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# All Things AXE 2010

WITH: John 5  
Rik Emmett  
Oscar Lopez  
Pavlo  
Devin Townsend  
& More ...

## Festival QUEST

A Look Into  
Grassroots  
Music Festivals

## Social Networking

WITH Stereos, Jessie Farrell & Dave Carroll

## HEADPHONE ROUND-UP

# LO LIGHTS

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Vol. XXXII No. 3



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COVER: LIGHTS BY LANA PESANT

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# FeedBack



## Blogs, Vlogs & More...

Visit the CM blog at: [www.canadianmusician.com/blog](http://www.canadianmusician.com/blog) to check out a series of guest posts from renowned live music producer, Tom Jackson, fresh off of keynotes at CMW and the ECMAs.

You can also stop by the CM multimedia page at: [www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia](http://www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia) for new content from The Weakerthans, Meaghan Smith, snippets from CMW 2010, and more.



## Vocal Love

Hello CM,

While you cover a lot of different bands and have articles about brass and woodwinds and guitar, you've never had an article about pure vocal music, like barbershop, a cappella, or beatboxing. I think even just a little article on this would be very different and a nice addition to a future issue.

Alex

*Ed. Thanks for the suggestion, Alex. While it has been awhile since we've done anything on strictly vocal types of music, our Vocal columns often have tips relevant to any kind of vocalist, so check them out in the meantime.*

## RE: Keep Up The Great Work

I just want to say that I LOVE the magazine. It gives you a bit of everything in it. I am starting to get into songwriting and I love the fact that you put tips on songwriting in the magazines. I am also a guitar/bass player and drummer, so I appreciate it all the tips. I have to agree with David Heuman (from Feedback, CM Mar/Apr. 2010). DON'T STOP what you're doing. I will be a subscriber for a long time to come.

Steve Porco

## Language Barriers

Hi,

I am disgusted with the (Business) column by Mark Spokoluk in the March/April 2010 issue. If this guy is a serious A&R person working for a serious record company, he really does not need to use the language he uses. I really could not take Mark's words seriously, as to speak this way shows a real lack of maturity.

If you cannot get your point across in a column like this without using swear words, then don't bother. You obviously do not have the smarts to do it. I believe in freedom of speech, but there is a reason movies have ratings. Don't demean your magazine by having language like this again.

Rich Gowman  
Amplifiers Plus  
amplifiersplus@gmail.com

*Ed. Duly noted, Rich. While I believe there was worthwhile underlying advice in Mark's column, in the future, we can be a little more aggressive with the delete key.*

# INVESTIGATING BEYOND OUR BORDERS

by Lynsey Kitching

**W**hen an album's been made, creative energy harnessed and captured, the next part of the process is getting your music to the people. There is plenty of information out there about distribution in Canada, but what about that big, exciting world beyond our borders?

In our digital age, we, in ways, have gained a false sense of globalization, thinking we actually reach those who are so far away. In a basic sense, we do, but it is only a small piece to the puzzle. Though the option for online distribution is always present, and a great way to make some extra cash, this piece is going to focus on physical distribution outside of Canada. How do you break through?

Canadian singer/songwriter Dan Mangan has distribution throughout different markets

around the world. He says, "It's tough. It's like, to be noticed within your home territory you kind of have to have a story about being known outside of your home territory. Then to be noticed in another territory you have to have a story about being big in your home territory – the battle of the

chicken and the egg. The key is to create relationships in each territory that will facilitate you being able to go there and tour."

The more you put into your art, your project, your passion, the more the world is going to get out of it. An important part of this equation is getting your material to the people. The truth is, nothing beats the human connection, often achieved by understanding different cultures. For example, Mangan says, "In Australia, radio is still really important. That is kind of the key to the

Australian market is to get on radio, whereas in Canada, that's not really the case. Each market has its little secrets, I think because they all operate independently of one another."

Though it may be intimidating to step out into new markets, and there is no guarantee you're going to make any money, the important part of this endeavor is the adventure itself. Concentrate on that, and everything else will follow.

