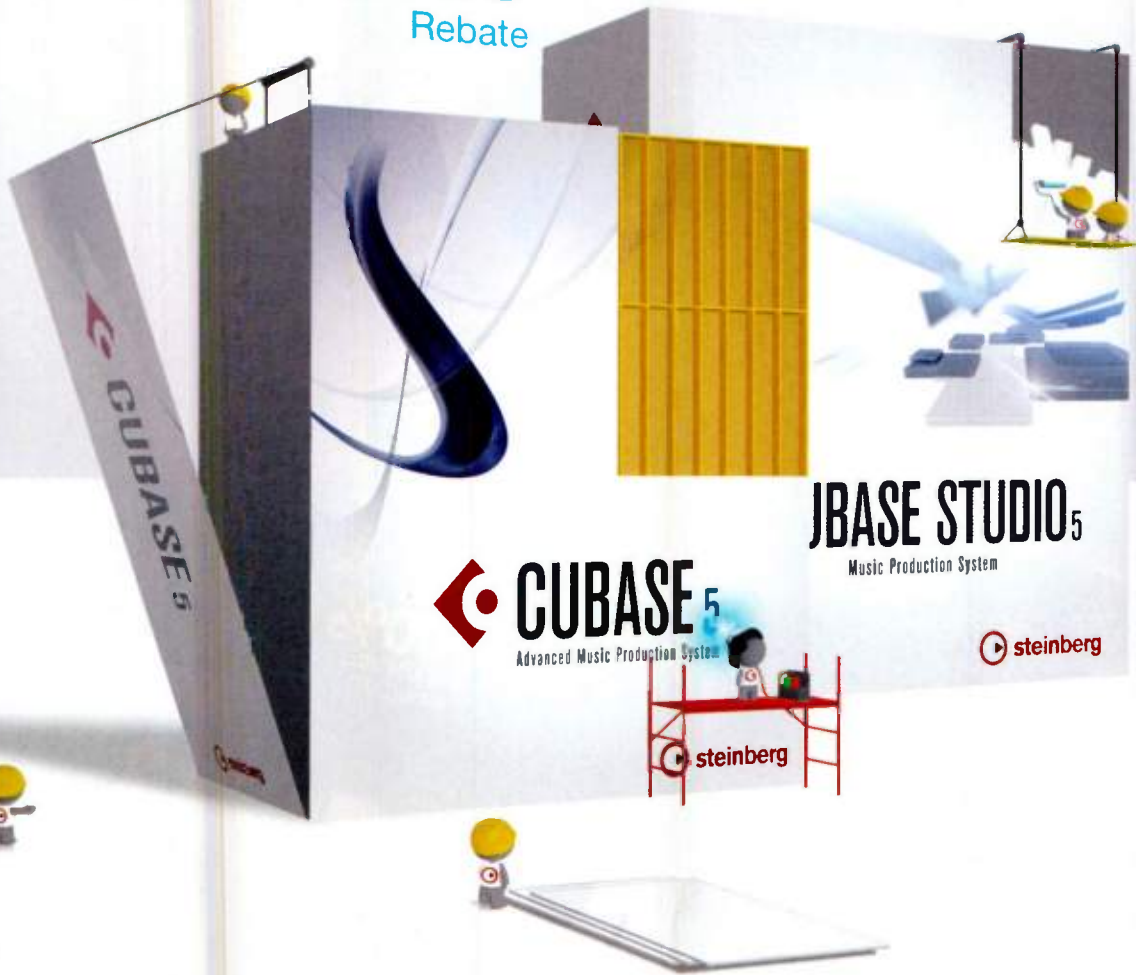


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# FeedBack

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## Check Out The CM Blog

Visit the *Canadian Musician* blog for a slew of regularly-updated content, including news, opinions, and artist features from CM staff, writers, and contributors. Log on now for exclusive content with Our Lady Peace, Two Hours Traffic, APlotAgainstMe, and more. Also, keep an eye out for upcoming content from The Artist Life, In-Flight Safety, The Most Serene Republic, and MORE! Have an idea for us? Send it in! [www.canadianmusician.com/blog](http://www.canadianmusician.com/blog).

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## Trebas Talk

The latest issue of *Canadian Musician* looks great, with many extremely useful articles. Thank you for the coverage of Trebas' 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the article and photo. It's great coverage!

Cheers,  
David P. Leonard  
Trebas Institute

*Ed. Thanks for the note, David, and again, congratulations on the 30 years!*



## FACTOR Online

The Business column on applying for FACTOR funding online was a good reminder to not wait until the last minute to submit! Back to finishing up and submitting my application...  
Dale Boyle

*Ed. Best of luck with the application, Dale. Be sure to check out Lonny's "Where The Money Is" feature in this issue for more tips on funding – and how to successfully submit for it.*

## AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENTS

I just wanted to congratulate you on the July/August 2009 issue of CM! [Your team has] done an excellent job and created a high-quality magazine with excellent content! You may recall that I previously commented about background colours obscuring the text. I'm happy to report that this issue has solved this – the black-on-white of the columns was very readable, and looked very clean and professional!  
Greg Holmes  
GH Services

*Ed. I really appreciate your previous feedback, Greg. It was certainly valued, and I'm glad you noticed some of the tweaks we've made. Don't hesitate to be in touch down the road.*

## TAPPING INTO THE

# DJ SCENE

by Andrew King

**O**ften times, recording and performing musicians need to supplement their income with a regular or part-time job, and often times, those jobs have nothing to do with music. In fact, a lot of the time, they downright suck. Still, it's easy to understand why picking up a secondary source of income is more than worthwhile if it allows you to continue living comfortably while making and playing music. That said, why not look for a way to bring in some extra money where you get to put your musical prowess to use, all while building your profile within your local music community?

Enter – as Beck, or Ricky from *Trailer Park Boys* would put it – two turntables and a microphone. Many musicians, including members of popular Canadian acts like Bedouin Soundclash, Sloan, and Constantines, can sometimes be found DJing parties or between and after sets at shows. It's a fun way to earn extra income that lets you share your musical tastes with others, and if you're doing it right, can boost your career as a musician in the process.

### WHY IT WORKS

Of course, you don't need to be a musician in order to command a dance floor as a DJ, but it certainly doesn't hurt your cause. "As a musician, you already understand concepts like beat count, tempo, and things along those lines," says Michael Coombs, who heads Prodigy Entertainment and is President of the Canadian Professional DJ Association

(CPDJA). "When you're mixing, you'll know when to bring the beat of a new song into the last." As he explains, nothing kills a dance floor like a DJ paying no regard to beats-per-minute counts.

Logistically, securing, setting up for, and performing a DJ set isn't too far off from a live musical performance. You need to get your name out there, be professional, and entertain a crowd. "As I DJ, I'm able to read the crowd

– and if your goal is to build up a following and start making decent money, – by doing a bit of scratching or blending, you'll want a digital DJ turntable connected into a laptop or directly into a mixer.

The equipment area is another where musicians are given a leg up. "A lot of musicians will already have a set of speakers and an amp available to them, which makes it quite cost-effective," explains Coombs.

For more on the CPDJA, check out [www.cpdja.ca](http://www.cpdja.ca).

and create a mood for the gig – something I think musicians would be familiar with," says Marc Leblanc, aka DJ Bones. Bones carries quite the profile as a DJ out on the east coast with his ((Indie Pop Nights)) that regularly bring out swarms of partygoers to packed clubs in Halifax, Moncton, Fredericton, Charlottetown, and other centres.

Bringing the music as a DJ is also a great way to make contacts within the music community – promoters, venue operators, and the like. It gives you the opportunity to strengthen that community of which you're a part. "A lot of people that come to see my shows are people that may not know some of the indie bands I'm playing," says Bones of his DJ sets, explaining how he'll rock The Strokes or MGMT right alongside east coast indie acts like Two Hours Traffic or The First Aid Kit. So long as you're playing the type of music the people on the dance floor want, anything goes.

### START SPINNING

Your basic set-up is dependant on the style of DJing you're looking at. "If you're going to be a background, push-button DJ, a lot of people will just plug a laptop into a basic mixing board, then into amplification, and then your speakers," says Coombs. If you want to get more technical in terms of mixing

Sometimes you'll even be able to connect to the house sound system if you're playing that kind of venue, but don't count on it.

The gear component is pretty straightforward, so that aside, the other element to getting set up as a DJ is where you're getting your content. The venue, promoter, or host of the party is responsible for the SOCAN fees – one less thing for you to worry about. If you're using music you've compiled on CD-Rs, mini discs, a computer hard drive, or any other medium where you've taken content and stored it somewhere new, you'll need an Audio-Video Licensing Agency (AVLA) license (check the sidebar for more details).

You can score an AVLA license by applying for one yourself, or by joining up with a DJ association like the CPDJA. "I think it's best to get involved with the association right off the top," advises Coombs. "When I made the transition from a nightclub DJ into the mobile world, I saw all of my competition was a part of it, so from a professional standpoint, it made sense." It's also beneficial from an educational standpoint. "Our main thing is education," says Coombs of the CPDJA. "We try to teach our members how to run a business properly." It must be working, as some members of the Association reportedly pull in over six figures a year.



MARC LEBLANC (DJ BONES) SPINS DURING (INDIE POP NIGHT).

## LANDING GIGS

Scoring DJ gigs is a lot like scoring live gigs (quite a few similarities, huh?). Basically, it's all about getting out there and making connections. "Go to gigs, meet people, and just immerse yourself into the scene," says Bones of landing gigs at local venues. Of course, if your set-up and library can handle it, there are plenty of other gigs outside of the venue sphere like corporate events, weddings, private parties, and many others. These gigs can come from just about anywhere, so make it known you can DJ them just about everywhere.

Social media sites are a great place to start, as you could imagine. Coombs has a friend who sent a message to his few-hundred Facebook contacts saying he'd entered the DJ market and could provide entertainment for weddings, parties, and so on. "He was able to book close to 20 gigs right off the top," says Coombs. Talk to your family members,



CPDJA PRESIDENT MICHAEL COOMBS.

talk to your friends, talk to your music industry contacts. Says Coombs: "It's networking at the basic level."

By entering the mobile entertainment market, you're able to earn a bit of extra coin while still working with music, still working up crowds, and still working your contact list. Start out by using your profile as a musician to your advantage within the DJ scene. Then, if you're doing things properly, your reputation as a DJ can start to boost your profile as a musician.

How do you know if this opportunity is for you? "When you go to a party," explains Bones, "there's always that one person stuck by the stereo picking what's being played. I'm like that, and if you're like that, this is your market."



Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.

## WHO NEEDS AN AVLA LICENSE?

You need an AVLA DJ license if:

- You are creating reproductions of sound recordings on a computer hard drive, CD-R, cassette, mini-disc, etc.

You don't need an AVLA DJ license if:

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- You are using cassettes/CDs/CD-Rs you have leased from an AVLA-licensed music supply service such as ERG, Multi Music, Promo Only, RSM, Innovative Entertainment, etc.

If you belong to a DJ Association, your AVLA license may be included in your association fees. Visit [www.avla.ca](http://www.avla.ca) for more information or to apply for a license.

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## Alberta Rockers Band Against Bullying

• Alberta-based pop rock act Seventh Rain has developed a name for themselves by performing and speaking out against bullying in schools on the west coast. Having experienced bullying personally, the band is making an effort to connect to students through their music. Their performances are a tool to motivate and entertain the students and help get the anti-bullying message across.

The band offers up an interesting model for bringing music to new audiences while promoting a positive message. Visit [www.seventhrain.com](http://www.seventhrain.com) for more information on the initiative.



Credit: Robbie Michaels

**The** deadline for submissions for the 2009 Songwriting Contest from the New York Songwriters Circle is October 1, 2009. The competition offers over \$25,000 in prizes. The Songwriters Circle creates communities designed to be supporting and nurturing to

songwriters, and is preparing to launch a circle in Toronto among, other North American cities. The dedicated International award offers songwriters from outside the US the opportunity to expose their music in the American market. Visit [www.songwriters-circle.com](http://www.songwriters-circle.com) for more information.

## DMDS Now Delivering Video

• Secure digital media distribution company, Yangaroo, has successfully delivered the first full broadcast-quality music video utilizing its Digital Media Distribution System (DMDS) 5.0. The company estimates that the market for music video distribution via DMDS in North America exceeds \$10 million.

The DMDS 5.0 is a major financial investment for Yangaroo, based on customer requests, user feedback, and the needs of organizations to move and market digital media files securely and efficiently. Currently, a number of additional trials and pilot projects are underway with major advertising customers and broadcasters throughout North America. For a full list of features added to the new version of DMDS 5.0 or to take a tour of the service, visit [www.dmds.com](http://www.dmds.com).



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## Halifax Pop Explosion Brings Indies East

• The 2009 edition of the Halifax Pop Explosion will run from October 20-24, 2009 at venues across the city. The five-day festival and conference will feature performances from the likes of MSTRKRFT, Mates of State, Cadence Weapon, By Divine Right, Two Hours Traffic, and several other well-known indie artists.

The festival also features the Music Matters Conference, with plenty of career-building panels for musicians and industry hopefuls. Topics being presented range from copyright issues to finding funding for musical projects. Visit [www.halifaxpopexplosion.com](http://www.halifaxpopexplosion.com) for more information on the event.



Credit: Chris Smith



MOE BERG IN-STUDIO DURING A TAPING OF AN EPISODE OF AUX' MASTERTRACKS.

## AUX Expands From Cyberspace To The Screen

• GlassBOX Television will launch its cross-platform AUX music channel as a new digital specialty on Rogers Cable this fall. AUX launched last November as a video-rich web destination at [www.aux.tv](http://www.aux.tv).

The "Real Music Television" station aims to bring its audience music-themed journalism, current affairs, news, videos, films, and documentaries focused on rising artists from Canada and around the world. The station bills itself as an interactive, cross-platform channel dedicated to promoting and sharing Canadian talent.

ExploreMusic with Alan Cross, interview and current music events show *Volume*, *MasterTracks* hosted by acclaimed producer Moe Berg, and urban music magazine show *Cypher* are just some of the original series on AUX. Visit [www.aux.tv](http://www.aux.tv) for more information.



## ECMA Announces Submission Deadlines For 2010

• The East Coast Music Association (ECMA) announced today the showcases and awards submission deadlines for the 2010 East Coast Music Awards, Festival, and Conference, taking place in Sydney, NS from March 4-7. Submissions for the ECMA 2010 Awards and Showcases are now open.

The submission deadline for the Showcase stages, Soundwaves program, and Discovery stage is September 16, 2009. The ECMA also presents music, industry, and honorary awards. All artists that have released recordings between June 1, 2008 and October 1, 2009 are eligible to submit to be considered for the awards, with the deadline for award submissions being October 1, 2009.

All submission details and forms can be found at: [www.ecma.com](http://www.ecma.com).

• John Gilliat, a guitarist from Langley, BC, took the top prize of a \$1,000 BOSS product voucher at the National Finals of the BOSS Loop Station 2009 Championship with a Latin jazz guitar piece. Ken Tizzard of The Watchmen and Thornley, who was a qualifying round judge for the contest, comments: "As a solo performer, his talent is above-average and he used the Loop Station to further enhance a wonderful performance." For more information and a video clip of Gilliat, visit [www.roland.ca/loopstation](http://www.roland.ca/loopstation).



## SaskMusic Drops Economic Impact Assessment

• SaskMusic has released its Economic Impact Assessment of the Saskatchewan Music Industry. Some interesting findings include that the biggest source of artist revenue is live performance fees, which at \$9.6 million, is more than eight times the amount drawn from the next largest source (sales



of recorded music) at \$1.2 million. For service providers, the largest source of revenue is manufacturing, renting, selling, repairing, or servicing musical instruments and accessories, at over \$16.8 million annually.

Several other findings and conclusions were discovered and drawn during the assessment. Summary and full versions of the Economic Impact Assessment are available for download from [www.saskmusic.org](http://www.saskmusic.org).

## PASIC Ready To Take Indianapolis For 2009

• The Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) will take place in Indianapolis, IN from November 11-14, 2009. For the second time in the event's history, Indianapolis will play host to more than 6,500 drummers and percussionists from around the world at the Indiana Convention Center and Westin Hotel.

PASIC features more than 130 events on 13 stages with leading artists from around the world. This year's featured artists include Virgil Donati, Jason McGerr of Death Cab for Cutie, Benny Greb, Akira Jimbo, and the Bisquera Brothers. "The Percussive Arts Society and the City of Indianapolis are very excited to bring the Percussive Arts Society International Convention back to Indianapolis," states PASIC Director Jeff Hartsough. "The week will be full of exciting events and sessions for both the members of the Percussive Arts Society and the public."

For more information, visit [www.pasic.org](http://www.pasic.org).



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## KoSA 14 Opens KoSA Centre For The Arts

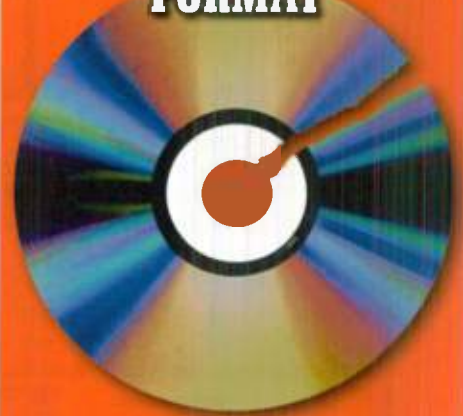
• The KoSA International Percussion Workshop and Festival held its annual drum camp from July 30-August 2, 2009 at the brand new KoSA Centre des Arts (KoSA Centre for the Arts), located in Montreal.

This year's participants, coming from all over the US, the UK, and Canada, experienced intense, hands-on percussion training with several reputable percussionists. Artists taking part in this year's

event included Ndugu Chancler, Memo Acevedo, Kenwood Denard, and others. Participants were introduced to different styles in masterclasses, received hands-on instruction during daily workshops, and were coached during rhythm section labs.

For more information on this year's event and regular updates on the 2010 edition, visit [www.kosa-music.com](http://www.kosa-music.com).

## MAJOR LABELS PREPARING NEW DIGITAL ALBUM FORMAT



• The US' four major record labels are set to compete with Apple's upcoming Cocktail project by collaborating on their own format called CMX. The format is reported to include songs, lyrics, videos, liner notes, and artwork.

The announcement of the initiative comes a few weeks after reports of Apple developing a similar format, dubbed Cocktail. Differences between the two formats haven't been disclosed. The format is set to be soft-launched with select retailers in November 2009.

# George L's



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## Five-Year Commitment To Canada Music Fund Announced

• The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages has announced that the Government of Canada has renewed the Canada Music Fund for a five-year term.

"The music industry generates billions of dollars' worth of economic activity every year," says Minister James Moore. "Our government is proud to offer greater stability in these uncertain economic times by stabilizing resources dedicated to Canadian music, while helping maintain thousands of jobs." The Canada Music Fund feeds funding groups like FACTOR, the Canada Council, and others. The arrangement finds \$125 million in funding going to the Canada Music Fund over the next five years.





**In** a redesign of its online approach, Nielsen Business Media's Billboard.com has unveiled its new site, which includes the opening of an archive of Billboard sales charts for users to peruse. This marks the first time the brand is making both the Hot 100 and Billboard 200 charts available at no cost.



The Musician Expo 2010 will be held March 2-4, 2010 in Louisville, KY – a show that opens its doors to all musicians. Information on the show is available at [www.musicianexpo.com](http://www.musicianexpo.com).



## Changes To SOCAN's Royalty Distribution

- As of the August 15, 2009 distribution, SOCAN is no longer issuing royalty cheques and paper statements for amounts less than \$500. Members whose accumulated earnings are less than \$500 in a distribution quarter will be paid through direct deposit and have statements available online only.

To register for direct deposit and online statements, contact the SOCAN Membership Information Centre at 866-30-SOCAN, or log on to your account at [www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca) and select View Financial Information. This change is part of SOCAN's efforts to reduce paper waste and encourage members to take advantage of its online tools and services.



## New SOCAN Site Goes Live

- SOCAN recently launched its new website, featuring separate sections for music users and music creators. Also included are sections like About SOCAN, News and Events, and SOCAN Interactive, which includes the SOCAN jukebox, links to the SOCAN MySpace site, and the Your Voice feedback page.

Music creators can become SOCAN members, and then have access to the Music Creators page. Music users have the chance to get a SOCAN license and have access to the SOCAN repertoire. Visit the site at [www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca).



HOLLER, WILD ROSE! DURING THEIR SECRET SESSION @ TARA.

## TARA Students Present Secret Sessions

• The Audio Recording Academy (TARA) in Toronto has launched a new initiative dubbed Secret Sessions @ TARA. The idea behind the sessions is that TARA hosted live, intimate concerts with indie touring bands every Saturday throughout the summer. Each session is recorded live and posted online for people to download free of charge.

“The audio recordings are set up, managed, and coordinated by current and former TARA students, continuing our commitment to providing real-life experience as our students and graduates pursue careers in the recording industry,” says TARA’s Michael Stephenson. The video recordings are managed by presenting sponsor AUX.tv. Visit [www.secretsessionstara.com](http://www.secretsessionstara.com) for more.



## Soundcraft’s Guide To Mixing Video Now Free Online

• Previously available only on DVD, Soundcraft has published its Guide To Mixing video series on its own YouTube site, SoundcraftUK ([www.youtube.com/soundcraftuk](http://www.youtube.com/soundcraftuk)). All 18 chapters from the tutorial may be viewed online, including sections on mic placement, setting up a mix, and monitor mixing.

To complement the video tutorials, a PDF text version may be downloaded from the company’s website, [www.soundcraft.com](http://www.soundcraft.com). Qualified educational establishments may request printed copies of the Guide To Mixing, as well as the full-resolution videos on DVD.