## Physical Presence (Even When You're Not There)

When thinking about going global with your distribution, consider touring. Akbar Johnson, guitarist and vocalist for Montreal's Special Ops, explains that they have gained distribution in Canada, the US, Australia, and the UK. He says, "Distro and touring go hand in hand. We landed overseas distro because of the tours. They see numbers on iTunes and who's downloading. You have to tour; if you don't tour no one is going to pick you up. Your first international tours are going to be just like your first Canadian tours. It's just the name of the game. You have to build."

KellyLee Evans, a soulful singer out of the Ottawa region, is distributed similarly to the others, and she comments on reaching those pockets where she knows she has a market. She says, "It's a growth process and I need to see and feel the market I'm in. I understand Canada, and I understand the Canadian music store, and being online. I feel like for other countries, I seem to have a block. It feels daunting. On CD Baby, I'll look and there are people buying from Italy and Poland. Clearly there's



SPECIAL OPS

a market out there. Each territory requires its own marketing and it's a question of funds."

Mangan explains the importance of little reminders within different markets. He says, "Being a musician is about subtly, politely, and benevolently reminding the world that you exist over and over again. Unless you have a team that can actively push when you're not there, I am of the impression that physical retail is not entirely necessary. If you are just starting, you want to make your music available online so that if someone in Germany hears it, likes it, and wants to buy it, they can."

## It's Just Such A MASSIVE Market

These were the words spoken by Mangan when asked about distribution in China. He goes on to say, "I would love to go. That is an area where I am incredibly unknowledgeable. I would love to go over to China; I would love to go to Japan. I do have some friends who work in the industry in Japan, so I think that it's not entirely outside the cards. It is something that is a little bit intimidating. It's not even about having things for sale there, so much as how can you possibly break into such a massive market and leave any kind of a dent. It's kind of a mystery to me."

The key to reaching the Chinese market, according to Jackie Subeck, CEO of Footprint Worldwide LLC, is to give them something unique to them. She says, "The good news



DAN MANGAN



KELLYLEE EVANS

## Helping You Get There

Since it is evident that in order to gain successful distribution outside of Canada, you're going to have to pack your gear and hit the road, here are a few options to help you get there:

- Transmission – Operates out of BC and sends Canadian indie bands to China on an annual basis – [www.transmitnow.com](http://www.transmitnow.com).
- FACTOR – Grants for musicians – [www.factor.ca](http://www.factor.ca).
- The Canadian Government – Grants, trade mission initiatives through CIMA, and more – [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca), [www.cimamusic.ca](http://www.cimamusic.ca).



**JACKIE SUBECK**

## India Insider With Jackie Subeck

"I know that India is getting started doing stuff like this, but I'm not sure they have quite enough infrastructure built yet on the business side, but they're getting there. I was talking to a few people at CMW and they're building quickly. You need places to play, promote, to sell. They have the infrastructure but it's only been for Bollywood. Now what they're doing is shifting it to a mainstream market. I think that India is definitely a place to look at touring and distributing."

that because China as a whole never really got access to much of the western music that is out there today, until the '90s, it is kind of a level playing field because they don't have the history. This is a good thing for artists because if you can bring it, they'll listen."

In order to bring it, you have to know people there. Subeck says, "You must find people that are working in that market that can give you some guidance and help you out. It is not like Canada or the US where you can just show up, make some phone calls, and get things happening. Not only do they not speak the language, but also they don't know anything about you. They are going to work with a local promoter. In

order to find those local promoters you are going to have to get in. It's a giant club, and once you know someone on the inside, which isn't that hard, then you'll get connected and work your way through."

## Do A Little Research

The investigation can begin on Canadian soil. Subeck recommends hitting some of the Chinese Clubs in Toronto or Vancouver to make friends. She says, "You would be surprised how many people travel back and forth from Toronto that are connected in China. I know plenty of bands that have gone over to China to do city tours. Sometimes they pair up. No one's really making any money, but

they're having a great time and they're getting out to new fans."

An important factor to remember as a Canadian is our social services. Subeck says, "The Canadian government can sponsor trade missions and bands usually come along with them as well. The Shanghai Expo, which starts in May and goes for six months, gains participation from practically every country. I know the Canadian government is sponsoring some bands to come out and perform during the expo. In a country like Canada where you have cultural funding, I would definitely look into it."

*Lynsey Kitching is the former Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician.*

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## Canadian Music Week Turned Up The Heat

**U**nseasonably warm as it was outdoors, the interior heat was cranked at Canadian Music Week and Canadian Music Fest this year at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.