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[www.ftc.edu/signup](http://www.ftc.edu/signup)

631.656.2110

## 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

## 5<sup>th</sup> 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

## 23<sup>rd</sup> OCFF Annual Conference

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

## 52<sup>nd</sup> 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

## 2009 AOSA Professional Development Conference

Milwaukee, WI  
November 11-14, 2009  
440-543-5366  
info@aosa.org, www.aosa.org

## PASIC 2009

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

## Midwest Clinic 63<sup>rd</sup> 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

## Hillside Inside 2010

Guelph, ON  
February 6, 2010  
519-763-6396, FAX 519-763-9514  
hillside@hillsidefestival.ca,  
www.hillsidefestival.ca

## 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

## KoSAs Cuba 2010

Havana, Cuba  
March 7-14, 2010  
514-482-5554,  
info@kosamusic.com,  
www.kosamusic.com

## Canadian Music Week 2010

Toronto, ON  
March 10-14, 2010  
905-858-4747, FAX 905-858-4848  
info@cmw.net, www.cmw.net

## SXSW 2010

Austin, TX  
Music: March 17-21, 2010  
512-467-7979, FAX 512-451-0754  
sxsw@sxsw.com, www.sxsw.com

## MTNA National Conference

Albuquerque, NM  
March 20-24, 2010  
513-421-3135, FAX 513-421-2503  
mtnanet@mtna.org, www.mtna.org

## 2010 Juno Awards

St. John's, NL  
April 18, 2010  
416-485-3135, FAX 416-485-4978  
info@carasonline.ca, www.juno-awards.ca

## "I Create Music" ASCAP Expo 2010

Los Angeles, CA  
April 22-24, 2010  
800-278-1287, FAX 212-595-3276  
www.ascap.com/eventsawards

## Montreal International Music Competition Violin 2010

Montreal, QC  
May 24-June 4, 2010  
514-845-4108, FAX 514-845-8241  
info@concoursmontreal.ca,  
www.concoursmontreal.ca

## NXNE 2010

Toronto, ON  
June 16-20, 2010  
416-863-6963, FAX 416-863-0828  
info@nxne.com, www.nxne.com

## 2010 COCA National Conference

London, ON  
June 16-20, 2010  
519-690-0207, FAX 519-681-4328  
www.coca.org

## 2010 Montreal Musical Instrument Show

Montreal, QC  
July 9-11, 2010  
514-871-1881  
info\_simm@equipespectra.ca,  
www.mmmis.ca

## 2010 Canmore Folk Music Festival

Canmore, AB  
July 31-August 2, 2010  
403-678-2524, FAX 403-678-2524  
info@canmorefolkfestival.com,  
www.canmorefolkfestival.com

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## Roland V-Piano

by Kevin Young

**H**istorically, Roland has paid close attention to not only quality sound reproduction, but to quality interface – maximizing the tactile elements that make an instrument a pleasure to play. That's important for any instrument, but an absolute must for a viable recreation of an acoustic piano, and with the V-Piano, Roland has outdone itself, not only in terms of versatility, control, and connectivity, but styling as well.

We'll get to functionality in a moment, but first things first...

Up to this point, given the option between a real acoustic piano and a digital recreation, I'd choose the real deal every time. No longer. The 88-key V-Piano feels, plays, responds, and sounds like the real thing and, like the real thing, it's actually a beautifully-designed instrument, which makes it all the more inspiring to play. Sure, looks mean comparatively little to some people, but one of the great draws of many early electro-acoustic and acoustic keyboard instruments was, arguably, the package. While function and sound trump good looks every time, if a machine is meant to stand in for an acoustic piano but looks like something out of a bad 80's made-for-TV Sci-fi flick, it can be a bit of a vibe killer.

Sonically, where it really counts, the V-Piano truly delivers. Bear in mind this is not a sampled piano – onboard, there are 24 preset physically-modeled pianos, fully customizable from the main screen, allowing the user the option of saving 100 additional tweaked versions. On many axes of this ilk, you may have customizable options, but the process of customizing them isn't nearly as transparent as it is here. Nor, put bluntly, is it as musical.

From the main screen/front panel, there's immediate control over a variety of parameters: volume, reverb, a palette of four individual pianos to choose from at the press of a button, and a sensible transposition button that can effortlessly be set to not transpose so as to limit the danger of doing so unintentionally. It also affords deep control over string tuning, hammer response, and resonance, as well as providing a 4-band EQ, but it's only when you get into the utility pages you get the sense of just how versatile the V-Piano is.



Once in the utility menu, the player has a myriad of options, laid out simply, making this far more powerful than virtually any other machine in the field – control over the temperament of the piano, key response, as well as pedal response and assignation. Many parameters, including Unison Tune, Hammer Hardness, and Decay and Damping time may actually be applied to individual keys, or sections of keys.

Sporting analog (XLR and 1/4") outputs, digital output, USB MIDI connector (computer connection for use with the provided editing software), and MIDI in, out/V-Link, and thru, the V-Piano boasts superior connectivity, regardless of your set-up, and makes a clear case for itself as the kind of instrument that's equally useful on stage, in the studio, or in your home. Left/mono/right inputs make for a simple practice set-up, taking the audio outs of your MP3 player or home system. The outs also allow for audio output up to four channels.

Similarly, the song menu offers powerful options for both teaching and songwriting applications: an onboard metronome with virtually as many functions as any digital credit card-sized metronome; onboard recording capabilities that are powerful enough for a tech savvy player, but simple enough for a player who's a bit of a Luddite at heart; and the capability to simply plug in a USB key to the front panel and save your work right from the instrument, or playback WAV or MP3 files from an external CD or USB drive.

All that said, if you're looking for a starter piano – something to test the waters, to see if you, or your kids, will actually take to the instrument, then this might not be for you. First off, its footprint is only a little smaller than your average apartment-sized acoustic piano. Secondly, there are no built-in speakers, and finally it retails for roughly \$8,500 CDN. These are in no way drawbacks – you get what you pay for. In the case of the V-Piano, perhaps more than you pay for, but if you're just looking for something to tool around on, you might want to spend a bit less the first time out.

When it comes time to get serious, however, and you want the best possible replacement for the real thing, and something that will stand the test of time, the V-Piano is it. Make no mistake – this is simply a stunningly professional instrument.

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

### Manufacturer's Comments

In this review, Kevin has done a good job in highlighting the significant musical and technological achievements that the Roland V-Piano represents. With the Roland V-Piano, sound, touch, and interface have all taken a big step forward. We are very excited to hear the music that the Roland V-Piano will inspire in the coming years.

Doug McGarry

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- |                   |                        |                       |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
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| Adrian Belew      | Carrie Underwood       | Flecktones            | Joey DeFrancesco  | Lee Ann Womack    | Nathan East           | Rocky Mountain     | System of a Down    |
| Aerosmith         | Casting Crowns         | Flogging Molly        | John Hiatt        | Lenny Kravitz     | Nelly Furtado         | Rod Stewart        | Ted Nugent          |
| Alain Caron       | CeCe Winans            | Foo Fighters          | John Hiatt        | Letterman Show    | Nickelback            | The Rolling Stones | 3 Doors Down        |
| Alice Cooper      | Celine Dion            | Frank Gambale         | John Patitucci    | Linkin Park       | Nine Inch Nails       | Rush               | Tom Cochrane        |
| Alison Krauss     | Charley Pride          | Franz Ferdinand       | John Petrucci     | Lisa Brokop       | Oak Ridge Boys        | Ryan Adams         | Tom Coster          |
| Allan Holdsworth  | Cheap Trick            | Genesis               | John Mayer        | Los Lobos         | Offspring             | Sammy Hagar        | Tom Jones           |
| Alter Bridge      | Chick Corea            | Garbage               | John Rzeznik      | Los Lobos         | On Stage Audio        | Santana            | Tom Waits           |
| America           | Chuck Rainey           | Gavin DeGraw          | Johnny A          | Lou Reed          | Our Lady Peace        | Sarah McLachlan    | Tommy Emmanuel      |
| American Idol     | Chuck Rainey           | George Duke           | Jonas Brothers    | Lucinda Williams  | Panic at the Disco    | Schubert Systems   | Tony Levin          |
| Amy Grant         | Cirque du Soleil       | Gino Vannelli         | Jon Jorgenson     | Manhattan         | Pat Metheny           | Scissor Sisters    | Toots & the Maytals |
| Anna Nalick       | Clair Brothers         | Glen Campbell         | Joni Mitchell     | Transfer          | Pat Travers Band      | Seal               | Tourtech East       |
| Ani DiFranco      | Clay Aiken             | Godsmack              | Josh Groban       | Manowar           | Paul Boothroyd        | Shakira            | Tragically Hip      |
| April Wine        | Cleanwing Productions  | Goo Goo Dolls         | Josh Turner       | Marcus Miller     | Paul Simon            | Sheryl Crow        | Trashlight Vision   |
| ATK Audioteck     | Clint Black            | Good Charlotte        | Journey           | Mariah Carey      | Peter Gabriel         | ShowCo             | Travis Tritt        |
| Asia              | Creed                  | Grand Ole Opry        | Juanes            | Marillion         | Phil Keaggy           | Simple Plan        | U2                  |
| Audioslave        | Crowded House          | Guns & Roses          | J Meldal-Johnsen  | Marilyn Manson    | The Police            | Slayer             | Vanessa Williams    |
| Avenged Sevenfold | Coldplay               | Gwen Stefani          | Justin Timberlake | Mark Knopfler     | Prince                | Slinknot           | Van Halen           |
| Avril Lavigne     | Cyndi Lauper           | Hall & Oates          | The Kaiser Chiefs | Mark Tremonti     | The Prodigy           | Smashing Pumpkins  | Victor Wooten       |
| Bad Religion      | Damien Rice            | Hannah Montana        | Kanye West        | Maroon 5          | Queensryche           | Snow Patrol        | Vinnie Moore        |
| Barbra Streisand  | Daniel Lanois          | Herbie Hancock        | kd Lang           | Marty Stuart      | Radiohead             | Solotech           | Weezer              |
| Barenaked Ladies  | Dave Matthews          | Hootie & the Blowfish | Keb' Mo'          | Maryland Sound    | Randy Bachman         | Sony Broadcast     | White Stripes       |
| Barry Manilow     | Dave Natale            | Hot Hot Heat          | Kenny Chesney     | Masque Sound      | Randy Travis          | Sound Image        | Westbury National   |
| Beach Boys        | David Gilmour          | House of Blues        | Kenny G           | Matchbox 20       | Rascal Flatts         | Spice Girls        | The Who             |
| Beastie Boys      | Def Leppard            | I Mother Earth        | Kevin McCarthy    | Melissa Etheridge | Rat Sound             | Steely Dan         | Weird Al Yankovic   |
| Beck              | Derek Trucks           | Jackson Browne        | Khaliq Glover     | Metallica         | Razorlight            | Steve Lukather     | Will.i.am           |
| Bela Fleck        | Destiny's Child        | Janet Jackson         | The Killers       | Metalworks        | Red Hot Chili Peppers | Steve Miller       | Will Lee            |
| Ben Harper        | Dixie Dregs            | James Taylor          | Kirk Hammett      | Michael Bolton    | Red Rider             | Steve Morse        | Wynonna             |
| Berklee College   | Dolly Parton           | Jars of Clay          | Klaxons           | Michel Rivard     | Rihanna               | Steve Stevens      | Yellowcard          |
| Black Crowes      | Donna Summer           | Jay Leno              | Klondike Sound    | Midnight Hour     | Rob 'Cubby' Colby     | Steve Winwood      | Yellowjackets       |
| Blackhawk Audio   | Donny Osmond           | Jeff Beck             | Korn              | Mike McKnight     | Robert Cray           | Sting              | Zakk Wylde          |
| Billy Idol        | Doobie Brothers        | Jennifer Lopez        | Lars Brogaard     | Michael Wagnier   |                       |                    |                     |
| Billy Joel        | The Doves              | Jerry Donahue         | LD Systems        | Minnie Driver     |                       |                    |                     |
| Billy Ray Cyrus   | Dreadstar              | Jerry Douglas         |                   | Mötley Crüe       |                       |                    |                     |
| Billy Sheehan     | Drentch                | Jet                   |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Black Eyed Peas   | Duke Robillard         | Jethro Tull           |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Blue Man Group    | Dwight Yoakam          | Jewel                 |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Bob Dylan         | The Eagles             | Jim Messina           |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Bonnie Raitt      | Edgar Winter           | Jimmy Haslip          |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Brad Paisley      | Eighth Day Sound       | Jim Warren            |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Bruce Springsteen | Emmylou Harris         | Joe Nichols           |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Bruce Swedien     | Eric Clapton           | Joe Perry             |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Bryan Adams       | Eric Johnson           |                       |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
| Buddy Guy         | Evanescence            |                       |                   |                   |                       |                    |                     |
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\*The above is a partial list of artists and sound companies that use or have used Radial products. No endorsement is offered or implied by their being listed here. Sorry if we've missed you - let us know and we'll include you next time!

## Rode M1 Live Performance Dynamic Microphone

by Lorne Hounsell

**R**ode Microphones from Australia has once again delivered a product destined to become an industry staple. For years, Rode has been challenging the competition with its line of high-end studio microphones with great success. With the introduction of the M1, this handheld Rode is sure to be challenging the competition in the live world as well.

During my career as a FOH technician, I've had the pleasure of using a variety of mics from all the different manufacturers. With this being said, the M1 definitely has the look and feel of a classic mic.

The M1 is housed in a charcoal gray-coloured, solid metal die-cast body, with a dynamic capsule. The cardioid pick up pattern Rode has chosen offers high feedback rejection critical to live sound applications. The frequency range is from 75 Hz to 18 kHz, with a 5db bump from 5 kHz to 10 kHz. Its low handling noise and its internal pop filter to reduce plosives all add up to a great candidate for the ultimate live microphone.

My first test with the M1 was at the Joao Carvalho Mastering NXNE party. I was hired to mix for the event involving 10 bands from around the world, each playing two songs. During the sound check, we did a comparison of the M1 against a couple of classic live mics we all use and are accustomed to. In most cases, the M1 won hands-down. In this shootout, the M1 was chosen because of its airy-yet-smooth highs without the engineer having to touch an EQ. An engineer friend said it's kind of like using a modified version of your old classic. During the course of the evening, I tried the mic on various singers and it performed flawlessly against the competition.

Recently, I was on the road mixing Matt Mays for a few shows. On a couple of dates, I had the pleasure of using the M1 on the keyboard player, Adam Baldwin. Adam has a great voice that would complement any lead singer performing out there. Whenever you have to place a mic in front of a keyboard player, the situation always becomes a little tricky. The monitor placement, which is always critical to feedback rejection, is never ideal for the sound engineer. The monitor is usually positioned to the side of

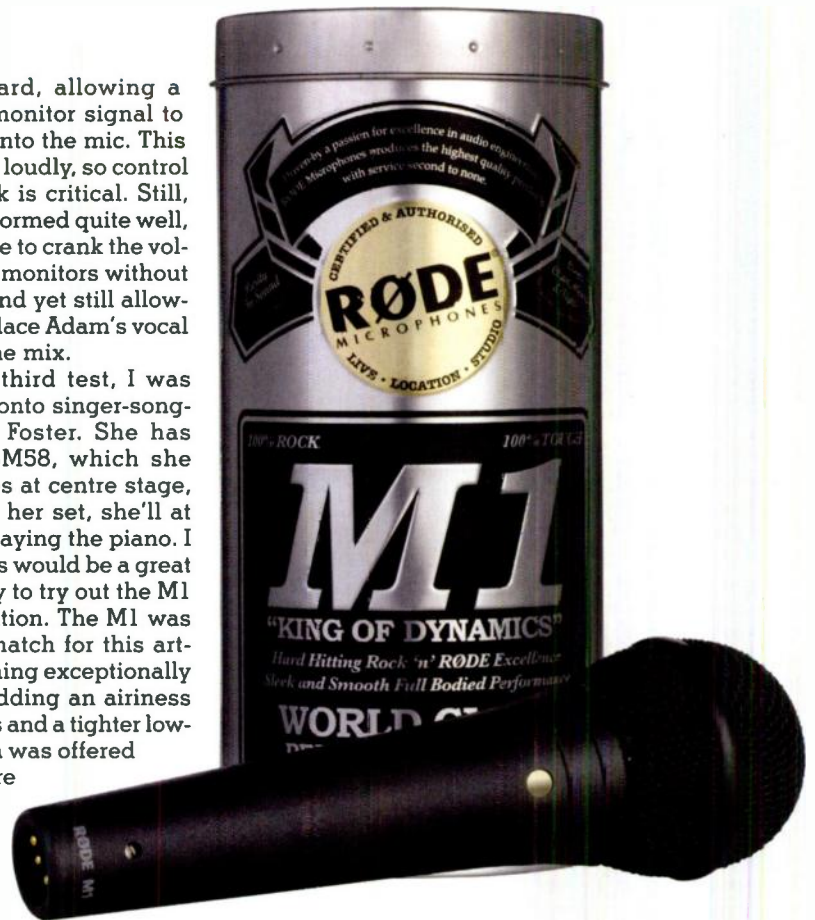
the keyboard, allowing a lot of the monitor signal to feed back into the mic. This band plays loudly, so control of feedback is critical. Still, the M1 performed quite well, allowing me to crank the volume in the monitors and yet still allowing me to place Adam's vocal on top of the mix.

For my third test, I was mixing Toronto singer-songwriter Jen Foster. She has her own SM58, which she always uses at centre stage, but during her set, she'll at times be playing the piano. I thought this would be a great opportunity to try out the M1 at this position. The M1 was a perfect match for this artist, performing exceptionally well and adding an airiness in the highs and a tighter lower mid than was offered by the centre mic, and feedback rejection was once again excellent.

The final test I performed with the M1 was in the recording studio. Usually, when I am cutting bed tracks, the vocal is a scratch take and I'll use whatever mic is closest to me at that time – SM7, SM58, or an e935. I recently produced some tracks for Jimmy Lingley, a New Brunswick-based artist. Everyone in the studio liked the sound of the M1 on the guide vocal takes to the point where we wanted to keep the guide vocals. That being said, I can't argue with the old saying: if it sounds good, it is good.

The M1 is definitely a great-sounding mic. At a street value of \$179, it's priced right and looks and feels amazing. With the introduction of the M1 to the market place, Rode has established itself as a major contender in the live realm. I'm recommending you go and try one for yourself.

Lorne Hounsell runs Central Audio Productions in Toronto. He can be reached at [lornehounsell@hotmail.com](mailto:lornehounsell@hotmail.com).



### Distributor's Comment

I think it's worth adding that Rode is so confident in the ruggedness of the M1's construction and its ability to endure the rigors of constant road use that the company is backing up the mic with a lifetime warranty.

Richard Lasnier  
President  
Audio Distributors International

# Ableton Live 8

by Alex Meade

**R**eleased April 2, 2009, Live 8 is the most recent version of Ableton's recording and performance platform. Coming less than two years after the release of Live 7, this installment boasts a host of new features, including new groove and warping engines, a Looper, several effects, and some helpful workflow improvements.



ARRANGEMENT VIEW



SESSION VIEW

For the purposes of this review, I installed Live onto an HP Pavilion laptop running Windows Vista (gasp). I did all testing using a Mackie Onyx 400f audio interface with an Akai MPD 24 and an M-Audio Axiom 61 for MIDI controllers. Installation was smooth and it couldn't have been easier to set up the I/O and controllers.

Along with all of the standard effects and features from Live 7, version 8 has new groove and warping engines, a Looper, five new effects, group tracks, screen zoom, browser wave form view, and updates the slicing functionality.

The groove engine lets you apply grooves to both MIDI and audio. The groove library includes templates that cover a range of feels, including emulations of the famous MPC swing templates. You can also create your own groove templates from pre-existing audio or MIDI and then apply them to your track. This is a cool feature if, for example, you want a drum pattern you've sequenced to have the feel from your favourite drum break, or the MIDI bass track to synch with the groove of the live drums you've recorded. You can add any number of grooves to the groove pool and then audition them on your tracks before committing.

The audio warping engine has been reworked with a new algorithm to improve sound quality, dubbed the CPU-heavy

Complex Pro, designed to provide higher-quality warping with fewer artifacts for more complex audio materials.

The new Looper is a basic sound-on-sound looper, similar to many of the hardware loopers available today, but better, given that you aren't limited to their editing features and relatively small internal storage capacity. With a MIDI foot controller like the Behringer FCB or similar, you can easily create loops on the fly as you would with a hardware looper. You can set the tempo before you start or begin playing and let the looper pick a tempo for you – great for building ambient sound-scapes or multi-layered guitar-gasms.

Ableton has added five new effects to its already-impressive arsenal: Overdrive, Frequency Shifter, Multiband Compressor, Limiter, and Vocoder. These are essential effects for any serious engineer or producer and I'm happy to say that none are lacking. The Overdrive models many-storied guitar pedals with flexibility and accuracy. The Frequency Shifter covers the standard flanging and ring modulation sounds that I typically wouldn't use, but that are sure to be a hit with many. Both the Multiband Compressor and the brick-wall Limiter are quite useful for honing your mix and have intuitive interfaces that provide strong visual representations of what you're doing. Finally, there is the much-trumpeted Vocoder, which is a bit more complicated to get your head around, but that delivers once you've teased out the sounds you're looking for. It offers plenty of flexibility and a great sound to boot. Let the robo voice-off begin!

Perhaps my favourite feature of Live 8 is Slice To New MIDI Track. This was a feature of Live 7 and similar functions have been available in MPCs for some time; however, in Live 8, it's been perfected. Simply load an audio clip, and Live will chop it up by transients, placing each slice onto its own MIDI note in the onboard sampler. If you've ever chopped up a drum break you can probably understand how much time this feature can save you. One click and the entire drum break is ready to be re-sequenced, twisted, and mangled to your heart's delight.

Some other features added to Live 8 are a useful screen zoom, annoyingly only available through the preferences menu, the browser wave form view, designed for previewing clips before importing them, and the much-needed group track capability.

If you're wondering why I haven't discussed any live performance-related aspects of Live 8, I'll only say this: APC 40. One could write an entire review on this amazing new Akai controller designed specifically to interface with Live. Check it out online if you're curious.

In conclusion, Live 8 is a real winner. Despite coming in relatively close succession to Live 7, this upgrade is far more than some tweaks and updates.

*Alex Meade is a Halifax-based freelance writer and music producer.*

## Distributor's Comment

As to "[w]ith a MIDI foot controller like the Behringer FCB or similar...", this is a common misconception. You don't need anything nearly as complex as an FCB. Looper was designed to work with a normal \$20 MIDI footswitch.

Mark Wellein  
Ableton Product Manager & DJ Specialist  
Erikson Audio

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# Mira X — 5 3/4 lbs.

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Kenny Bridges sings and plays guitar in Moneen. Their new album, *The World I Want To Leave Behind*, is available now. Visit [www.moneen.com](http://www.moneen.com).

GUITAR

by Kenny Bridges

# Delay Delay Delay Delay

## I like delay.

I like delay a lot.

I have always had this thing with weird noises – not weird noises made by a single pedal you click on and all of a sudden you have “weird,” but weird noises that have to be achieved by your own creativity. Take flanger for instance. You turn it on and everyone thinks the same thing: “Yup, flanger.” But delay, on the other hand – that is all about how you use it.

I’ve scaled my pedal board back a bit, but at one time I was using a Boss DD3 and two Line 6 DL4s. As well, I have the guts of a DD3 in my custom Tele, too. Since then, I have taken away a DL4 and replaced it with the Boss RE 20 Space Echo. I have gone through a few reverb pedals as well. I went from the Electro-Harmonix Holier Grail to the Holy Grail. Now, I am onto this less expensive pedal made by Behringer called the RV600.

I have tried lots of custom delay pedals that are very cool, but I am more into what I can do with what I have. I started with the DD3 and I still use the same one I got 10 years ago. Mine is strange, though. When you put the repeat to full, it starts to turn into a dinosaur eating your face. It gets really crazy and the delays morph into pure destruction. I guess it is from all the touring and me stepping on it about a million times.

Delays are very simple. They take a note and repeat it. Done. But it is all about using those repeating notes to create new space within a song; creating a completely different feeling. In the studio, we use very subtle delays on a lot of parts. We creep it in just to the point where you can almost hear it – just enough that when you take it away, you miss it. There is a really cool pitch shifter delay (Boss PS3) we use a lot for this as well.

That was our secret weapon for the new record (*The World I Want To Leave Behind*). It has a really nice sparkle to it on this one setting and adds some great texture to lead parts.

### SOME TRICKS...

Any weird noises on any of our records are from us playing with our delays. The whole ending to “Tonight I’m Gone” (from *The Theory Of Harmonial Value*) was done in one take with three or four delay pedals and a Roland Space Echo. There was nothing else but us tweaking the knobs, seeing what weird sounds we could come up with. Nothing was planned; we just pressed record.

Live, we use delays in completely different ways. It is more about shifting from subtle delays to the weirdest noises we can make. I have a couple tricks I like to use a lot. One is with the DD3. With the delay on the slowest millisecond notch, I play a single note and put the repeat on full and the speed of delay on the fastest. After playing the note, I slowly start sweeping the delay speed down all the way. This gives you that “the world is slowing down and about to end” sort of sound.

Another one of my favourite things is to use the DL4 with an expression pedal. With the expression pedal UP, set a delay to a nice tape echo setting. Give it an average repeat and set the speed to whatever tempo you need. Store that. Now push the expression pedal DOWN and turn the repeat all the way up to full and the delay speed to almost the fastest setting. It will be going crazy on you but store that setting onto the same patch. This will give you two settings you can sweep back and forth from. Now with the expression pedal UP, play a chord. While it is ringing out, slowly put the expression pedal into the DOWN position. You will get a really wild tape feedback loop happening that you can control using the expression. When it gets too crazy (and it will) bring the pedal back into the UP position. This effect is all over our records. You can hear it on “Start Angry, End Mad” (from *Are We Really Happy With Who We Are Right Now?*) before the song kicks in after the intro.

It’s strange. While other kids were going to parties, I was at home shoving a screwdriver into my guitar pickups, seeing what weird noises I could make. Who would have ever known it would amount to anything?



by Dave Cohen

# The Role Of "KEYBOARDIST"

**D**rumpers drum, guitarists play guitars, and bass players play bass. Keyboard players play everything else. We play pianos, Rhodes, synths, and organs. We are string orchestras, as well as sample-triggering computer programmers – often at once. Every gig we drive, fly, or bus to has its own set of challenges and restrictions. Let's look at the more common situations we deal with, what gear to use, and how to make the gig as great as possible.

## IN-TOWN/CLUB GIG

These are often cover band gigs with a broad repertoire, often unknown until you arrive. Stages are small and space is limited.

My in-town rig centres around an 88-weighted-key workstation keyboard. With this, I am prepared for almost any sound. Pre-set piano, Rhodes, synth, strings, and basic organ sounds are available, and by adding an expression pedal, I can layer string sounds atop a piano sound. Being a Hammond organ enthusiast, I find the lack of drawbars a hindrance, so I almost always bring an organ clone with its own expression pedal. If space permits, I even bring my Leslie speaker and preamp pedal set-up. Nobody expects it, but if it's on wheels, why not?

Hearing myself is a challenge at these gigs. Unless you can have your own monitor and monitor mix, a keyboard amp is essential. I use a six-channel stereo amp with balanced outs; it's powerful enough to hear over the guitar amp and crash cymbals crammed next to me, and I have enough channels if the gig calls for more than two keyboards. Balanced outs ensure everyone else can hear you. If you can avoid broken DI boxes, send a stereo mix of all your keyboards to the mains – everybody's life is easier.

Overall, this type of gig is fairly flexible. Your rig can be as elaborate or as simple as you want. Just remember, you're the one who has to tear it down and carry it at 3 a.m.

## ARTIST FLY DATE/FESTIVALS

Artist gigs are completely different from cover band gigs in the amount of preparation expected. Artists rely on you to faithfully recreate the parts and sounds on their records.

This is backline territory. When an artist signs a contract to play a fly date, there is usually a rider (list of requirements) specifying the necessary gear. Here are a few rules for specifying your backline:

- Never assume the person assembling your backline order is a keyboard player; they may not know a Roland sustain pedal is the wrong polarity for a Yamaha. They may not know the difference between a volume pedal and an expression pedal. **Specify everything** in painstaking detail.

- Never assume backline gear is as well-maintained as your own gear. The thought of a virtually unlimited list of gear at your disposal is tantalizing. Why play an organ clone when you can order a B3 and a 122? How about a '77 Rhodes Suitcase? Why not? Here's why not: backline gear is like a rental car. You may drive it a bit harder. You may park it where you wouldn't park your own. Believe me, you'll learn this after one good shock from a poorly-grounded organ or out-of-tune Rhodes. **Skip the vintage gear** unless you know it's in good shape.

## TOURS (BIG OR SMALL)

Tours present some of the biggest challenges to our gear and us. Unless you're the headlining act, there are tight time constraints. Load-in, set-up, and sound check times are often minimal. Space is also a big concern. If you are an opening act, more often than not, you are setting up around or in front of the headliner's gear. Rig size and ease of set-up and takedown should be thought out.

One of the most important things is to bring spares, spares, and more spares. Keys break, cables get run over by risers, and flight cases go missing. I went through four sustain pedals on the last Johnny Reid tour.

If you can swing it, bring a spare of your main keyboard. You just never know. One thing you do know is you will not be able to find that weird power cable for that really cool keyboard at 7:45 p.m. in downtown Nakus, BC.

At the end of the day, the key to being a keyboard player is to be self-empowered. It's too easy to fly around with lap-top set-ups and small module versions of larger keyboards. With all of the technology out there, you can't leave anything to chance.





Photo by Cheri Marjon

by Josh Trager

# TEACHIN' "THEM KIDS" TO ROCK

**H**aving the right drum part can be an essential part of a song. Sadly, there is no mathematical equation that leads you there. Music is not a science and there is no "right" or "wrong." I believe that the right drum part should be inspired, make sense, and complement where the writer is coming from creatively. I'd like to take a look at the song "Them Kids" from our record *Love At The End Of The World* and discuss the thought, inspiration, and execution behind that drum part.

Once I had some inspired musical ideas, I paid close attention to the lyrics and vocal phrasing. That gave me a better idea of where Sam was coming from creatively. Generally speaking, the song is sort of a reflection on the modern technology-obsessed indie hipster culture. "The kids don't know how to dance to rock 'n roll" line made it fairly obvious that the drums should be on the dancy side, so I started thinking in terms of the drum part being loop-based.

## BIRTH OF "THEM KIDS"

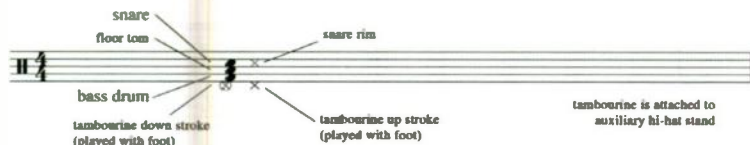
I noticed how well the song took to a train beat, so I used that as the foundation. I was hearing some tom accents at the end of every two-bar sequence. It would complement the vocal phrasing as well as make it feel a bit more dancy and loopy. Leading with the right, the tom accents as I was hearing them would have to be played on a rack tom with the left hand. The rack tom just didn't sound right to me. It definitely needed to be a floor tom. I decided rather than set up a remote floor tom on my left, I would take on the challenge of leading with the left hand. In doing so, the left hand plays all the quarter notes, including the backbeat on two and four, and puts all the upbeat eighth notes on the right hand. A little unconventional and a bit uncomfortable, but I was on my way!

Over the course of making *Love At The End Of The World*, I was experimenting with and trying to incorporate separating straight eighth note ride patterns between the left foot and right hand. It was something I first saw Vinnie Colaiuta do on the *Sting Unplugged* video. He was using this "system" with sixteenth notes. He would play the eighth notes with his left foot on the hi-hat and play the accompanying sixteenth note upbeats with his right hand, also on the hi-hat. It can be very musical and a great independent exercise to practice. "Them Kids" is the only track where that idea stuck!

The beat still needed something more to help bring it further into the dance loop realm, so I started playing the right hand upbeat part on the rim of the snare. In the case of the bass drum pattern, it was easily dictated by the vibe of the music and where the accents are. Lastly, we stuck on a tambourine track playing eighth notes almost throughout.

## "THEM KIDS" ARE ALL GROWN UP

For live application, I really wanted to reproduce the tambourine parts without the use of sequencers and triggers. My friend Julien Blais from The Stills was using a tambourine mounted on a second hi-hat stand, so I started experimenting with that. I found that, depending on the spring tension, amount of space, and foot technique, you could get either straight or swung eighths or sixteenths. It has come in quite handy in reproducing tambourine parts live.



INTRO

LH RH LH RH LH RH LH RH etc.

VERSE

\*notation by Christopher Cargello

## OPTIONS

When first sinking my teeth into the track, I had some choices to make: open hats, closed hats, ride? Keep the verses tight? Open the chorus? Bass drum patterns? Then came the question of dynamic changes between verses, chorus, bridge, outro. Sometimes on demos of this nature, dynamics between sections of a song can be difficult to pinpoint. It's our job as drummers to establish those dynamics, set up those sections, and make them happen! We have the power! It just goes to show how crucial a well-crafted drum part can be in breathing life into a song.



by Daniel Schnee

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.

**WOODWINDS**

# Solving **DIFFICULT** Compositional Problems

**In** most musical moments musicians encounter in their careers, standard training and terminology is sufficient to getting the job at hand done. Rarely will the average Canadian musician be required to perform many of the more difficult techniques and compositional processes available for any of the woodwinds, but of course, you the reader are different. You read *Canadian Musician* because you don't want to be average; you want to be way beyond average. You want to be like Don Byron, or Michael Brecker, and not like that character on *MADtv* that throws up his hands and shouts "Uh-oh, hotdog!" So I have chosen to discuss the extreme end of musical accompaniment or composition, to challenge your preconceived notions of what you are capable of.

What do you do with difficult-to-realize projects? I am not talking about a difficult orchestration or writing complex music. What should one do when faced with making music for or out of a conceptually complex theme? These themes occur a lot in performance-based art or cutting-edge modern dance works that require input from a sound designer or composer. Let's say you were called to work with someone like choreographer Twyla Tharp. Could you, through improvisation or composition, explain the allegorical relationship between a French maid, a pineapple, and 4th century Christian martyrs? How would you go about creating music for an experimental film to be shown on the back of the artist Shozo Shimamoto's head? What would you think-up to musically accompany Julianna Barbaras lying semi-nude on a table in-front of a live audience getting seam lines permanently tattooed on her body?

Working with dancers and choreographers is challenging, and trying to collectively create a work is fraught with frustrations and setbacks, but it is a rich source of learning, and deeply rewarding when it all comes together. Dancers tell stories with their bodies and strive to create an emotional performance through the use of space, intensity, rhythmic energy, and dynamic change, etc. So too does the performance artist, and since it contains so many possibilities of innovation, performative art can be seen as the zenith of creative activity. It usually happens in a specific place, with a select collection of materials, and lasts a measured amount of time, and usually, the artist, the area, the audience, or possibly all three are transformed somehow.

What becomes critical to your success is having a conceptual/musical tool kit specifically designed for these kinds of situations – various chromatic theory systems, symmetrical and asymmetrical rhythmic structures, emotional sound generators, and/or an onomatopoeic-imitative sound continuum. To build this kind of kit, you must begin exploring your instrument as a sound source, noting all the different sounds

the keys can make (clacking, popping), the overtones (blowing through the saxophone without the mouthpiece like a trumpet), etc. These sounds have been applied in rather vaudevillian manners for the last 100 years. It's high time woodwind "noises" take their place as expressive techniques in our kit. Treat every sound, note, buzz, clack, sneeze, or pop as equal. Buzzes and clicks are only silly or ugly when they are used that way. A great way to get over hesitation to learning and using such sounds is to explore the sounds written down in the "Sax Can Moo" section in Steve Lacy's book *Findings*.

So then how would you go about using this tool kit to solve the aforementioned conceptual problems? In the case of Shozo Shimamoto, I created industrial beeping and siren sounds, moving on to Doppler effects and the Lydian scale to create a sense of weightlessness or flight. Now the choices I made were not particularly related to the images being projected, but I and most of the audience knew the next act of the evening was Shozo being hoisted high into the air by an industrial crane and dropping paint down from the sky onto a giant canvas. In this case, I chose the "heaven and earth" idea to work as foreshadowing buried within the film music. In the case of Julianna Barbaras, I chose a selection of lullabies from different countries, and sang them softly in their original languages, accompanied by an electric tambura. I then played several brief improvisations using circular breathing and multiphonics in the middle range of the bass clarinet, as it matched what might be called the sonority of Julianna's physical pain. The encouragement to relax and not be afraid was responded to by Julianna's physical "voice" confirming a response. Now, it is not like everyone in the audience might have heard the connections or imagined them to be so, but using this system has always worked in getting my music much closer to the metaphorical or allegorical meaning of a performance.

Thanks to globalization, and the opportunity for more artists to expand their idea of art into multiple genres simultaneously, now is the time for us woodwind players who also compose to expand our idea of "musical instrument." We can't download new software for our Selmers, so we must download a new attitude for the new century and see technique and sound as something much more expansive than just dominant chords and swing rhythms. Now's the time ... to write music about "now" and "time!"



by Patrick Boyle,  
B.Mus, M.A.

# ENDURANCE: Thoughts On *Winning* The *Unwinnable*

*"Some days you get up and put the horn to your chops and it sounds pretty good and you win. Some days you try and nothing works and the horn wins. This goes on and on and then you die – and the horn wins."*

John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie  
(1917-1993)

What a perfectly concise description of the unforgiving experience of being a brass player. Often, I observe pianists and guitarists with envy in that, they can play with such sustained intensity hour after hour, seemingly without getting tired. The physical body of a brass player is the instrument, and as such we

so awful, so it goes with certain life-sustaining brass exercises. I have not found a single exercise better for overall brass health than the long tone. Even as you look at it (see Fig. 1) you are yawning. These are lengthy, sustained notes, played with a tongueless articulation, that begin softly and crescendo. Then, at the height of the crescendo (without going to the harsh edge of your sound), you bring it back to *ppp*.

A large part of my personal routine includes long tones played with love and reverence. I take my sweet time and always play musically. Practicing long tones prepares my mind for the rest of my musical day. Side note: I usually begin my practice with 15 minutes of buzz-

with the horn on your face. Despite your best intentions, blasting straight for a few hours often yields little results. Try fingering though a few passages with the horn off your face every 15 minutes or so. Think about practicing for an hour in which you are 100 per cent committed to the music but only playing the horn 50-60 per cent of the time.

The "play, rest, play" approach is also an excellent mindset to bring into real-world performance, particularly for improvising musicians. By holding back a little, you can draw the audiences' attention to the space you create. This builds tension and anticipation for your next entrance. Simultaneously, you are resting your face in tiny increments.



Play on every note (everyday) to a metronome. Use a tongueless attack 'hu.'

need to micro-manage some very specific muscle areas in order to consistently get to the heart of the music.

To a brass player, a head full of wild, amazing musical ideas and a heart full of good intention are meaningless without a solid grounding in the fundamentals. It is akin to designing a house. What good are platinum doorknobs and a heated patio if you build your dream home on a foundation of marmalade? In this, my first column for *Canadian Musician*, I am pleased to offer some very practical advice on endurance. Perhaps in subsequent articles, my analogies will improve (though I have my doubts).

## Turn Down The Boredom

One of the main obstacles to increasing endurance is the boredom factor. As healthy food can sometimes taste

ing on a trombone mouthpiece. When I then switch to my trumpet mouthpiece, it seems so effortless. The trombone piece is a little like having a weight on a baseball bat while I'm "on-deck."

In your practice session, try playing as though there is a great master in the room, listening to you. The idea here is not to induce a panic attack, rather, to get you to think critically about each aspect of your playing so that you are even better at the next session. Cultivate a clear idea in your mind's ear of what is important to you musically, and as you practice, take stock of how far away you are from that sound.

## Play, Rest, Play

Everything in moderation (including moderation). As you are practicing, consider the amount of time you spend

This is an extremely useful strategy.

## Your Needs Are Unique To You

It is critical to understand that no book, method, or teacher can tell you exactly what you have to do to be your best. Dizzy Gillespie had the most bizarre embouchure ever, and it is safe to say it worked for him. The best teachers monitor your progress and suggest a course of action that may include examples from texts. You yourself need to highlight your musical priorities and create an effective individual routine. Inevitably, your needs will change over time. This is not always obvious. Be vigilant enough to know when something is not working for you. The key word here is routine. This is our daily commitment to music at large, not just the instrument.



by Colin Crowell

Colin Crowell is a member of Halifax-based indie/electro outfit Ruby Jean & The Thoughtful Bees. Check them out at [www.rjattb.com](http://www.rjattb.com).

# The **BIGGER** The **BETTER**: *Achieving Huge Bass Synth On A Budget*

**L**et's face it. Not everyone has access to the coveted preamps and classic analog synthesizers that add that special "something" to a great synth bass line. I've often encountered nothing but frustration when trying to replicate a classic bass sound with VSTs or inexpensive hardware synths, but this doesn't mean us less-fortunate electronic musicians need to spend thousands, or even hundreds of dollars on new equipment to achieve a full, meaty tone in the home studio. The message I want to stress in this column: be different! Hopefully by using some of these techniques you'll create sounds that are not only dance floor killers, but completely your own.

### Work from the ground up and pick a wave.

Instead of resorting to your keyboard or VST's presets, start from the ground up and build your own sound. The biggest factor in the sound you'll eventually achieve is the wave shape you choose. For example, starting with a square wave oscillator will give you a nasty, full-on loud tone reminiscent of Super Nintendo (some synths will even let you select a lower bit-depth for an even more retro vibe). Pitch it way down, and we've got an aggressive, yet admittedly thin, starting point.

### Use multiple oscillators and multiple synths.

Once you have a single oscillator bass sound that you're happy with, it's time to fatten it up using more oscillators, a different synth altogether, or both! Try using different wave shapes, filter configurations, and even pitches/tunings to complement (or destroy!) your original tone. Almost all hardware and software synths have several oscillators and the capability to mix them together.

If you're still lacking in the sub-bass dept (~60 Hz and lower), let's make a new track to flesh things out a bit. Create a single oscillator sine-wave (the softest wave) synth, and pitch it one octave lower than your original bass line. Apply a sharp low-pass filter somewhere around 100 Hz and juice around 40 Hz if desired. Careful: mixing this layer properly can be difficult without an accurate monitoring environment and/or subwoofer.

### Compliment the kick.

You may find that your bass line and kick drum, however awesome they sound independently, just don't fit quite right together because they're fighting for the same (low-end) sonic space. There are a couple of ways to make these foundation elements compliment each other nicely:

- **Side chain.** Perhaps the most popular method of making

the kick and bass work together is to drop the bass out (almost completely in some cases) whenever the kick hits. It's beyond the scope of this article but if you haven't side chained yet, I strongly encourage you to research it more.

- **Precise EQ.** Look at your kick in an analyzer. What's the most predominant frequency? Consider shaving this same frequency back on your bass track.

- **Compress.** If your bass line has a lot of peaks and valleys, consider squashing it a bit, especially if this is going to be a banger.

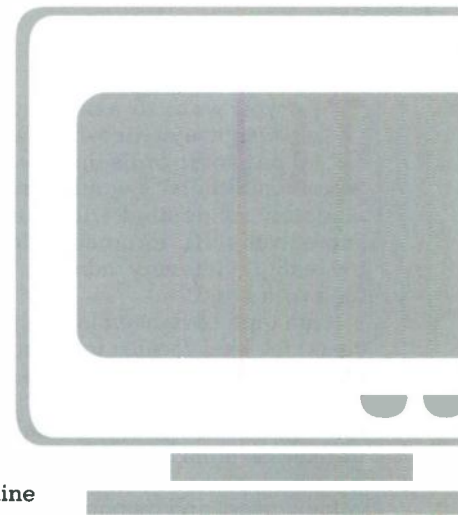
Also watch for phase issues: again somewhat beyond our scope, but remember that opposing waves will cancel out. This can greatly affect the fullness of your bass if you've recorded multiple parts on top of one another.

### Take it live.

Why not experiment with your oscillators, envelopes, filters, and other effects in real time, while you (or someone else) plays the bass line? Simply map some parameters to your favorite MIDI controller and go nuts. A great technique is to record your VST bass track(s)/loop(s) as MIDI, then go back over them and apply some interesting variations to the aforementioned parameters.

### Apply the final touches.

Once you have something you're happy with, why not try running your bass through a real amp, or even a simulation of one? This can be a great way to add "room" and make your tone mesh with live instruments like a drum kit or guitar. Also try effects like distortion, slap-back delay, and even tremolo; they work great on bass. Remember, a big part of electronic music is experimentation: go a little crazy and focus on finding sounds that work well with your song's vibe as opposed to your "genre." It's fresher sounds that are most likely to catch the ear of new listeners and your peers alike, so go ahead and break the rules!





by James La Brie

# YELLING

## *Can Be Beautiful*

### Part 1

**If** you were to ask me when I was five or six what I was going to do or be upon reaching adulthood, I would have passionately responded with the exact same words that fortunately describe my reality at this very moment: "singer for a rock band."

I am (and have been for the past 18 years) the lead vocalist for Dream Theater – an American progressive, metal, rock band with a Canuck (moi) thrown in for good measure as the vocalist. Not unlike the music itself, it insidiously garners a diverse social gathering of colour, creed, and demographic.

Think of someone cooking up a musical stew or smorgasbord that infuses every ingredient, herb, and spice available. You have four virtuoso instrumentalists technically capable of almost unlimited abilities. Every conceivable style and genre is being tapped into (okay, not country), explored, and challenged to its very extremities. Every time signature has been traversed and included within Dream Theater's compositions, but not without reason, thought, and purpose.

I feel that each of our albums has been very current or contemporary at the time of recording. In no way have I found our music retro or mirroring uncomfortably close to some of our influences. I think every album has shown we continue to musically evolve, re-invent ourselves, while at the same time staying true to our sound and who we've been.

What's it mean to be a singer for a band like DT? Well, let me put it to you this way. It allows me a coveted and diversely expressive platform. Hell, that was my motive and inspiration for becoming a singer, a frontman, and per-

former. I could convey every possible feeling and emotion without being ignored or,

better yet, locked up. It's therapy and they pay me!

Seriously though, Freddie Mercury was the consummate frontman and singer of Queen. Here was a man that possessed one of the most incredible voices known to rock and roll. Through him, I was able to appreciate his evocative, emotional, powerful, and commanding voice. He succeeded with such conviction, whenever he sang. His band created music with absolute freedom – no boundaries and no one ever dared to suggest or dictate their next move. Their earlier albums were unprecedented with such vocal harmonies and brilliantly-executed vocal triads as well as rock operas unlike any other. This is what we embrace as well – pushing the envelope because that is what brings forth the unforeseen and unpredictable and stirs so many emotions within one's self. You can't help but feel moved in so many ways.

Allow me to backtrack a bit. I was born in Penetanguishene, ON, and still live in the area. At five, I started singing to the radio and to some of my Dad's record collection (Nat King Cole, Perry Como, and Frank Sinatra) of notable singers, big-band music, and jazz artists with the likes of Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich on drums. My mother also came from a very musical family. They played instruments and sang, and I can truthfully and objectively state, with beautiful voice. Because my father loved to sing and did so in church choirs, he was more than willing to cultivate my obsession with the instrument,

even getting me involved around 10 to sing some Barber Shop numbers. I did love it and it proved to be very fundamental in hearing the voice and developing its sound.

I was already thinking rock bands. I haven't mentioned until now but I also played drums from the age of five until I was around 17. I knew with the kind of drummers out there that I was much more potent as a singer than drummer. Hell, look at the guy playing drums for our band. Need I say more? This was essential to my development rhythmically and has been very crucial with my understanding and place within the cacophony of rhythms that largely comprise DT's musical shape.

I have studied voice privately throughout the years since I was 20 years old. This is absolutely necessary to any professional who wants to be doing this for most of their lives. With this being said, I still feel that who and what I've become as a vocalist still comes from the infinite wisdom from my influences and or indirect mentors – Freddie Mercury, Steve Perry, Robert Plant, Steven Tyler, Ian Gillan, etc. These guys had/have incredible voices. They conveyed the message and the lyrics even if they weren't read, understood, or put to memory by the listener. Through their delivery, their emotion, and conviction, it was crystal clear what was being evoked or communicated. This has been my approach to every single song within DT's repertoire. Whomever the lyricist for that particular song, I first absorb it through self-interpretation, then through literal means from the person who penned it. This, I feel, has always without fail allowed me to find the voice and become that personality.





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# BILLY TALENT

BY LUTHER MALLORY  
PHOTOS BY DUSTIN RABIN

In some tiny little town in southern Ontario some years ago, four kids from the Greater Toronto Area hauled drums and amplifiers onto the back of a tractor trailer to play their Rage Against The Machine- and Soundgarden-influenced brand of hard rock for the locals. When you're cutting your teeth as a live band, you learn to just grin and bear it when the generator craps out four times during your set. You learn to just rock those jump kicks on stage, even if your audience is comprised mostly of farmers. It's how you learn and get better. "That was a bad show," says Ian D'Sa, half horrified, half laughing. "Then the racists came," adds Ben Kowalewicz. "They accosted Ian and told him to get out of their town. That was worse." Ya, that's worse.

D'Sa is the Gcan guitarist and primary songwriter in Billy Talent, one of the country's biggest hard rock bands. Since the tractor trailer incident, he has indeed learned and gotten better alongside vocalist Kowalewicz, bassist Jon Gallant, and drummer Aaron Solowoniuk, and together, they've made Billy Talent into one of Canada's biggest musical exports.

How and why Billy Talent are as successful as they are is about patience and friendship. The average life span of a band is about two years – not long enough to grow past infancy, or really give it a respectable shot – just hope for a miracle. Billy Talent outgrew the terrible twos about 14 years ago. While most bands are throwing food and taking naps, Billy Talent are getting their driver's license.

Sixteen years without a single lineup change is almost unheard of. There's always the band-dismantling "real job" waiting at dad's insurance company or personality clashes that end up leveling most bands. Nobody left and nobody really clashed; they're just as good at being friends as they are at playing music together.

This is also the reason that these four gentlemen have a reputation with fans, and within the industry, as being respectable, well-mannered, down-to-Earth people. "I think we're good guys because it took 10 years to get people to understand what we're doing. If this would have happened 16 years ago, we'd all be dicks," jokes Solowoniuk. "I think we were all raised well," adds Kowalewicz. "We're no better and no worse than anyone else. I think if you were to go for beers with any one of us you'd see that. Our parents are good humans."



In 2003, Billy Talent released their self-titled debut with Warner Music after changing their name from Pezz due to legal issues. The record won them Group of the Year, Best New Album, and Best New Group of the Year (10 years into their career) at the 2004 Juno Awards. Since, the band hasn't slowed down or missed a beat – hit singles and videos, sold-out tours, the release of *Billy Talent II*, more hit singles, more sold-out tours... Everything you already know about Billy Talent that has led up to this point.

I was summoned to a hotel in downtown Toronto for my interview with the band. It was a full day of press, and journalists were being shuffled in and out of the room like it was a walk-in clinic. I had a full hour with them – enough time to relax and pace things a bit. Pastel furniture and matching paintings of arbitrary things like boats and landscapes adorned the wall – definitely a hotel room. The guys were looking energized and pleased to take care. I sat down and Solowoniuk pulled out his cell phone. On the drive to the hotel, he had recorded a video out the car window of a really old man cranking jungle music out of a ghetto blaster that was duct taped to the back of his seat, rocking out while pedaling full speed on his bike – a perfect icebreaker.

I have a curious relationship with Billy Talent in that my band practices two doors down from theirs at our rehearsal space. I let D'Sa know that I've been hearing him work on guitar parts for the band's third release, *Billy Talent III*, for about the last year and, through muffled walls, heard the development of the record. I can testify to the band's relentless work ethic. *Billy Talent III* is the purpose for the press day and the

focus of the interview. We launch into the topic of songwriting.

Kowalewicz begins: "Our writing process usually involves Ian working really, really, really hard and not sleeping very much, coming up with these amazing, beautiful riffs and then, somehow, he glues a rough version of a song together. Then he'll bring it to Aaron and Jon and they'll put their ideas down on it. When it comes time for melodies and lyrics, Ian and I work on those together. Ian is the front runner, the MVP of our records." D'Sa doesn't blink; he's comfortable with the role. "The melody, in the beginning, is usually a 'na na na' thing for a long time," says D'Sa, "and then we'll just sit in the room and hash out ideas until we have some words."

Lyrics may be the final thought when it comes to completing a new song, but Kowalewicz and D'Sa are insistent about keeping Billy Talent away from obsolete, jingle-type lyrics that don't hold any weight. Kowalewicz's philosophy on lyrics: "It has been something important to us since our beginning days, way back. If you have the opportunity and the privilege to tell a story or say something, you should really work at it to try to convey it in the best way possible." D'Sa continues, "I think with every record, we try to up the ante and challenge

# BILLY TALENT

ourselves to write as many meaningful lyrics as possible." I ask if there's a particular lyrical theme on *Billy Talent III*, and everybody seems stumped. D'Sa takes a shot: "I don't think there's one single theme. The only thing I've thought of is, maybe it's about an individual struggle against a lot of forces around a person." The rest of the band nods in agreement.

It's the nature of the group to write on the darker side of things; they aren't exactly a primary colours kind of band. Today, all four of them are dressed head-to-toe in black. It's a look, and the look is intentional. There is, however, one theme on *Billy Talent III* that shows up in the song "Pocket Full of Dreams" that seems especially poignant. It speaks to getting older and using your time more wisely. "It's our age," says D'Sa, who's in his early 30s. "We also have songs like 'White Sparrows' to do with the death of a loved one and how you can't dictate how long you live. It's important to do everything that counts now because you never know what could happen to you."

Billy Talent has done "cautionary" and "hopeful" a few times before. "I think songs like 'Nothing To Lose' attracted a lot of attention, especially with younger people – those self-empowerment songs," says Kowalewicz. "Then we have songs like 'Devil In A Midnight Mass' and these kind of dark songs. People take something else away from them. We've gotten a few letters from victims of abuse about how that song got them through a tough time. That's absolutely amazing – kind of why you do it."

The delivery of the lyrics often features sweeping harmonies, which have become a Billy Talent signature. "The River Below" and "Devil In A Midnight Mass," among others, feature D'Sa on backups mixed as loudly as Kowalewicz. "Vocal harmonies come up after the fact," says D'Sa. "Then we have to figure out which melody is going to be the lead and which will be the harmony."

Perhaps the most apparent Billy Talent signature sound is the instantly-recognizable guitar style and tone. "I never really liked oversaturated, crunchy guitar sounds," admits D'Sa. "I really like chimey cleans and that all developed on the first record with the amps we chose to record with. I ended up buying one of those amps. It's a Mark Stephenson-made amp and it's still my number one amplifier."

Stylistically, D'Sa has succeeded in achieving a distinguishable sound that makes Billy Talent songs sound like Billy Talent songs two seconds into the intro. It's damn-near impossible to be distinctive being anything other than a vocalist.

BEN KOWALEWICZ



IAN D'SA



Regular music listeners don't "relate" to the guitar like they do the vocals, so there is only a handful of guitar players who can boast being "identifiable." "I started doing the dropped D (tuning) thing on the guitar in the late '90s after listening to my favorite bands, Soundgarden and Rage Against The Machine. I really enjoyed Kim Thayil and Tom Morello's technique and I found by watching them having to be both rhythm and lead players in their bands, it was a lot easier for me to be able to play bar chords with one finger and then play lead notes over top with my other fingers. That's something I started doing and then it just developed into my own thing." He credits his melodic sense to playing piano at a young age.

Throughout the interview, Kowalewicz, in a non-disruptive, keeping-himself-entertained-on-an-otherwise-tedious-press-day kind of way, frequently pokes and jabs at Solowoniuk, who bats him away like an old stoic cat barely acknowledging him. It's apparent that Solowoniuk's been thwarting Kowalewicz's attempts to piss him off for the last 16 years. I say, "Ben, you pick on Aaron a lot." "Is it that obvious? Aaron is totally passive-aggressive. Don't think he's quiet. He's very methodical and very weird and creepy." They all laugh. Solowoniuk is the quintessential "quiet one." He is solemn and mellow. He's the kind of person who doesn't speak unless he has something to say. Generally, those are the types of people that get picked on, and he's the catcher's mitt for most of the punishment in Billy Talent. It's brotherly and all in good fun.

The secret, it seems, to essentially being married to three other dudes and making it last for 16 years is respect for one another and communication. "There's always going to be ups and downs and that happened in the first 10 years," says D'Sa. "After that, you learn from the fights and arguments and you begin to communicate. It's the simplest solution to any problem. Just communicate. Simple." The band has been around long enough to have every little thing ironed out from sustaining friendships with each other to interview etiquette and how Billy Talent portrays themselves in such interviews.

At one point during our chat, Kowalewicz gets caught just barely complaining about having the flu during a big show last year in Toronto and gets immediately scolded by all of his bandmates at once with a trio of groans. "Come on," quips Solowoniuk. "Let's just 'ang-ish' in the glory." Everyone laughs at Solowoniuk's made-up word and the drummer, as usual, is a good sport about it. It's nice to see that Billy Talent have decided, between the four of

AARON SOLOWONIUK



them, to appreciate how far they've come and portray that attitude in interviews. No complaining allowed when there's really nothing to complain about.

With writing in the bag, the plan for the recording of *Billy Talent III* was to have D'Sa produce. Before signing off on the decision, the band decided, just for fun, to take an unlikely shot by contacting a couple of legendary producers: Butch Vig (Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins) and Brendan O'Brien (Stone Temple Pilots, Pearl Jam). "We threw out some demos just to see what would happen," says Kowalewicz. "We thought, 'Let's try these two guys and see if it works.' Butch was the first guy to get in touch and he said he was too busy, and then Brendan called and said, 'I'm in, let's do it.' It just really worked out in a weird way." Years of experience in the flakiest business of all time have made the band hesitant about getting too excited before the ink hits the paper. "We didn't believe it until he was in our rehearsal room."

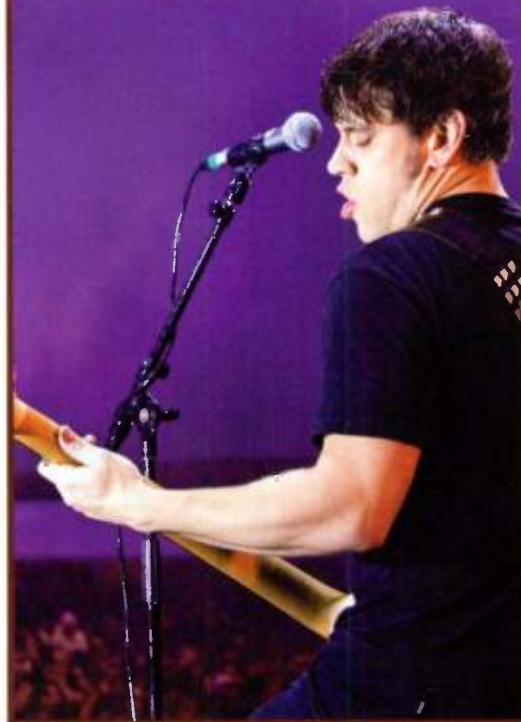
"In our initial talks with Brendan," continues Kowalewicz, "I remember sitting and chatting with him at our jam space and we said we'd like to be a four piece band, and whatever we do on the record, we'd like it to reflect what we do live." D'Sa adds: "When we got in the studio, he really captured our band as a live act, really organic-sounding and huge. We all played in the same room where Aaron was getting his drums tracked. Jon and I were playing along with him, and most of Jon's bass was kept from that live session. I think you can really feel the liveliness on the record."

*Billy Talent III* features arrangements on Mellotron, clavichord, piano, and alternate percussion. The extra instrumentation was O'Brien's idea, and something that made the band a touch nervous, says D'Sa. "When we were first discussing the record with Brendan, we said we don't want any strings or anything, we just want to sound like we do live. He said, 'OK, that's fine if that's what you guys want. I think that's stupid, but it's cool.' He was right; it was the wrong attitude to go in with and we warmed up to the idea."

When your musical stock is as high as Billy Talent's, you have to consider what might end up throwing off your fans. Some of the hard rock music fanatics of the world are particularly unimpressed with instruments that don't have that sandpaper quality. The band was worried that fans wouldn't "get" clavichords and pianos. Solowoniuk sums it up with an angry fan impersonation: "I heard a tambourine in a Billy Talent song. Twice! They're losers."

"We're not the type of band to go and write some crazy artsy record that fans wouldn't like," says D'Sa. Gallant explains that the purpose of the extra arrangement was simply for thickness and variation, not artist integrity. "When Brendan started to add the extra

JON GALLANT



know that this is what I'm supposed to do and this is where I'm supposed to be and these are the people that I'm supposed to be doing it with. It's in me. I don't think about it, I don't acknowledge it. It just is." ■



Luther Mallory sings and writes songs for Crush Luther, and is the Director of A&R for High 4 Records. He also writes a songwriting blog at [www.luthermallory.com](http://www.luthermallory.com).

arrangements, we said, 'Maybe just turn that down a bit,' and Brendan would say, 'Oh, you want me to turn down the magic? OK.' By the end we were like, 'Go add some magic to this!' All said, the "magic" on *Billy Talent III* is sparse and appropriate. No angry letters will be written.

The most extreme change from previous records on *Billy Talent III* is no doubt the almost entire lack of screaming – barely a yelp out of Kowalewicz on this one. Mostly, he just... sings. "The vocals on this record sound better and more clear and just... awesome," says Gallant. "You can hear every word properly. I think [Brendan] worked really well with Ben and Ian on harmonies." When O'Brien first flew in to the band's rehearsal space for pre-production he promptly dropped the keys of several of the brasher, higher-keyed songs so Kowalewicz could actually reach the notes singing instead of screeching like he had been doing on previous records to get his range up there. The result is a record more focused on lyrics, and the clarity in the message of each song isn't lost in the grit. Perhaps a slightly more grown up sound in that sense, but still, somehow, Billy Talent's heaviest, crunchiest record by many miles.

This year and into the next, the band will once again tour relentlessly in support of *Billy Talent III*. When that's all finished, D'Sa will likely be back in the rehearsal space to start writing the next album, and the band will again begin the creative cycle of write, record, tour, repeat. What else do you do when you've spent 16 years learning and getting better, getting famous, starting to communicate, picking on your drummer, putting out number one records, and generally being good humans?

Last year, ages after the racists chased D'Sa and his band out of their dumb little town, Billy Talent played perhaps their best show ever to a crowd of 20,000 fans holding 20,000 lighters at Toronto's Air Canada Centre without a single generator malfunction. Kowalewicz takes a moment to "anglisch" in the glory that has been his career in Billy Talent: "I can honestly say I've never actually thought 'This is what I'm going to do.' It's just always been there. Billy Talent has just been my constant. I just

A 3D rendered golden figure stands in a dynamic, forward-leaning pose. The figure holds a shovel in its right hand and a rake in its left. A path of gold bars leads from the bottom left towards the figure, curving around its legs. The background is white with faint vertical lines.

# WHERE THE

# MONEY

BY LONNY KNAPP

A large, stylized blue dollar sign (\$) is positioned to the right of the word 'MONEY' and above the author's name.

So you are in a band. The live shows sound great, the fan base is growing, you've written some hits, and you figure it's time to book a studio to record your opus. Well, I'd hate to dismiss that rock n' roll fantasy, but these days, you are better off waiting for pennies from heaven than for some fast-talking major label A&R guy to swoop down with a briefcase full of money to bankroll your studio session.

It's a cold hard fact; before you lay down the first track, you're going to have to cough up some dough, but don't despair comrades; the money is out there and we are going to help you find it.

## Funding Organizations

Thanks to our liberal forefathers, there is a wealth of federal and provincial programs designed to assist artists of all stripes – even rock and roll musicians are eligible for some taxpayer-funded cash. Through structured loans and grant programs, the following organizations have helped countless Canadian artists capture quintessential moments in audio. Read on as we focus on just a few of the many funding programs designed to help musicians like you – and meet the artists reaping these monetary rewards. Pay attention; these cash cows could soon be cutting you a cheque.

### The FACTOR Factor

Founded in 1982 with a mandate to help Canadian artists produce recordings suitable for radio airplay and retail sale, The Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent On Recordings (FACTOR) has administered well over \$100 million since its inception. Each year, it injects approximately \$13 million into the fragile music industry.

FACTOR receives its flow in part from sponsoring radio broadcasters and Canadian Heritage's Canada Music Fund. This money is doled out in the form of loans and grants designed to assist the growth and development of the Canadian independent recording industry. The non-profit organization has been a key factor in the successful careers of some of our greatest exports and homeland heroes. From Albie Zappacosta to Anvil, The Boss Brass to Billy Talent, and the Nylons to Nickelback, hundreds of Canadian artists owe their success in part to FACTOR.

Whether you are looking to record a demo, a full-length sound recording, to market and promote an existing album, or showcase and tour domestically and internationally, funding is available. With programs that loan artists up to \$25,000 to offset the recording of an album, FACTOR should be the first target for cash-strapped musicians.

"Ask any successful band from the last ten years and they will tell you that it would be extremely hard to have a career without the ongoing support of FACTOR. It's a crucial source of income for so many Canadian bands," says Wayne Petti, frontman of Cuff the Duke. His band hails from Oshawa, ON, a city better known for producing hockey players than successful recording artists, but by applying a blue collar work ethic to recording and touring, Cuff the Duke has evolved to become bona-fide purveyors of rich and rootsy Canadiana.

Last year, Blue Rodeo tapped the band to open a slew of dates, including a two-night stand at Toronto's famed Massey Hall. After the tour, Blue Rodeo's Greg Keelor invited the band out to his farm near Port Hope to record a few tracks in his studio. This past January, with Keelor at the helm handling engineering and co-production duties, the band began recording tracks for what would become its fourth album. Forgoing the navel gazing process of pre-production, the band set out to capture the essence of the songs; Keelor's jones for vintage gear upped the intimacy of the project.

"It was total old school. We recorded on eight-track 1" tape. If you hear organ and piano on a track, it was recorded in one room with one microphone," Petti says. Arguably, the best records are those that capture a distinct moment in time. Recorded in the dead of winter in rural Ontario, *Way Down Here* is one of those albums. It is a recording that acts as a time capsule. Listen closely and you can hear the snow falling outside and the fire burning in the wood stove.

When it's released in September on the band's own Nobel Recording Company label, *Way Down Here* is sure to further cement Cuff the Duke's reputation, but without the financial assistance from FACTOR, the album may not have been made. "We applied for an album grant, and were lucky enough to get it," Petti explains.

### Wise Council

Created by an Act of Parliament in 1957, The Canada Council for the Arts (Canada Council) fosters and promotes the study, enjoyment, and production of works in the arts. Each year, the Council's Music Section invests approximately \$25 million into the Canadian music industry. As well as funding residencies and commissioning Canadian compositions, the Music Section awards grants to help offset the cost of tours, concert production, festival programming, and sound recording.

For artists keen to record, the Council offers Grants for Specialized Music Sound Recording. This program covers 60 per cent of recording costs to a maximum of \$20,000; however, since this grant is funded by Canadian Heritage's Canada Music Fund, the same body that supports FACTOR's programs, much onus is put on the

word "specialized." While rock, hip-hop, country, and all other commercially-oriented projects are deemed ineligible, artists performing in genres such as classical, folk, and jazz, are welcome to apply for the funding.

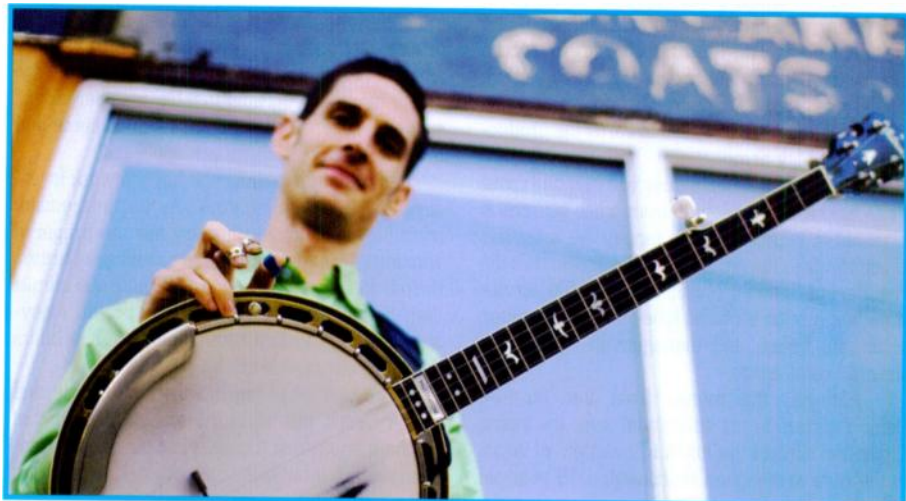
"I had a vision, and the funding from Canada Council allowed me to realize it. It's pretty much a miracle," says Juno award-winning banjoist Jayme Stone. In performance, Stone captivates audiences with an eclectic mix of Appalachian fiddle tunes, jazz standards, and culture-bridging world music compositions, but it's not his ability to defy genre that sets him apart; it is his insatiable curiosity. Stone's approach to music is simultaneously historical and anthropological. Think of him as a musical scholar with a taste for adventure, a sort of musical Indiana Jones.

This curiosity has led to some interesting collaborations. In 2004, a mutual friend introduced Stone to Mansa Sissoko, a renowned griot (a traditional West African folk singer) and kora player (a 21-string African harp).

The banjo is a direct relative the ngoni (a West African plucked lute). Stone had long-harboured an interest in African music and over the years, he had picked up some African folk songs. Though the two spoke only a few words of each other's language, they shared a deep musical bond.

"When you collaborate with people from different cultures, you find the lowest common denominator. It feels like you're really connecting, but I wanted to understand the subtleties of African music. I wanted it to be more meaningful," Stone says.

This meeting with Mansa was catalyst to a great adventure. Jayme packed his banjo and



RIGHT (TOP): CUFF THE DUKE.  
RIGHT (BOTTOM): JAYME STONE.

PHOTO BY JOE FUDA.

# WHERE THE MONEY IS

headed to Mali, a landlocked nation in Western Africa, to trace the origins of the banjo and study African music. For seven weeks, he studied with well-known musicians such as ngoni master Bessekou Kouyatem, and travelled to rural villages in search of authentic musical encounters.

"I hung out with musicians who had never left their village and had never heard a radio, and definitely never seen a banjo. I wanted an immersion in the culture and music, so that when I came back to collaborate with Mansa I was more conversant."

With a head full of traditional African tunes, and a heart full of inspiration, Stone returned to Canada and once again teamed up with Mansa Sissoko. The pair sequestered themselves in the studio and emerged with *From Africa to Appalachia*, a haunting, uplifting, and moving record deserving of the award for Best World Music Album it won at this year's Junos.

Stone underlines the role funding has played in his career. "It's the missing piece. There's a gap between having a vision and making it happen, and for me, arts funding has been the bridge."

## Provincially Speaking

So far we've looked at bodies offering funding at the federal level. Now we'll zoom in to take a look at funding available at the provincial level. Each province has some sort of program designed to assist musicians. In Prince Edward Island, it is Music PEI.

Founded in 2001, Music PEI is an organization devoted to advancing careers of Prince Edward Island musicians. In the beginning, Music PEI operated solely as an awards organization, but in 2007, the non-profit organization launched programs providing financial assistance to the music industry. For musicians trying to secure money for a recording project, Music PEI offers the Targeted Demo Program. This program grants successful applicants \$1,000 towards the production of a quality demo.

"Nobody thinks the money will cover all costs. It's to be used with savings from other sources. It is meant to supplement the money the artist has to contribute to the pot," says Lloyd Doyle. He's the President of Sandbar Music, a small multi-service shop that acts as a record label, digital distributor, publishing house, and management office for a slew of Island artists.

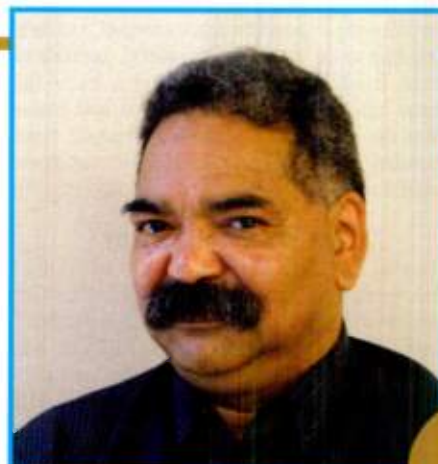
Although the money from the Targeted Demo Program is not substantial, over the years, Doyle has applied the funds in a variety of ways. In the case of Meaghan Blanchard, a 19 year-old



ABOVE: FACTOR PRESIDENT & CEO HEATHER OSTERTAG.

RIGHT (TOP): RUSS KELLY OF THE CANADA COUNCIL.

RIGHT (BOTTOM): INDIO SARAVANJA.



emerging singer/songwriter, the money was used to produce an electronic press kit; The Sidewalks, a "skalternative" band hailing from Charlottetown, combined money from Music PEI with their own savings to produce a 7-song EP; and Battery Point, a straight-ahead rock quartet, is using the money to audition big-name producer David Barbe.

"The band is going down to Athens, GA for two days to hang with the producer and record a two-song demo. That demo will be used to attract private investors and perhaps FACTOR financing," Doyle says. Doyle says that the Targeted Demo Program is designed to help bands get out there and start touring.

"It's about creating an industry, and the support means a lot to the bands that use it wisely. You never know where that \$1,000 is going to lead," he says. "It's okay to have dreams, even in PEI."

## Submission Ambition

So now that you know of a few organizations willing to shell out thousands (or millions) of dollars to support the creation of Canadian music, you're probably thinking that some of that money is yours for the taking. Unfortunately, it's not that easy. These funding programs involve a rather extensive application process. Competition is fierce and only the best applications are approved.

"It's not free money; you have to work for it," says Amanda VanDenbroek. As an independent consultant to the music industry, she has prepared winning grant applications for a number of artists. Despite her impressive approval ratio, she admits that: "writing grant applications is not an enjoyable process." To first time applicants, she offers this bit of advice.

"It's a lot of paper work. Start early and give yourself lots of time," she says. "Eat that elephant one bite at a time." Most funding applications require a business plan, a marketing plan, a

song demo, a sound financial outline, and in most cases, these applications are subject to a review by jury. Do your research. Each organization's application process is unique, and every funding program has its own caveats and quirks. While each organization's website will have a detailed outline of requirements for consideration, for your average musician, the whole process is daunting. Thankfully, we've elicited some guidance from those in the know.

"We are looking for good songs, a marketing and promotion plan that makes sense, and an overall package that shows some potential. If you've sent a rough demo and you know the vocals are pitchy, you need to acknowledge that stuff. Let us know that you are aware of the problems and that you will fix it if the submission is successful," says Heather Ostertag, President and CEO of FACTOR.

"Recognize that you are talking to people who know the business. This is not artsy-fartsy; it's not about how well you write. We need to see that the numbers make sense in today's environment. It's important that all your ducks are in a row, as each application gets about 10 minutes to win the judges' approval," explains Russ Kelly,



head of the Music Section for the Canada Council.

"We want to see that artists have thought about their careers and established a critical path," says Rob Oakie, Executive Director of Music PEI. "We don't want to see vanity CDs. The world is full of those."

As sure as an impressive marketing plan will impress a jury, there are bonehead moves that will get your application tossed straight in the bin. Follow Ostertag's advice and you could be singing all the way to the bank.

"Before hitting send, double check to see that you've attached the files. You'd be surprised how many people don't attach the songs, or forget to upload the marketing plan," Ostertag says. "And don't lie on the application form. Somehow that has a way of reflecting negatively on an applicant. I've seen it in every jury I've been involved in, and there will be at least one project this year. If you are misleading, it will be the kiss of death."

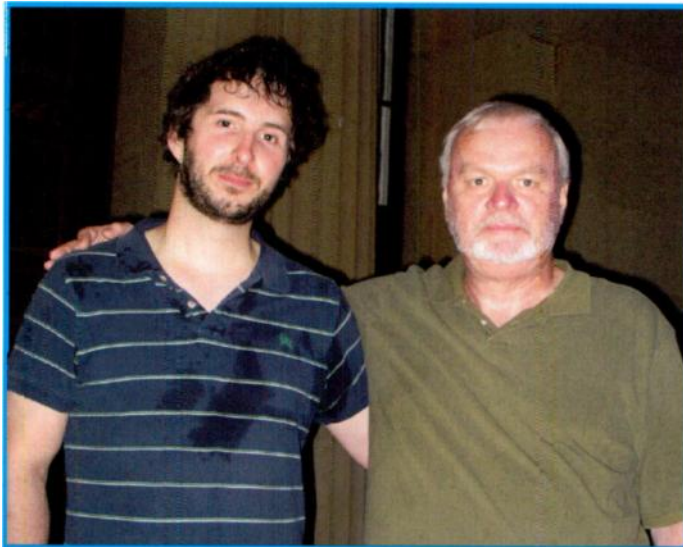
## When The Well Runs Dry, Pray For Rain

Each year, organizations like FACTOR dish out a finite reserve of funds, and each year these organizations receive more applications than could possibly be approved. Inevitably, the well runs dry. Due to increasing competition, even great applications are turned down. If you happen to receive a rejection letter from a funding organization, don't take it personally. It just means you'll have to be more creative.

Despite the widespread critical success of his self-titled album, Indio Saravanja hasn't released a follow up to his FACTOR-funded debut. It's not from lack of desire. "Life just got in the way," Saravanja says. He began recording a follow up for his former label, Caribou Records, but the album got bogged down in bureaucracy and was shelved. Then his mother fell ill and eventually passed away. After a period of mourning, he returned to his career to find the industry had moved on. Album sales had slumped and labels were less than interested in signing the singer songwriter. His several attempts to secure funding through FACTOR came up flat.

"Even though I had amazing response from the first album, I was having no luck," he says. Then Saravanja caught wind of a trend that sees cash-strapped artists asking fans to pay for an album long before it is recorded. In 2000, British neo-prog rockers Marillion launched a revolutionary Internet pre-order campaign, raising over \$150,000 to record its 12th album, *Anoraknophobia*, without the assistance of a label. Since then, many enterprising artists have followed suit.

At first, the idea didn't appeal to Saravanja. Leaving his home in Venezuela at the age of 14, he cut his teeth in the folk scenes in New York, Montreal, and Vancouver, developing a style in the same vein as free-spirited troubadours Townes Van Zandt and Bob Dylan. Saravanja never asked anyone for anything. In the end, however, his desire to make an album trumped his pride. "It was really hard to humble myself," he says. "I had to do it my own



LEFT: SANDBAR MUSIC PRESIDENT LLOYD DOYLE (RIGHT) WITH FRESH-OFF-THE-STAGE CLIENT PAT DEIGHAN.

BELOW: MUSIC PEI'S ROB OAKIE (LEFT) WITH PEI UP-AND-COMER MEAGHAN BLANCHARD.



way. I couldn't just come out and ask people for money."

His plan was simple. He budgeted \$12,500 for the album, and had saved \$5,000 of his own money. He hoped to generate the remaining \$7,500 through prepaid album sales and corporate sponsorships. Saravanja set a date to begin recording, and with fingers crossed, sent an appeal directing fans, friends, and family to a PayPal link on his website.

With no guarantees he could raise the money, he couldn't chance booking time in an expensive studio. Instead, he set up a makeshift studio in a 10-ft. by 10-ft. plywood shack on Canada's famous Caravan Farm Theatre – a performance venue and working farm in Armstrong, BC where he currently lives and works along with his wife. Tucked inside a little wooden shed in the middle of winter with rented gear and little experience as an audio engineer, Saravanja self-produced the sessions on his laptop. The situation was less than ideal. "I was running on blind faith. I almost went nuts," he says. "Believe me – it was hell."

The money slowly trickled in. By the time he had finished tracking the album, he had raised \$1,500 more than his targeted goal.

With cash in-hand, he hired musicians to add sonic subtleties to each track, and booked time in a proper studio to mix and master the album. Dubbed *The Caravan Sessions*, the album is currently available on his website and through iTunes. The generosity of his fans has reinvigorated the once disillusioned artist.

"It's just another ten songs, but it symbolizes more to me. A guy from Florida threw down \$1,500, just because he is a fan. It's humbling to know that some people think I'm worth it. I have to keep fighting now; I can't give up." Though he admits the financial uncertainty weighed heavy on his mind, Saravanja recommends this type of campaign to fellow fund-challenged musicians. "Why not; it worked for me," he says.

The preceding article offered an overview of a few of the many ways musicians can attract funds for recording projects, but there are many more organizations willing to part with their dough. Canada has plenty of competitions, music associations, and financial organizations that exist only to make your life as a musician better. Don't be shy – get out there and find yourself some money! ■



Lonny Knapp is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

# CM

# 'S

# VANCOUVER HEAD GUIDE

BY PETER GREEN

Vancouver has long been one of Canada's most fertile fields for growing top-quality talent, on both a national and international scale. The city that fashioned artists like Chilliwack, Trooper, The Payolas, Bryan Adams, Matthew Good, and many more, has continued to deliver the goods over the past 30 years. We checked out the Vancouver scene for gigging musicians, and spoke with a number of rising talents, established artists, and one of Vancouver's best success stories - 54-40 frontman Neil Osborne. We talked about venues, promotion, music suppliers, and aspects of playing live in a big city.

I'm a relative newcomer to Vancouver, and for any novice, a read of the city's weekly entertainment publication - *The Georgia Straight* - is a must. *The Straight* ([www.straight.com](http://www.straight.com)) is a tasteful serving of music, entertainment, arts, theatre, dance, fashion, dining, news, and much more. The writers are strong and diverse and the coverage appears to be fair and focused on the reader, not the point of view of the paper. That makes for a good overview of all that is happening in Vancouver and the surrounding region. The first rule of thumb for gigging musicians is to have *The Straight's* club and concert listings submission number tattooed on their hands. Another good aspect of *The Straight* (and I've heard this from a number of bands) is that it tends to be pretty fair with new and established talent. It has a good homegrown bend - venues list their performers and the paper delivers on coverage of local acts. Everyone seems to know where to look for music in the city.

As with any large metropolis, there's no shortage of places to play in Vancouver. Shaun Funk, vocalist of the band Closing Iris, shares that he finds it means that the quality of acts - overall - is exceptionally high. "I think that the music-loving audience in Vancouver has seen so much in terms of quality that it takes something truly awesome to get them excited. It makes you work harder." Funk notes that among his favourite venues are the Backstage Lounge and Media Club ("one of the best places for bands starting out to play"), while the staples remain the Railway Club and the Plaza Nightclub. "David Hawkes books for the Plaza Nightclub. He often books name bands from out of town but is equally likely to provide opportunities for touring Canadians, and local artists." Funk also concurs with solo artist Colin Rink that the Yale Hotel is among the city's best. States Rink: "If you can get in there for a show, from the pub atmosphere to the acoustics and the stage areas, I've had the most fun there. Kind of intimidating sometimes, seeing all those legends on the walls."

Funk and Rink represent acts that are building a following and rising up through the ranks of Vancouver's music community. At the top of that particular pyramid stands 54-40, who broke out in 1986 and have remained one of Canada's most beloved and followed bands. Neil Osborne reflects on what has changed in the Vancouver music scene since he and his band gigged regularly to build a name, like Closing Iris and Colin Rink are trying to do: "Vancouver has gone through cycles," he says. "A lot of bands, a lot of venues - a very active scene. It's always been like that, which is great for musicians and music lovers." Osborne notes that his particular favourite for "hottest local band" is Bison B.C., a Vancouver-based band that had Victoria Brewery create their own brand of beer, labelled with the band's latest CD cover and with the request: "Please don't throw me at the stage". Now that's creative marketing!

Osborne also comments on the various clubs and those he prefers in Vancouver. His personal favourite is the Commodore Ballroom on Granville St. Opened in 1929, the Commodore has undergone a series of changes, upgrades, restorations, and re-openings. "Our dream, as a club band, was always to play the Commodore," says Osborne, "and now we get to play our dream, every year." The smile is evident - even over the phone. Every year, 54-40 play a sold-out show (or, for 2008, two) at the Commodore. Osborne acknowledges that the Commodore has one of the best PAs and lighting rigs in western Canada. "It's run by Live Nation; they make sure the production value is good."

The city's venues present a wide range of styles, genres, and experiences, and the jazz scene is another hotbed of growth and excitement. Recording engineer and musician Andy Amanovich, owner of Oceanview Studios and a session player, noted that the Cellar Restaurant and Jazz Club is "the cornerstone of the jazz scene in Vancouver." A colleague of Garth Richardson, producer for Nine Inch Nails, Nickelback, and many others, Amanovich is excited at the growing audience for jazz and various hybrids in Vancouver. "One thing I've noticed is that there is more appetite for pop-jazz crossover artists." One of those is Chelsea Crawford, a 26-year-old singer/songwriter who came from Winnipeg but has spent the past two years developing her live show and recording a CD with Amanovich and others. Self-described as a blend of jazz, soul, and fusion, Crawford

has performed largely in areas outside of the city but has recently become a fixture at local jazz and pop clubs. "The Sunshine Coast is just northwest of Vancouver and is a really vibrant musical community," she shares. "Pack Ratt Louies in Gibsons is a really supportive venue for musicians. I also love Spence On The Coast and the Grasshopper Pub in Pender Harbour." Crawford is also excited about playing Coco Nymphs, in Vancouver, with its baby grand - "that's awesome for me," she says.

The venues are plentiful, but what about drawing a crowd to fill them? The artists we spoke with all shared their particular "niche" for promoting gigs. Across the board, MySpace and Facebook, among other online networking tools, are invaluable. Funk explains it as the best way "to meet people in your area and to share your music with them. It helps build a relationship that leads to more bodies at the live show." The artists also agreed that postering was extremely important, but that word-of-mouth was vital. "You have to do everything," adds Funk. "You get your friends, you get your friends' friends... I try to get tickets into their hands as soon as possible by selling them beforehand." The consensus is that a lot of hustle is required to build the name recognition and the following needed to move forward. Funk also adds that he enjoys playing places with a built-in crowd - venues that draw a crowd each night.

The Vancouver crowds are plentiful, but they're also discerning; all of our artists agree with this. Osborne of 54-40 shares that: "For us, they're awesome. They sing the songs, and they know a lot." He further shares that: "When I'm an audience member, and when I see bands, that ties into the 'Vancouver cool.' The audience may appear to be a little aloof, but they're reading the vibe, feeling



THE STAGE AT THE COMMODORE BALLROOM.



PHOTO BY ALEC WATSON

PHOTO BY ALEC WATSON

# CM's VANCOUVER ROAD GUIDE

it. Vancouver has always been a vibe city. They come back, they support and enjoy the music, and they just don't cheer madly." Closing Iris' Funk adds that "the level of talent in this city is really high. I meet a lot of people who have influenced my career. The audiences know talent and quality when they see it."

For the local or visiting musician, there's always the need for last-minute gear. Strings, PA gear - if you can name it, you will (at some point) need it. It seems that in Vancouver, the venerable Long & McQuade stands tall among the music dealers. It's the overall first-choice for Osborne, and he adds: "You can just ask people; it's a network of musicians. If we don't have it and need to get it, that's what we do." Rink shares the sentiment: "The people there know what they're talking about, so you're always on the same page."

Osborne and 54-40 recently wrapped-up a cross-Canada tour, after releasing their latest album *Northern Soul* last year - not bad for a band that's been on the top rung for over 20 years; however, in talking with Osborne, I learned that the club scene in Vancouver wasn't just a proving ground; it remains an important component of their lives. "When you are starting out, you play wherever you can. We played everywhere that would have us. I think most serious bands know that to be the truth." Osborne also encourages bands to "network with other bands. Their fans see you, your fans see them; it's win-win." Rink followed Osborne's advice and played a venue called The Penthouse on Seymour St. "It was awesome," he recalls. "I thought it would be a bit shady playing there, but it was red carpet treatment the whole way. People were friendly and nice; stage and sound were all together. You wouldn't think that from a typical, dingy strip club." All of the artists we spoke with agreed that playing as often as possible, in every possible venue, is the only way to build a reputation.

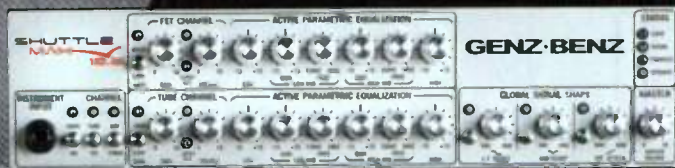
Across the board, our performers acknowledged that it's pretty common to have competent sound techs and good PA and lighting systems within the city. The demands of competition dictate that a club with poor sound or poor tech staff will not survive long in an industry where reputation is spread by word of mouth, and a bad experience will go a long way. The band isn't the only one demanding good sound and production value; the audiences have come to expect it. Brian Holt of Sound and Silence gave mention to The Bourbon, in Vancouver's Gastown, noting that the sound engineer, Lauren, is "great." Funk told us most houses have good PA systems: "I've yet to encounter a bad one," he says. "Bad moments, maybe, but overall, good people and good gear make for good experiences and the venues know that."

A trait shared by musicians - from the established star to the first-timer - is that after the gig, they're hungry. We polled our performers as to what they did after a gig in terms of their preferred dining establishment. Osborne and his 54-40 band mates like to "keep it simple - grease wheels. Pizza. You order two, one pepperoni, the other one cheese. Start putting weird stuff on your pizza and you run into trouble." Osborne laughs as he says this, but it's a simple premise. After a gig, they find the nearest local pizzeria and keep it simple. Rink notes that: "after a gig, the best place has got to be Vera's Burger Shack (11 locations in Vancouver)," but also comments that "actually, the



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# CM's VANCOUVER ROAD GUIDE

best meal I had after a show was at Johnny's Pizza Factory on Granville St." I have to admit, there's just something about pizza and musicians. Funk gives his vote to Roxy Burger on Granville in the entertainment district. "It's the only place you eat, no matter where you play."

The realities of performing in any big city are the same as a lot of other vocations. How safe do you feel in Vancouver? We asked our performers about how safe they felt their gear was in Vancouver. The answer was typical - it's a big city. Be smart.

Osborne believes that no matter where you are, your gear is never totally safe. He noted that in Vancouver and other cities in the area, gear can be stolen from trucks right outside of the gig. "All



PANELISTS SHARE IDEAS DURING A NEW MUSIC WEST SESSION.

PHOTO BY ALEC WATSON



SPIRIT OF THE WEST ROCKS THE COMMODORE.

of our gear was cleaned out one time in Toronto," he recalls. "Vancouver is, obviously, a big city. Any gear left in a vehicle, in an unattended truck, even at a gig is fair game." One musician says: "You get caught up in the moment, talking to everyone after a gig, and you can totally miss the guy walking out of the gig with your guitar. It's a music club; people are always walking by with guitars, and nobody knows if that person is in your band or not." Funk recalls a gig at the Plaza Club where they posted a bouncer to oversee the equipment. "It's about the only way you can feel safe about leaving your stuff anywhere," he shares. Vancouver is a relatively safe city, as big cities go, but gear left unattended is just too tempting for someone who knows how quickly an instrument can be sold.

Vancouver has its share of venues that play the "tried and true." Casinos are presenting classic artists from the past. One only has to look at the list of coming attractions in *The Georgia Strait* to see a list that includes names like Blondie, Eric Burdon, Burton Cummings, and many, many more. The club and concert scenes are alive and well, and a strong selection of recording studios can meet the demands of the most seasoned pro (AC/DC completed their latest album in Vancouver, among many others) and the rawest of rookie bands. Vancouver remains a vibrant and stimulating place for musicians and artists of all genres: classical, jazz, folk, Celtic, and other forms of music co-exist and mingle with rock, pop, punk, R&B, and hip-hop. Bands listen to and learn from each other.

The large number of national and international success stories rising from Vancouver is no coincidence. The local club scene is demanding, the audiences are discerning, and as Osborne says, the audience is "reading the vibe, feeling it." Our other performers agreed that Vancouver is truly a "vibe city." Osborne laughs as he shares that the "Vancouver cool probably has something to do with the weather." Having played in Toronto, Seattle, and so many other cities, he still identifies Vancouver as unique and exciting. It is evident that no matter how large or prestigious a venue 54-40 will play in another city, playing the Commodore is still, for them, seen as their dream gig. ■

*Peter Green is a musician and writer, based in Niagara Falls. You can reach him at [songseeds@hotmail.com](mailto:songseeds@hotmail.com).*



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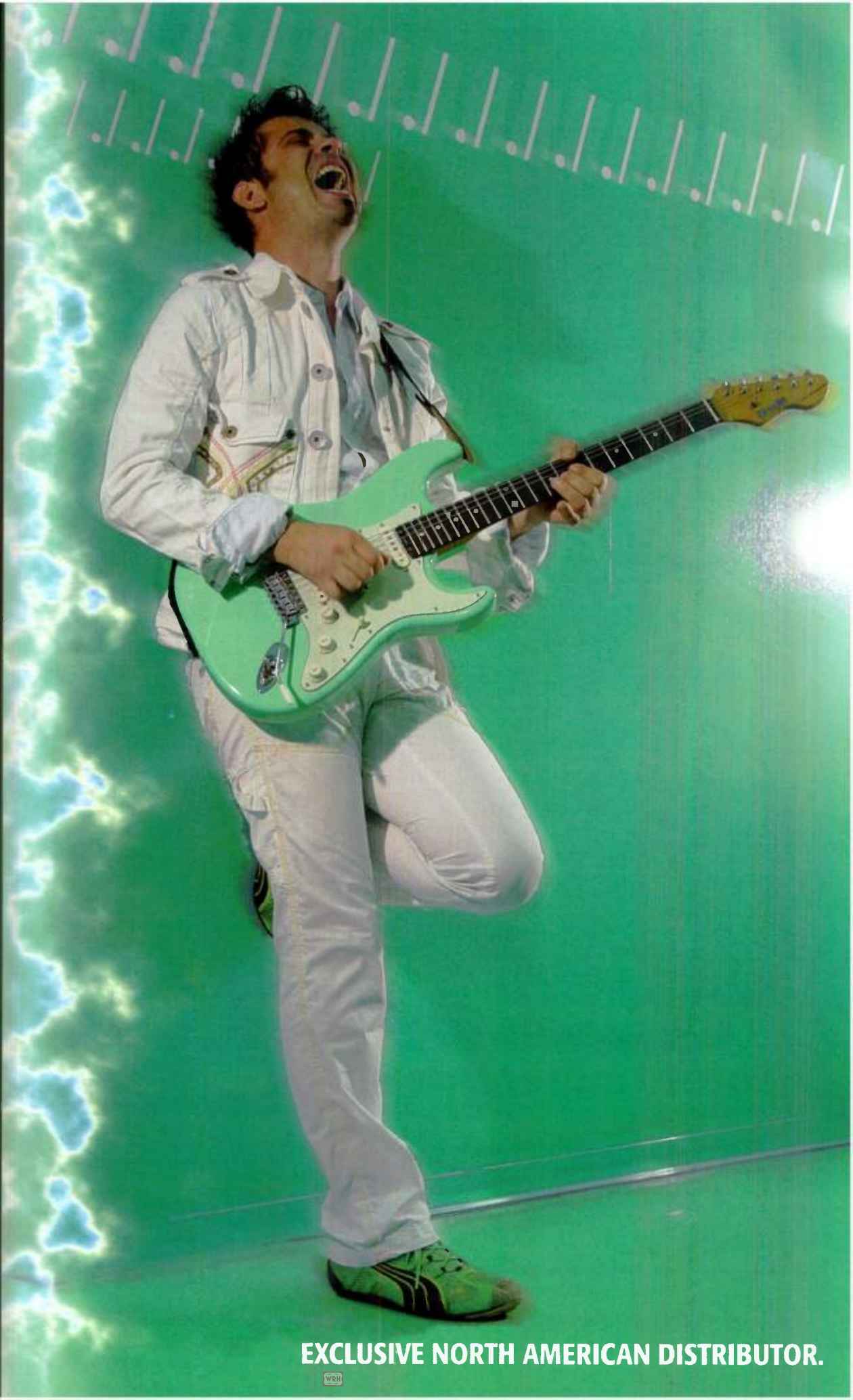
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A photograph of a home recording studio. In the foreground, a black grand piano is partially visible. To its left, a red electric guitar stands on a stand. In the background, there is a wooden desk with a chair, a white armchair, and a large wooden cabinet. The room is lit with warm, orange light. The title 'HOME RECORDING 2009' is overlaid on the bottom half of the image in a large, stylized font. 'HOME RECORDING' is in white with a black outline, and '2009' is in a solid orange color.

# HOME RECORDING 2009

BY KEVIN YOUNG

We've all heard the phrase "sounds like a demo." Many of us have said it, sometimes in response to our own efforts, and sometimes – more often, perhaps – in response to hearing someone else's work. It could be a matter of sound quality. It could be that the songs don't resonate with the listener making that judgment; that the arrangements, melodies, or lyrics are awkward or overly-complex; or to put it bluntly, overall, your recording sounds amateurish.

You can find fault in just about anything you listen to. Conversely, you can elevate a freshly-recorded track to a previously untapped level of brilliance in your own mind, only to find, the very next day, you can no longer stomach it. It's as much a trap to get caught up in the moment and commit yourself to a mediocre performance as it is to overwork things to the point where any magic that might have been there has been beaten to death and buried.

Rather than talk gear, this year's home recording installment will focus on more intangible elements of the recording process, drawing on the perspective and experience of Terry Brown, Jimmy Shaw of Metric, and Our Lady Peace's Raine Maida. The elements these three discussed with *CM* apply to any recording situation and any budget, whether you're working in a high-end pro facility, a tricked-out home project studio, or entirely within the box on your laptop – namely, getting great songs and inspired performances on tape without losing anything in the process, and better yet, adding something magical in the process that makes them even more memorable.

# HOME RECORDING 2009

## Some Tips From Terry

If you're intent on making a record, it's kind of assumed that you believe in yourself without reservation. No one sets out to make a lousy record. But it's not conviction alone that makes for great recordings: it's experience, performance chops, and the ability to differentiate between great songs and performances and merely good ones. Knowing the difference, particularly when you're producing your own music, is far more important than the

play on an acoustic guitar and still get a good vibe from your audience." But even the best song can be mangled in the studio. After writing that great song, it has to be approached intelligently from a production standpoint. "You've got to know when to stop," he cautions. "It's a question of having the taste and expertise to put it together."

Chances are, if you're writing, performing, recording, and producing your own material, there's no one as close to it as you are. That can be a

becoming so committed that you ignore opportunities to improve on it during the process. "You need to be able to make decisions based on the artistic content." For example, "Something that has a great feel and vibe, with a bit of noise on it, that you throw away to get rid of the noise. Bad move. There's always been noise on records, until we went digital. In fact, some producers are putting noise into tracks in order to create more of a vibe, because we've lost some of it, with this silent recording we've come up with."



Terry Brown's Toronto-based studio.

recording platform you're using.

That's something that came up repeatedly at this past year's CMW Producer's Panel and, more specifically in many of the comments made by panel member Terry Brown. Though perhaps best-known for his production work with Rush – on every record from *Fly By Night* to *Signals* – the Watford, UK-born producer/engineer's earlier days in the business found him working with the likes of The Who, The Moody Blues, The Troggs, Donovan, and Procol Harum, to name just a few.

An early proponent of digital recording, Brown now runs a small studio out of his Toronto-area home, but he's unequivocal about the one key ingredient to making a great record and forging a rock-solid emotional connection with your audience. The first, most paramount ingredient, he says, is "a great song that you can sit down and

blessing or curse. "You have to be wary of whether or not you have the chops to do it. Some people have great songs, but don't have a clue how to put them together intelligently." There are so many different ways of going about the process that choosing how to proceed, in the absence of any hard-won experience, can be daunting; however, "With a bit in the way of engineering chops and providing that you've got an idea of what you want, what instrumentation you're hearing, the song structure – and you're right in all those departments – there's a good chance you'll make a good-sounding record."

That requires perspective, and the ability to make decisions at every step of the process to ensure you're heading in the right direction. Pre-pro is key to gaining that perspective – putting in the work, prior to recording, to forge a solid vision for your music without



Producer Terry Brown

**"Record as much as possible. Record ten songs, and then do another ten, and then another ten. It's tough to go into a project when it's do-or-die."**

**– producer/engineer  
Terry Brown.**

But you can't hedge your bets by keeping everything. That, too, can easily muddy your process and dilute the impact of the finished product, never mind the fact it will infuriate anyone who's trying to mix your raw tracks. You have to balance various performances and the qualities they possess against one another, be able to recognize a great performance when you hear one, and always be ready to capture one, from the moment a person steps up to the mic or sits down with their instrument to play. "Don't do take after take, trying to find your vocal sound, and miss the very first take, which might have been the winning performance."

Of course, what constitutes a great

performance is subjective. Being able to recognize one requires maintaining confidence in your work, but without blindly trusting your unflinching incandescent brilliance every step of the way to the exclusion of all else. In other words, being able to be critical of your own work without being overly so. If you don't possess the ability to self-produce, to make those decisions, to maintain that balance, there's an inherent benefit to having some outside ears come in as an impartial advocate for the song.

That, too, is a critical decision. One of the strengths necessary to making the best possible record you can is knowing when, and where, to look for outside help to preserve the intangibles that made the track so compelling originally. Some artists would benefit from a kind of ground-up guidance, while



Raine Maida in his LA-based home studio.

others would find that both the process and the music suffer from that kind of relationship. "It depends on the artist," says Brown. "Not all producers are created equal. Some come in and put their stamp on it, so it has to sound like them. Some spend a lot of time trying to make the band sound completely original, keeping the performances that are endemic in the artist." You have to decide which approach will most benefit you.

"You need to listen, and be very objective about whether the songs that you're writing are as good, or better, than some of the stuff that's sitting on the charts," Brown says. That's not to say that making "hits" is the only consideration, or for some artists, a consideration at all. "We're in the entertainment business — and

it's supposed to be entertaining. That doesn't mean it has to fit into very tight guidelines." You might hang a project on tight little pop tunes, or aggressive performances, or something else entirely. There are no rules.

That being said, Brown has some recommendations for anyone going into the process of making records, regardless of genre, and the "where and how" of your approach. "You really have to believe in what you're doing. If you lose objectivity, take a break from it, step back, and finish it and put it out there, unless you have somebody in your camp who's very candid, objective, and can help you in a constructive way. Again, you have to be able to recognize that in order to use that information." Also: "Record as much as possible. Record ten songs, and then do another ten, and then another ten. It's tough to go into a project when it's do-or-die. I think you've got to allow some leeway."

"Half your day is spent trying to do all the other things to promote your career, rather than focusing on writing and being a better singer and better player. That's the problem with the business right now."

— Raine Maida of Our Lady Peace.

He also cautions against over-rehearsing and over-thinking: "Don't overdo things for so long that you lose the essence of what's there." Over-thinking, particularly at the beginning of a project, can strip it of momentum, and crush the kind of spontaneity that's often the hallmark of enduring songs and records. "When we were making records like The Troggs' 'Wild Thing,' the song was worked up, the band was ready, they came in, and within two hours we had that song finished. It was on the radio two days later and it was a hit a week after that." Another example: "Stevie Winwood's 'I'm A Man'; that was maybe one or two takes. That was not agonized over; it was, 'let's go into the studio and cut this song.'"

That said, absolute certainty isn't always easy to come by. We all know people who've been working on their record for years. At some point, you have to put aside any insecurity you

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# HOME RECORDING 2009

have and be done, but when that insecurity crops up, and you're seriously questioning whether or not you are actually done, or if your recording could be better, you have to determine whether you're suffering from unnecessary jitters, or whether you really need to do more work. "You should base your willingness to move forward on the ability to have an intelligent conversation with whoever has that insecurity - artist, producer, label - about whether or not there's more there that is as yet untapped, what that is, and how to tap into it."

That's a hard conversation to have with yourself. Very few artists spend their entire career relying exclusively

tive and ears you trust to listen to your work - someone for you to learn from, emulate, or disagree with, whether it's a member of your band or an outside producer. "It's a much bigger thing when you put five great minds together than when you say, 'We just want the lead singer. I've got much better musicians on my team - forget the band.' Then, all of a sudden the songs don't have that personality, the funny little timing things and tuning things."

## The Metric System

Music is by its nature a dialogue and collaboration is often a necessary component of creating great recordings. An open dialogue is key

That space, he says, was based around a 17" Mac G4 laptop, Metric Halo Converters, Logic Audio, a number of analog pres and compressors, and a small mic pack. He took a similar approach this time, but describes the new space, called Giant Studios, as a bigger and more in-depth space, one he bought and built with ex-Death From Above (1979) member Sebastien Grainger.

"There are two separate apartments and a building in the back - an old auto shop that we turned into a recording studio." The new studio incorporates a full Pro Tools HD rig, a 56-channel Trident from 1982, 10 Neve strips, and a much larger selection of mics, outboard gear, and guitar amps than the previous space. While more advanced than your average first timer's home studio, the same principles apply. Shaw, like Brown, maintains the success of a record is grounded in songwriting and performance. "If you think of it, the only thing between you and the listener is a microphone, a preamp, and a piece of tape. It really does rely entirely on you to create magic." Being able to pull that magic out of yourself and others is a talent in itself.

While Shaw is generally confident in his ability to maintain objectivity, he's also not shy about admitting when he's lost it. "Every once in a while I'll get to a point with a song where I'm feeling super good about it and psyched to play Emily (Haines, Metric vocalist) something and I'll press play and she'll say, 'I can't stand that.'"

That's when he steps away, partly in an effort to see Haines' point, but also to fulfill his role as producer and satisfy himself and Haines as artists. "I literally leave the building, then come back and try and hear it the way someone else has." It's about context, he says. "The first thing I do is to try and understand where the person is coming from, and what the context is under which they're listening."

All the technology in the world won't help you if you don't develop the skills to manage all the myriad details that have to fall into place to make a record. "It can sometimes do the opposite - distract the hell out of you and lure you into a confusion of possibilities," says Shaw.

He says producing records is equal parts psychology and music: "Knowing who the artist is, what their quirks are, what kind of context works for them, and what doesn't, plays a massive role in how they make music." Having a high level of self-knowledge plays a huge role in production. There are times, he says, when he'll work until the wee hours of the morning, and think he's



Jimmy Shaw in Giant Studios.

on their own judgment, particularly in the very beginning. As much as you want to, you may not be the ideal person to make your own record. Doing this lot of it yourself isn't easy. "For you to be able to cover all those bases, and come up with a product that's got legs and people love, is rare," Brown says.

Becoming more adept at all aspects of recording sometimes means recognizing when you're in over your head. Brown learned his craft by working with some great players and engineers - watching, learning, and honing his craft. Just as you would as a songwriter and player, you practice. And that's another value in collaboration and getting some outside perspec-

to Metric's recording process, Jimmy Shaw explains. When I caught up with him earlier this summer, on a six-day break between tours, he's laying low in Paris, where the band will start their first European circuit in support of their latest release, *Fantasies*. "In my band, people like to talk, to have reasons why they like or don't like something. I find it pretty unnecessary to find out why using words. If something's not fitting right for you, the best way to continue the conversation is pick up an instrument and try and fix it, or get on the console and start muting stuff, but usually, the conversation happens musically."

For Metric's last effort, *Live It Out*, Shaw built a studio for the band to live and work in while recording in Toronto.



Metric's Jimmy Shaw.

"If you didn't make a decision, you'd work on one song for the next 25 years." - Metric's Jimmy Shaw.

struck gold, only to come back and find himself unhappy with a track. "Most of the process of trying to figure out what happened, is trying to figure out where your headspace was at when you thought it was gold, and where it was at when you thought it was a piece of trash - what the difference is, and where the happy medium is."



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# HOME RECORDING 2009

Even with the depth of experience he's gained from Metric's past recording to draw on, Shaw sees value in allowing others outside the band to participate in that process. For *Fantasies*, Metric added another voice to the conversation in the person of co-producer Gavin Brown.

Bands tend to develop their own language, Shaw explains – a lexicon of inside jokes and abbreviations based on shared experiences and the sheer weight of time living in each other's pockets that outsiders can't really understand. "The same thing happens in music. We're playing a song and lyrically, or in terms of the arrangement, we know what we're getting at." The "but" is implied...

While Metric are eminently capable of getting their message across on their own, Gavin Brown helped



## Burning The House Down

For the recording of their latest record *Burn*, Our Lady Peace also opted for a home-based approach, recording in singer Raine Maida's Los Angeles home studio. That approach, says Maida, resulted in one of the most seamless recording experiences the band has had to date, one that found them experiencing a new creative freedom. "We're very fortunate," he says. Fortunate, he adds, not only because of the knowledge they've gleaned over the course of their career, from each other and the producers they've worked with, but from the wealth of studio environments they've had at their disposal over the years.

That has allowed them the luxury to develop a certain perspective and an ability to focus that he believes today's smaller recording budgets increasing expectations on artists to engage their fans, aren't as conducive to. "Half your day is spent trying to do all the other things to promote your career, rather than focusing on writing and being a better singer and better player. That's the problem with the business right now."

**CM:** In your bio, (drummer) Jeremy Taggart says that the songs picked themselves. Can you explain what he meant?

**RM:** At the end of the day it's about trusting yourself, and it's about an emotion. When we got into this business, we got into a room with a bunch of guys, started jamming, and something happened. You felt something that made the hair on the back of your neck stand up. It was as simple as that for us – getting back to that. We know how to write songs, but not every one is going to be a great one, and if you're able to extract that kind of emotion from one, then it's probably one to keep a look out for. So we put those in one pile and after we had ten of those, we made the record.



Raine Maida

**CM:** You've described the process as a sonic and philosophical rebirth. How so?

**RM:** When we were making our early demos, before we were signed, things were very simple. Once you learn more about the studio and work with guys like Brendan O'Brien and Bob Rock, the parameters are expanded – not that that's a bad thing. We always loved experimenting, but this is kind of coming full circle. We cut this record pretty much live off the floor and there's an energy when you're playing in the room together, an inherent synergy in the music, that it's tough to get when you're playing separately.

**CM:** Can you describe your home set-up?

**RM:** I have an old 50 Series Neve console. All my gear is kind of vintage. Basically, the live room is always wired to record. For OLP, I kept everything miked all the time, so if we had an idea in the morning, we could record it that afternoon. It was really just about capturing the energy of the moment. I think that was the best thing about this record: the song is written, everybody learns it, goes in the room, we press record, four minutes later, the song's done. Whether we loved it or not was a different story, but empowering ourselves to do that was an amazing thing.

**CM:** On which platform are you recording?

**RM:** Pro Tools.

**CM:** What benefits are there to working from home, as opposed to in a larger studio?

**RM:** We have the best of both worlds – all the gear, but no one saying: "You only have two weeks here because of cost." We keep going until we're done. That takes a whole bunch of pressure off an artist. If it wasn't happening one day, we got out of here. There's nothing like it. If you want creative freedom, that's the way you have to do it.

**CM:** Having said that, you can benefit greatly from outside ears. For someone just starting out, making their own record, how would you describe the benefits of those outside ears?

**RM:** I'm one of the biggest proponents of collaboration. It's the key to everything, in science, in the arts. For us, we've been doing it from day one. We felt like this is a challenge we wanted to undertake, but if you're a new artist, you need an objective opinion you can trust – not that you always have to take it as The Bible every time, but it's pretty crucial to a new artist and it might be crucial to us again for the next record.

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# HOME RECORDING 2009

refine that message, making it that much clearer for casual listeners. "He made us take a second look at our first instinct," Shaw says, by asking: "Is that what you want to say? Or do you want to take a second and figure out how it might be a little more understandable to someone who has 30 seconds of their day to listen? And, if they're going to take 30 seconds of their day to listen, don't you want them to understand it in that 30 seconds so they give it another three-and-a-half minutes?"

Even if you've written the most compelling song in the world, if you can't express it, if you can't translate it, no one will ever know how great it is. "He really fulfilled the role of objectivity and made sure that our statement was cohesive enough in the universal language of music for people to understand."

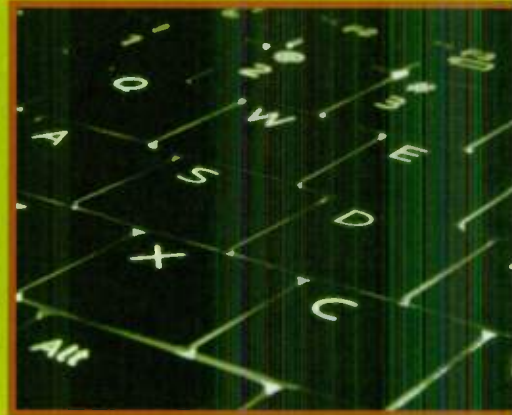
There's a certain focus and single-minded drive that is necessary to not only making a really great record, but any record, especially when there are so many points at which the process

can go awry. Again, it doesn't matter if you're working in your kitchen or a full-blown commercial studio. Ultimately, you want to achieve an accurate and elegant translation, from artist to tape to audience, without losing any of the power in between.

To do that, you need to make all the decisions Shaw and Brown have discussed, over and over again throughout the process. Analyze them endlessly. Trust your instincts. Roll bones - whatever works for you.

Manage those details any way you want. Simply put that's the key role you as a DIY producer must fulfill. "It is the most important thing in making music, or art of any kind," says Shaw. "If you didn't make a decision, you'd work on one song for the next 25 years."

One of the key ingredients to making those decisions is confidence, particularly when it comes to your own performances - "especially in rock and roll," says Shaw. "So many of the great singers don't sing properly, but they sing with conviction. When someone



steps to a microphone with 100 per cent conviction, unless they're a complete amateur, if they totally, totally believe in what they're doing, they can't be wrong."



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



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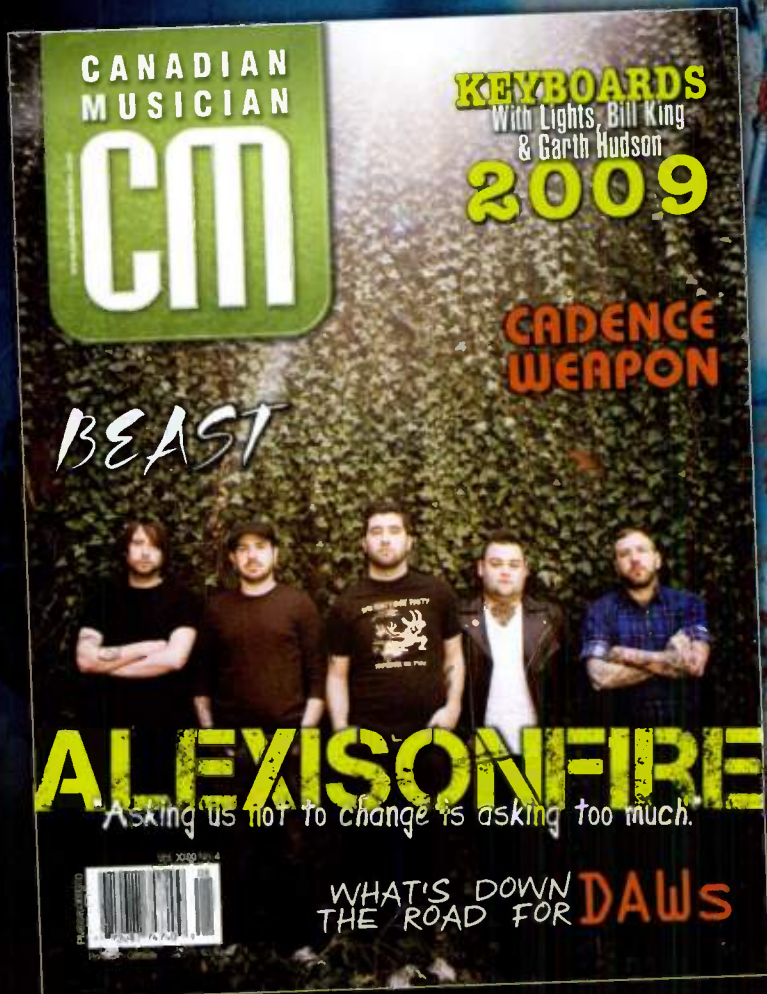


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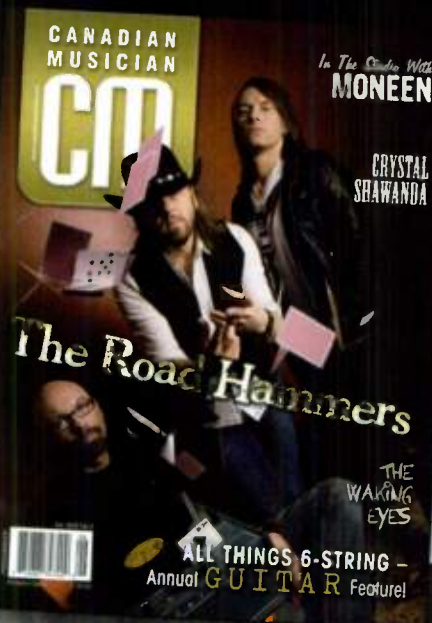
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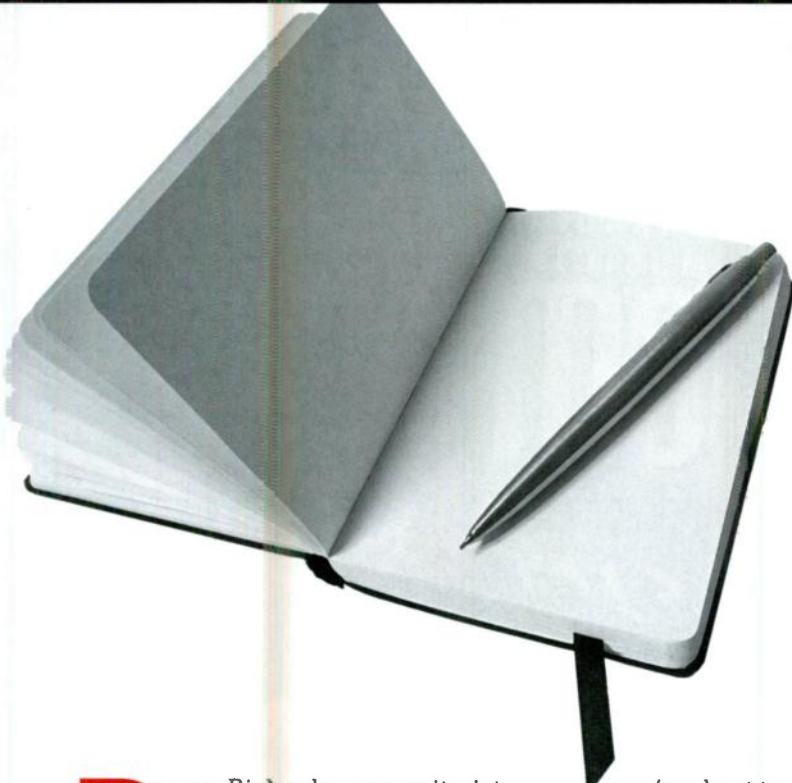
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by Ian Blackwood



# Let's Start A PUNK SONG!

**D**ean Richards, our guitarist, and I do most of the writing in the band. We have a very similar style of writing, where we start with lyrics. It's all about finding that hooky chorus – something that's memorable. When we think we've got it, we'll build the rest of the song's skeleton on that. A lot of the time, we'll end up changing that initial chorus down the road to find a better one – one that better suits the song that's come together.

I think melody takes the biggest role with writing a catchy, three-chord pop-punk song. A lot of Artist Life songs are anthemic – they've got a repetitive vibe to it where you can imagine you and 10 or 15 of your buddies at a pub singing along. We're big into doing a lot of gang vocals and getting as many voices as we can in a song to thicken up the track. It brings a real collective, "the gang's all here" kind of **vibe**. That's always a good way to go with a punk song.

That catchy chorus is certainly a step in the right direction, but if you take a song like Blink 182's "Dammit," everyone remembers the opening guitar riff to that song. There's a handful of different ways of approaching it, but finding something that'll instantly stick with your listener or audience is important.

As for song structure, if you've found that killer riff, you can also bring that riff back to become your first chorus outro or final outro. That simple guitar riff is now plotting the timeless piece of music

you're about to write.

Moving on from there, Dean and I always joke about writing "power bridges." This can constitute breaking the bridge into half time, or coming up with a repetitive gang vocal or lead with a harmony. For example, in "You're Not Fooling Anyone" (from 2008's *Let's Start A Riot!*), we go simply from:

*"The offer's there if you don't know  
And she doesn't care, but  
You know I know. You know I know."*

Which basically goes from a lyrical catch to that repeated "You know I know" line. We call it a power bridge because, although it only lasts for about 30 seconds, it can easily become one of the most memorable parts of a song. You can then kick it into a third verse that's brought down. We'll often do this and bring the vocals an octave down and keep them soft and soothing, bringing more dynamics into the track and again highlighting that chorus. There are always different ingredients that can work in a good pop-punk song.

Lyrical, one of our new songs, called "Steel City," tells a story that touches home, so singing it and delivering it passionately isn't difficult for me. That's another huge point – it's all about the performance of the vocalist. Any pop-punk band that wants to be great needs a fantastic singer. That's not to say that I'm a great singer, but that delivery needs

to be inviting and full of passion and attitude. Look at Joe Strummer – not the greatest singer and he could barely play guitar, but his confidence and attitude pretty much changed music.

Finally, vocal diversity in the final product is a big help. A lot of the stuff we write – the new stuff especially – highlights vocal diversity. If there's more than one voice in the band, then at certain points it's good to showcase that. If you've got a voice that can come in with that high harmony, why not take advantage of that resource?

Finally, when it comes to writing those harmonies, there's a fine line between rad harmonies and ones that are way overdone. We've always tried to harmonize as many choruses as possible so long as it doesn't become redundant, but you need to ask yourself if it creates a dynamic in the song. It's also important to be able to deliver those harmonies live.

Especially with all of the studio tricks that have taken over the market, there's something to be said for recreating the idiosyncrasies on record in a live setting. Definitely be weary if you're over-saturating the harmonies on record, especially considering what you can do live. Sure, you want to make the best sounding record you can, but I believe – at least with punk – that representing your live show and what you're able to bring onstage is really important to keeping that track full of attitude and ready for the masses.



by Ryan Hoyle

Ryan Hoyle is the drummer for Paul Rodgers and Collective Soul, and also owns and operates Cave Studio in L.A., where he records custom drum tracks for remote clients. [www.livedrumtracks.com](http://www.livedrumtracks.com).

## The New Paradigm In Music Production: Collaborating From A Distance

Over the last 10 years or so, I have had the privilege of playing drums on hundreds of tracks for clients around the globe, and now that this way of collaborating is not just a possibility, but a necessary privilege for most, I would like to share a few of the things I have learned about the art of making music from a distance. Whether it be down the street or literally across the world, there are a few things to consider when making music and doing business from afar. While I reference tracking drums specifically, the basic process works for any instrumental part you're enlisted to track.

### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The single most important aspect to long-distance collaborating is communication. When I get a new lead on a potential client, I immediately respond with an e-mail asking for the best time to schedule a phone call. Music is a personal thing and I feel that it is very important to reach out and establish a first impression based on personal interaction.

### TRACKING DAY

When the day arrives that I begin tracking, I have already made sure ahead of time that the client will be near a computer and accessible by phone for most of that day. After downloading their files, creating a session, and making a chart, I will call the client by phone (or Skype) to discuss the game plan for that song.

I try to keep it simple by asking broad questions like, "If you could hire any drummer for this song, who would it be?" Questions like this tend to be easy for songwriters and will give me just the kind of information I need to discern what they are looking for. As soon as I finish that introductory call, I will begin to create click/percussion beds to play over (based on the feels we discussed),

a set-up of which drums and cymbals I will play, and I will immediately take the heart of the song (second chorus, bridge, solo, breakdown) and roughly track about 16-20 bars or so.

As soon as I bounce this first draft down, I will text the client, and as soon as they are able to listen to it, we will speak on the phone once again. This time, I will first and foremost focus on



the drum sounds themselves. I want to know that they are happy with the sound of my kit in the context of their track before I invest any time in capturing a solid performance. As soon as we sign off on sounds, I move to more specific questions, like intros ("Where do I come in?"), outros ("Is it a short ending?"), bass drum patterns, hi hat/ride cymbal placements, fill lengths, dynamics, and so on. As soon as I have these topics covered and hopefully have garnered a little bit of excitement from the client, I then arm myself for battle and go in for final takes.

### NAILING IT

Now I'll begin the process of rehearsing the song enough to create only keeper takes in my playlists (or "virtual tracks"). This way, when I am compiling a drum rack (if necessary), I am only working with the best of how I performed that day instead of trying to wade through 20 takes of mediocre performances. Rehearsal is the key.

Now that I have rehearsed the song enough to be able to get through it without crashing, I will try to anticipate which areas of the song may be up for debate. Then, I will deliberately play these sections very differently in each take to ensure that once I have exhausted myself (and my drumheads), I will have enough options to prevent having to go in and redo the entire track. This way, when the client says, "I love the track, BUT the fill going into the second chorus bothers me," I can say "no problem" and comp in another fill.

### RANDOM TIPS

When working with international clients, I have found Skype to be the most affordable way to communicate. For payment, I recommend asking if the client's bank offers free online bill payments. This way, you are getting a bank cheque, which is more reliable than money orders, personal cheques, and PayPal; furthermore, there are no fees (PayPal charges a percentage).

When transferring files, I would highly recommend using YouSendIt.com. It's the fastest and most reliable way that I have found to deliver large session files. When requesting what kind of files to work with, I have found that MP3s are unreliable and contain latency and undesirable artifacts that can affect the timing of the performance. When tracking, I have found that it is best to only process with plug-ins instead of printing these effects to tape, so to speak. Most mixers will want the raw files.



by Dave Gardner

# ROCK 'N ROLL *OR* ROCKET SCIENCE?

Some believe music is one and not the other; some believe it's a combination of both. So which is it? From a band's point of view, it's all about the music, while a sound engineer thinks it's all about the science. They're both right. Together in harmony, these can create an amazing experience for a live show, but with a

wrong turn, they can wreak havoc, making for a nightmare gig.

In the fast-paced world of live sound where you only get one take to get it right, there are so many little things that can make or break a performance. Maybe a singer can't hear her own voice in the monitors or maybe a front of house engineer struggles with his mix based on room acoustics or size. Here are a few suggestions to try to get that balance for an unforgettable night:

## 1. Keep your stage volume under control.

Most of us have seen *Spinal Tap* (if not, drop this article and go rent it), and not a day goes by where a sound engineer doesn't deal with a musician who wants his amp to go to 11. This point of the day is usually the worst part for an engineer because any instrument that requires amplification such as a guitar or bass has an immediate impact in reference to stage monitors and a FOH mix. Sound coming directly from a speaker cabinet and sound coming from a PA are travelling at two different times, which causes phase cancellation and a disruption in time alignment from the competition between the two sources. Less stage volume should always be a priority not only for the FOH engineer, but also for the monitor engineer. The louder the amps are onstage, the harder it becomes to deliver a clear sound for stage monitors, causing artists to complain about not hearing vocals or the instruments they need in order to deliver a great performance. Keep in mind: less is more.

## 2. Watch out for over-mixing.

This happens to so many engineers on a day-to-day basis. You get a mix sounding really good and balanced and then it all goes to hell, most likely because you can't stand back and listen to the show; you believe you need to have hands on faders at all times. This doesn't need to happen. If the PA system is well EQ'd and your mix is balanced, don't hesitate to stand up straight and just

listen for a bit before you go resting your hands on faders you'll eventually move. Also, if you are mixing a band for a show and you don't know the music, do not interject your view of how it should sound. So many local house engineers have a tendency to put reverb or delay on certain things at all times. This then takes what could have been a great performance and turns it into a washy-sounding mix that doesn't impress. Effects such as tap delays are meant to be used in opportune moments – not through every song of the set continuously.

## 3. Good sound in = good sound out.

Sound engineers are not God. If the sources with which they are working aren't good, they have no chance to build a good, balanced mix. So many people want to come and tell sound guys to turn this up or that down or fix this, but the reality is that sound starts with the source onstage. If a guitar is too overdriven, or has too much treble or not enough bass at the source, it is hard for the sound engineer to fix these issues. Sometimes having less overdrive from the source is better. Coming through a PA at 110dB, overdrive causes the guitar to lose its clarity and gets lost within the mix. My suggestion is to listen to a lot of records you take influences from and compare your sound. It doesn't have to be the same but if the two are miles apart in tonality maybe it's time to reexamine the settings on your guitar or bass amp so you can elevate beyond the person shredding in the local music shop.

Whether you're an artist playing onstage or the sound engineer at the show, it's everyone's equal responsibility to deliver the best they can in cooperation with the other. Remember, without a sound engineer, a band has no way to be heard in the smallest clubs or largest arenas, and if there's no band onstage, a sound engineer has no work, so keep it fun. Things could be a lot worse...

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by Cristina Fernandes  
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# Ask A Music *Publicist*



**Q: Do I need a publicist?**

We'd like to think that everyone needs a publicist, but this isn't always the case. If you're just starting out and have only played a show or two in your backyard, the short answer is no. If you've been touring locally or regionally on a regular basis, have begun to establish a buzz, and would like to take your profile to the next level, exploring the possibilities of hiring a publicist might be in your best interest. If you tour nationally, are constantly being sought-out by press, and about to release an album, a publicist is a very, very good idea.

**Q: I just started a band! Can I hire you?**

See above. Unless your new band is Velvet Revolver and made up of former members of well-established and notable bands, there isn't much we can do for you at this stage that you can't do for yourself.

**Q: We want to hire a publicist to get our CD reviewed. How can I find out if my publicist has the right contacts?**

Don't be afraid to ask the publicist if they could provide you with a list of publications that they normally service in order to see if they cover all essential media and target the outlets that apply to your genre of music.

You can also tell how effective a publicist's contacts are by researching the success of artists that they are currently working with or have worked

with in the recent past. Though it's not always the case, if their artists

have been quite successful and are well-represented in the general entertainment media, this is a good indication that the publicist has well-established relationships with media and their contact database is well maintained.

**Q: If I hire you, do you guarantee that my CD will be reviewed?**

It is important to get the point across that just because you hire a publicist to send out your CD, it does not guarantee your CD will be reviewed! If you are using a publicist that has established a good reputation and relationship with the media, their mail-outs are more likely to be cracked open and listened to before anyone else's, but if a publicist "guarantees" they can get you a CD review placed somewhere, we'd suggest you proceed with caution. Ultimately, no matter how good a publicist is, the representation of your music needs to stand on its own two feet.

**Q: What sorts of things can I expect a publicist to do for our band?**

A music publicist's duties can encompass a laundry list from babysitting to damage control. This list is a summary of some of the more key jobs of a publicist.

- Write and disseminate press releases to relevant media.
- Coordinate press surrounding an album release, tour, or any other related event.
- Aid in writing bios and developing documents that help brand an artist with the media.
- Service a new album to relevant press (physical copies and/or digital distribution).
- Album review and tour press monitoring.

- Provide press updates and inform the artist of feedback from press outlets.

**Q: What should I expect to pay?**

This depends on many factors, including how established the artist is, what their expectations are, and the level of services they require. There may be different fees depending on whether you need a CD serviced, or need publicity surrounding a tour, which is more time-intensive. For an established artist, expect to pay somewhere in the ballpark of \$1,500-\$2,500 or more a month for publicity surrounding a tour, depending on the scope of the tour.

**Q: Can I hire a publicist for a short period of time?**

We have worked with Alexisonfire, Bedouin Soundclash, Cancer Bats, and City and Colour since their humble beginnings; however, there are many amazing artist and bands that we take on for shorter campaigns. Xavier Rudd and Mishka are talented, internationally-renowned artists for whom we work publicity campaigns for specifically when they have a release and/or tour in Canada.

**Q: How long should I expect a publicist to work on my project?**

Generally, a tour publicity campaign is about three months. An album publicity campaign can run 2-3 months depending on the current success and profile of the artist.

**Q: Where should I start my search for a publicist? How can I find a good one?**

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## Roland KC-880 Stereo Keyboard Amp

■ Roland has introduced the new flagship for its KC-Series of keyboard amps: the KC-880 Stereo Keyboard Amplifier.

Building on the KC sound, the KC-880 offers a new stereo design, powered through a 320-watt stereo power amp, two 12" woofers, and two horn tweeters. This allows for a clear full-spectrum sound. New onboard stereo effects such as Tremolo, Rotary, and Reverb also give musicians a new range of performance possibilities. The new stereo Chorus effect gives the KC-880 spatial depth and detail.

The KC-880 offers a total of five stereo input channels – four stereo instrument inputs and an additional stereo aux input with dedicated volume control, to play external sources like rhythm machines, CD/MP3 players, or mixers. Also included are XLR line outputs, a stereo headphone output, and more. The Stereo Link function allows two KC-880s to be linked for an expanded stereo stage sound.

For more information, contact Roland Canada Ltd: 604-270-6626, FAX 604-270-6552, [www.roland.ca](http://www.roland.ca).



## TRS Custom Drums Savant Series Snares

■ Richmond Hill, ON-based TRS (The Rhythm Section) Custom Drums has recently introduced its new Savant Series snare drums.

The Savant Series snares are custom-crafted shells of maple, birch, African bubinga, vintage mahogany, and poplar, rounded out with custom veneers and the TRS Segmented Exotic Wood shells. Each drum is then finished with inlays, burst, and lacquer finishes.

All shell interiors are finished with a five-step process utilizing special oils, lacquers, and sealers, and an SRF (Shell Resonance Factor) designed specific to the wood type to add clarity, resonance, and warmth. All edges are hand-cut to 35 degrees and are specially sealed and waxed. A custom TRS two-stage snare bed is installed on some models.

All drums are designed to respond to sensitivity, have a noticeable sweet spot, and good projection. They come equipped with a choice of hoops and lugs, TRS die-cast strainer, Puresound snare wires, and Evans Drums Heads.

For more information, contact TRS Custom Drums: 905-773-8305, [info@trscustomdrums.com](mailto:info@trscustomdrums.com), [www.trscustomdrums.com](http://www.trscustomdrums.com).

## FENDER STEVE BAILEY JAZZ BASS VI

■ Part of its Artist Signature Series, Fender has released the Steve Bailey Jazz Bass VI, its first-ever 6-string bass, available in both fretted and fretless versions.

Features for the new addition to the Fender family include an alder body, a quarter-sawn maple neck with compound-radius ebony fingerboard for both models (with 24 frets on the fretted model), custom Fender pickups, 18-volt active electronics with onboard active EQ and a mute switch, a heavy-duty, fully-adjustable Fender locking bridge, and Bailey's initials on the back of the headstock.

The bass also offers master volume, pickup blend, bass boost/cut, treble boost/cut, and mute switch controls. The headstock features Hipshot Ultralite tuning machines, with the rest of the instrument's hardware being chrome. A four-ply tortoise shell pickguard, Posiflex graphite neck support rods, a five-bolt neck attachment, and 6-string retainer are also included in the package.

For more information, contact Fender Musical Instruments Corp.: 480-596-9690, [www.fender.com](http://www.fender.com).





## IK Multimedia StealthPedal

IK Multimedia has announced that its StealthPedal, a compact audio interface and MIDI controller housed in a wah-style pedal, is now available. StealthPedal was designed specifically for guitar and bass players looking to connect their instrument to their computer and control parameters of their software from the floor.

Players can plug into the StealthPedal to control the included Powered by AmpliTube software without additional set-up. Players can also control any MIDI-controllable software with the StealthPedal using the included StealthPedal MIDI set-up application. The pedal is USB-powered with two discreet inputs for connection of Hi-Z or line level instruments, as well as two separate outputs, plus a headphone output.

The circuit design of the StealthPedal is derived from IK's StompIO stage controller. It provides a software-configurable input gain level and a 109dBA low-noise input stage. The pedal comes with an assortment of guitar and bass software from IK Multimedia, and is compatible with DAWs supporting ASIO and Core Audio drivers on both Mac and PC.

For more information, contact IK Multimedia: 954-846-9101, FAX 954-846-9077, [www.ikmultimedia.com](http://www.ikmultimedia.com).

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## Peavey Tube-Powered VYPYR Modeling Amps

■ The Peavey VYPYR Tube 120 and VYPYR Tube 60 combos, a pair of tube-powered modeling guitar amps, are currently available.

The VYPYR Tube 120 2 x 12 and VYPYR Tube 60 1 x 12 combo amps feature 24 amp channel models – two channels each of 12 amp models – plus 11 editable preamp stomp box-style effects and 11 editable post-amp rack effects with dual-parameter control, global re-

verb, and global delay. The VYPYR Tube 120 and Tube 60 utilize a 6L6GC tube power amp styled after the Peavey 6505 and a preamp that combines 12AX7 tube and TransTube tone.

The VYPYR amps are based on 32-bit, floating-point SHARC processors that enable detailed, accurate modeling and flexibility. Both amps feature 3-band EQ, master volume, and pre- and post-gain controls. An onboard looper

and onboard chromatic tuner are included. With the Sanpera II footswitch, the amps can run up to five effects simultaneously and 400 presets. MIDI I/O, a USB computer interface, MP3/CD/Aux input, and headphone/record output round out the package.

For more information, contact Peavey: 601-483-5365, FAX 601-486-1278, [domesticsales@peavey.com](mailto:domesticsales@peavey.com), [www.peavey.com](http://www.peavey.com).

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## MixVibes Cross DJ Software

■ DJ software developer MixVibes has introduced Cross, a new digital vinyl software for Windows and Mac platforms. Cross is built around a high-end audio engine to deliver features like Hot Cues and Auto Beat Loops, and the deck layout is based on known DJ hardware.

The Z-plane Master Tempo technology ensures sound quality even for drastic BPM changes (+/-20 per cent) while the Hybrid mode ensures a clean transition between Master Tempo and Speed mode to avoid digital distortion at extreme pitch values.



Cross features a quality scratching algorithm when used with MixVibes' control records/discs. The high-resolution time code allows for precise scratching even at advanced speeds. Cross can also be controlled via MIDI and is already compatible with several controllers.

Cross focuses on media management and interface simplicity with an advanced media management system: full iTunes integration, multiple tag edit, artwork browsing, smart media preview, missing media manager, multiple playlist visualization, and more.

For more information, contact Erikson Audio: 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, [info@eriksonaudio.com](mailto:info@eriksonaudio.com), [www.eriksonaudio.com](http://www.eriksonaudio.com).



## Tycoon Signature Heritage Series Djembe

■ Tycoon Percussion has announced the addition of an African key-tuned djembe to its Signature Series of percussion instruments.

Complementing its Signature Series of congas and bongos, Tycoon now offers a matching Signature Heritage Series 12" key-tuned Djembe. The drum is handcrafted from environmentally-grown and harvested Siam oak and equipped with a brushed-chrome Classic Pro hoop and hardware as well as a premium-grade natural goatskin head. The Signature Heritage Series Djembé is available in Tycoon's Traditional, deep-brown, hand-rubbed finish.

For more information, contact D'Addario Canada: 905-889-0116, FAX 905-889-8998, [info@daddariocanada.com](mailto:info@daddariocanada.com), [www.daddariocanada.com](http://www.daddariocanada.com).

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## Gallien Krueger Fusion 550 Bass Head

■ The Fusion 550 bass head from Gallien Krueger incorporates a six-stage tube pre-amp paired with a 500-watt version of the high-current, solid-state power amp used in the company's 1001RB-II.

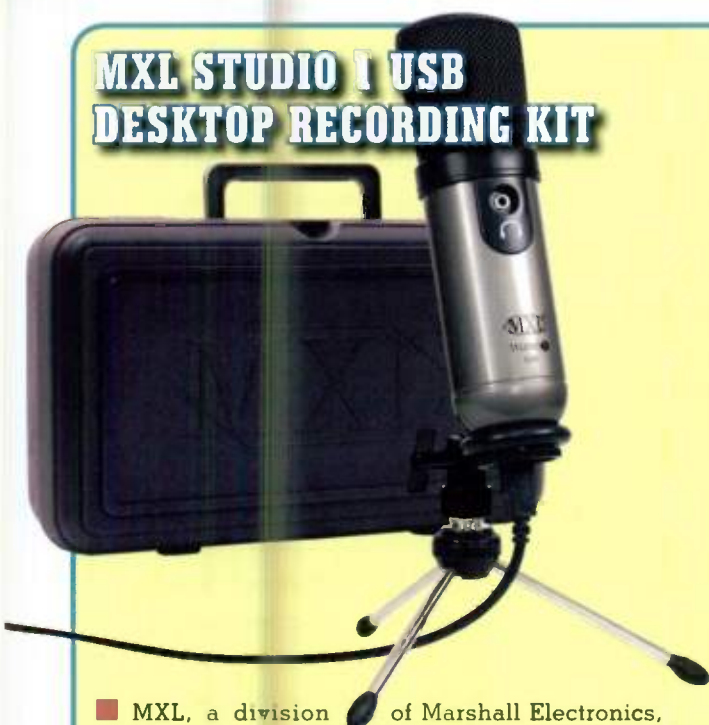
GK has added motorized knobs, which allow users to store two different settings. This allows players to set a separate clean and overdrive tone, or a slap- and finger-style tone, and foot switch between them. The amp pushes 500 watts at 4 ohms, or 350 watts at 8 ohms, and features a 50-watt horn bi-amp system, toroidal transformer, and three 12AX7 tubes. Onboard controls include Gain, Master, and Horn level.

The amp boasts four-band active EQ and variable contour with mid-frequency select. Deep and Bright switches offer further tone manipulation. The amp welcomes a 1/4" input jack and features an active/passive switch (-14dB), an effects loop and tuner output, two horn bi-amp-compatible Speakon outputs, and two 1/4" speaker outputs. Finally, a rear-vented, temperature-controlled fan is added for smooth operation.

For more information, contact Yorkville Sound: 905-837-8777, FAX 905-839-5776, [canada@yorkville.com](mailto:canada@yorkville.com), [www.yorkville.com](http://www.yorkville.com).



## MXL STUDIO 1 USB DESKTOP RECORDING KIT



■ MXL, a division of Marshall Electronics, has added the Studio 1 Desktop Recording Kit to its line of USB microphones. The Studio 1 includes a portable USB condenser that can be used for various recording tasks, from instrument and vocal recording to podcasting.

The Studio 1 USB Desktop Recording Kit is set up to plug-and-play for both PC and Mac. Users plug the mic into a laptop or desktop computer through a standard USB port with no mixers, preamps, or other gear required.

Features of the Studio 1 include a built-in headphone jack for low-latency monitoring and clear audio playback. The low-latency feature provides accurate recording when doing voiceovers and Internet recordings such as podcasts. The MXL Studio 1 USB mic also includes a 2-micron diaphragm capsule, 16-bit audio resolution, 44.1 kHz and 48 kHz sampling rate, and 40 Hz-20 kHz frequency response.

The MXL Studio 1 includes a hard plastic carrying case, desktop mic stand/adaptor, 10 ft. USB cable, user manual, and application guide.

For more information, contact Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.: 416-298-1311, FAX 416-292-0732, [support@yamaha.ca](mailto:support@yamaha.ca), [www.yamaha.ca](http://www.yamaha.ca).



## JBL LSR2300 Series Studio Monitors

■ JBL Professional has introduced the new LSR2300 Series Studio Monitor System, which includes the LSR2328P Bi-Amplified 8" Studio Monitor with 160 watts of amplification; the LSR2325P Bi-Amplified 5" Studio Monitor with 85 watts of amplification; and the LSR2310SP Powered 10" Studio Subwoofer with an integrated 180-watt power amp.

A feature of the LSR2300 design is the large waveguide and the elliptical tweeter aperture that work in conjunction with a 1" silk-substrate high-frequency transducer to deliver quality imaging and smooth frequency response. The monitors also feature long-excursion low-frequency transducers with high-flux motors and a custom-tuned port that work to produce deep, accurate low frequency response.

Additionally, each model in the LSR2300 line produces high SPLs, achieved through the use of high-sensitivity transducers and attention to the thermal properties of the system. Featured to integrate into professional systems, all models include balanced XLR, 1/4", and unbalanced RCA inputs that allow connection to a wide range of playback sources including computer audio workstations, professional mixing consoles, as well as consumer playback systems.

For more information, contact Soundcraft Canada: 514-595-3966, FAX 514-595-3970, [information@soundcraft-canada.com](mailto:information@soundcraft-canada.com), [www.soundcraft-canada.com](http://www.soundcraft-canada.com).

## Seagull Performer Cutaway Flame Maple Q1 Guitar

■ The Seagull Performer CW Flame Maple Q1, as with all Performer models, features flame maple back and sides, a select pressure-tested solid spruce top, custom polished high-gloss finish, and onboard Q1 electronics.

The guitar features a silver leaf maple neck with flame maple veneer on the contoured headstock. The fingerboard and bridge are both constructed of rosewood. Also included are a Tusq nut and compensated saddle.

The Quantum 1 (Q1) electronics on the Seagull Performer series guitars include a built-in tuner and are a standard feature on these models. This combined with a cutaway and Seagull embroidered gig-bag makes a package for gigging musicians.

For more information, contact Godin Guitars: 514-457-7977, info@godinguitars.com, www.godinguitars.com.



## NORD ELECTRO 3 KEYBOARD

■ The Electro 3 from Nord builds on the company's Electro series of keyboards and features a new organ section, a new piano section, new effects, and also a new feature that allows the Electro 3 to use any samples from the Nord Wave library.

Sounds can be loaded from the Mellotron Library or any other instrument or sound from the Nord Sample Library. Users are able to create their own Sample Instruments using the Nord Wave Manager and then use these in the Nord Electro 3. The Electro 3 is equipped with a selection of effects including reverb with five different algorithms, as well as a selection of tremolo, panning, wah-wah, phaser, flanger, and chorus effects.

Users can sculpt their final sound by choosing from a selection of three amp simulations that can add different levels of distortion. A three-band EQ with sweepable mid-range and a compressor can be added to the final stage of the audio path. The rotary speaker emulator also originates from the Nord C1 Combo Organ.

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

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## MAPEX MAYAN SATURN SHELL PACK

Based on the Black Panther Mayan Steel snare drum, Mapex has introduced a limited edition Mayan Saturn 6-piece drum shell pack bearing the same design. The shells feature the Saturn Series' hybrid walnut/maple composition (2-ply walnut interior, 4-ply maple exterior), with a hand-lacquered, eight-coat finish, and brushed brass hardware.

The shell pack includes a 22" x 18" kick drum, 10" x 8" and 12" x 9" rack toms, 14" x 14" and 16" x 16" floor toms, and a 14" x 5.5" Black Panther Mayan Steel snare drum. The Mayan Saturn features 6-ply/5.1 mm rack toms and an 8-ply/7.5 mm kick drum with low-mass, single point-of-contact lugs. Mayan Saturn drums also feature Mapex 2.3 mm Steel Powerhoops and Remo Emperor batter heads on all toms. Black Panther's 20-strand Mayan Steel snare drum and the bass drum come with Remo Ambassador heads.

The Mayan Saturn limited edition bass drum claws are die-cast, low-profile, and cushioned to protect the drum hoop. Like all Saturn drums, the Mayan Saturn has the Isolated Tom Mounting System on all toms and bass drums, spring-loaded floor tom legs, and the thin maple and walnut hybrid shell, producing deep, rich tones.

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



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## SPARROW VON DRAT SURF GUITAR

■ Sparrow Guitars has introduced the Von Drat Surf Guitar, the newest addition to Sparrow's family of retro guitars.

The Von Drat Surf Guitar joins Sparrow's Rat Rod and Twangmaster in that all three models are available in the Continental line. Crafted in Vancouver, the Von Drat Surf Guitar features Burns Tri-Sonic pickups, Grover tuners, a bone nut, and Wilkinson tremolo. With an alder body, maple neck, and rosewood fingerboard, the Von Drat is a 21-fret, 12" radius, 25" scale length guitar with the volume and tone top-hat knobs and three-way selector switch located at the lower bout for versatility and playability.

The Von Drat is currently available in Tudor Black and Avocado Green, with a custom pickguard. The guitar is the namesake of Toronto-based surf outfit The Von Drats.

For more information, contact Sparrow Guitars: 604-253-3034, FAX 604-253-3008, [info@sparrowguitars.com](mailto:info@sparrowguitars.com), [www.sparrowguitars.com](http://www.sparrowguitars.com).



## TC ELECTRONIC NOVA REPEATER PEDAL

■ The latest addition to TC Electronic's Nova range is now available. Nova Repeater is a new dual delay pedal for the guitarists.

Nova Repeater features six different types of delays, including authentic tape delay reproductions and the dynamic effects introduced on TC Electronic's 2290 Delay. The pedal has two inputs matched for instrument and line level signals, allowing it to fit in front of an amp or in an effects loop.

Nova Repeater also features a dedicated tap tempo delay switch, and includes TC Electronic's audio tapping technology that lets guitarists set the tempo with their playing. The company has also added a new dual delay – 1/4 and 1/8 notes.

For more information, contact TC Group Americas: 800-565-2523, FAX 800-525-7081, [info@tcg-americas.com](mailto:info@tcg-americas.com), [www.tcggroup-americas.com](http://www.tcggroup-americas.com).



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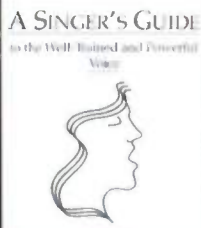
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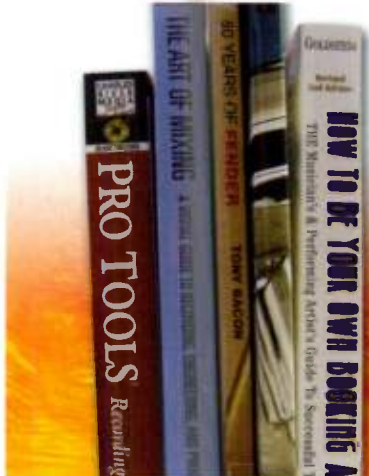
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by Doug Gallant



## THE BEAUTIFUL UNKNOWN

**Where:** Toronto, ON  
**What:** Rock  
**Visit:** [www.thebeautifulunknown.com](http://www.thebeautifulunknown.com)

Toronto indie rockers The Beautiful Unknown took an interesting, and might I suggest admirable, approach to making music. That approach, simply put, was to mine all of their respective musical influences, regardless of genre or decade of origin, for things they liked and then try to craft a sound from those diverse elements that was fresh and original. The end result of their labours is a sound that should strike a responsive chord across a broad demographic. A sound that embraces everything from classic garage band rock and '60s power pop to quirky art rock.

It's catchy, melodic, hook-laden stuff with zippy grooves and great choruses. It's handsomely produced and beautifully executed. It's also the work of seasoned pros.

The line-up for The Beautiful Unknown features Thomas Barlow on guitar and vocals, Derek Downham on drums and vocals, Kirt Godwin on lead guitar, and Ryan Gavel on bass. As their first record, *Riot In The House of Ruin*, so clearly illustrated, they make one hell of a band. They've already created a fair bit of excitement.

"Perfect Wave," a song from their debut album, was utilized in the *Shaun White Snowboarding* video game. They also joined forces with Burton Snowboards to create an interactive CD the company made available at Burton Demo Days across the country.

The single "Spinning In My Grave" went top ten in several cities, and I suspect that's just the beginning.



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*.

## FRANCO

**Where:** Vancouver, BC  
**What:** Pop/Adult Contemporary  
**Visit:** [www.thisisfranco.ca](http://www.thisisfranco.ca)

You don't get a second chance to make a first impression.

As cliché as that sounds, there's more than a grain of truth to it. When you regularly listen to a lot of bands, you begin to look for that immediate connection that makes you want to hear everything they've got. Twenty seconds into "Forever," Vancouver's Franco had my undivided attention.

The foursome of Mark Bridgeman (guitar/lead vocals), Marcus Abramzik (bass/vocals), Andrew Rasmussen (piano/vocals), and Josh Contant (drums) has the kind of polished pop sound that just screams radio – and radio is listening. The aforementioned track, which has a very Crowded House feel to it (Bridgeman sounds like a cross between Crowded House's Neil Finn and Keane's Tom Chaplin), has been chosen for the intro to *CBC Radio's Almanac*. Earlier this year, Franco was chosen as the featured band of the month on Victoria's 91.3 the Zone FM.

They've been together little more than a year and their average age is just 22, but Franco sounds like they've been perfecting their sophisticated brand of melodic music for years, which draws on a host of influences ranging from John Mayer, Something Corporate, and Death Cab for Cutie to Coldplay and Keane.

You gotta like this band, and not just for the music – they've got big hearts as well. They recently embarked on a summer tour in support of their *This is Franco* album, which they are also using to champion the Kids Help Phone. They're donating 15 per cent of the sales from that record to that charity. Expect good things for this band.



## NORMA MACDONALD

**Where:** Halifax, NS  
**What:** Singer/songwriter  
**Visit:** [www.normamacdonald.com](http://www.normamacdonald.com)

Growing up in New Waterford on Cape Breton Island, singer/songwriter Norma MacDonald was exposed to a steady stream of classic country songs broadcast by local AM stations, and there was more at home, where the songs of Willie Nelson frequently found their way onto the family stereo.

It likely didn't come as much of a surprise to those around her that elements of classic country found their way into MacDonald's music when she began to write her own songs.

Two albums into a promising career, MacDonald's music still reveals the influence some of those early country songs had on her, but one listen to her second album, *The Forest For The Trees*, will tell you her influences are far more wide-ranging than that, crossing both genres and generations.

MacDonald in fact draws her inspiration from a host of sources – sources that include both Nashville stalwarts and more contemporary tunesmiths like Springsteen and Wilco.

The songs that pour out of her are honest, heartfelt, and emotionally charged, and they are exceedingly well-crafted for someone whose career is only just beginning to take shape. They are well served by a voice which has a beautifully melodic quality to it, falling somewhere between Gillian Welch and Patty Griffin.

The future looks very bright for MacDonald, who's already garnered favourable reviews from as far away as the UK and just this year found herself with an ECMA nomination for Female Solo Recording of the Year.



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