The event took place from March 10-14, 2010. Music industry members and fans from around the globe came, saw, and celebrated in record numbers. This year's festival rocked with more attendees, performers, venues, countries represented, and media accredited than ever before.

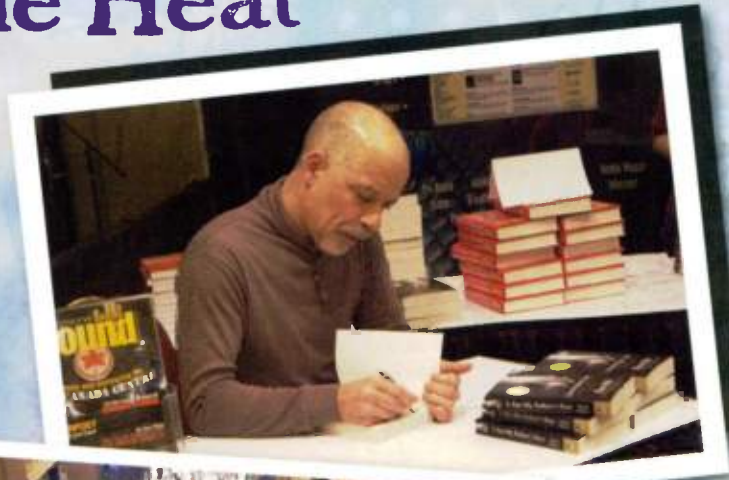
There were 1,883 industry delegates, 3,565 attending musicians, 713 bands, and 58 participating venues. Some musical highlights included: Constantines, Joel Plaskett, Great Lake Swimmers, The Rural Alberta Advantage, Plants and Animals, Arkells, Handsome Furs, Dan Mangan, Timber Timbre, Woodhands, and more. Kate Rogers from the Kate Rogers Band says about the event: "I think events like this are very important. It depends on where you're coming from. Having done a lot of showcases, some over in Europe as well, you really have to maximize your time and the impact you can make while you're here."

Jeff Leake hosted The Indies with a live broadcast on XM Satellite Radio. Mariana's Trench collected two Indie awards while Burnz N Hell, Desperate Union, Plants and Animals, The Rural Alberta Advantage, Great Lake Swimmers, and Constantines amazed Indies fans with their performances.

The well-attended Digital Strategies Conference focused on effectively marketing products and services in the digital age and the Songwriters' Summit attracted writers from far and wide to learn from the pros like Dan Hill and Don Schlitz.

Continuing its international outreach, CMW 2010 presented the Spotlight On India, which provided an insider's look at the world's second fastest-growing economy and hosted an Indian Music Showcase over two nights. The International Marketplace played home to several visiting countries and hosted one-on-one dedicated match-making meetings with India and Australia.

For more information, visit [www.cmw.net](http://www.cmw.net) or [www.canadianmusicfest.com](http://www.canadianmusicfest.com)



Dan Hill book signing for *I am My Father's Son* at Norris-Whitney Communications booth.



Songwriters Summit



Plants & Animals perform at the Indies.

## IMSTA & HITLAB's Song Competition

IMSTA and Akon's HITLAB have come together in an effort to provide musicians all over the world with the opportunity to participate in a song competition and a chance to win a major label contract. The IMSTA Song Competition ends May 31, 2010. The winner will perform in front of Akon and other music industry heavyweights at the upcoming HITLAB Showcase this summer for the chance at a label contract.

For more information about the IMSTA Song Competition and to upload songs, visit [www.imsta.org](http://www.imsta.org).



Akon



### Barenaked Ladies Rock For MusiCounts

MusiCounts gathered in Toronto with more than 350 Alexander Muir/Gladstone Avenue Public School students and staff to celebrate a 2009-2010 MusiCounts Band Aid grant.

Highlighting the celebration was an appearance by Barenaked Ladies. Not only did they give an intimate performance, but they also took some time to talk about the importance of music education and how it has influenced their lives.

Melanie Berry, President and CEO of CARAS and MusiCounts, spoke at the presentation, "It is schools such as Alexander Muir/Gladstone Avenue Jr. & Sr. Public School that embody our belief in the importance of music education. Every school should be so lucky to have the outstanding support of talented teachers who inspire and empower students every day." For more information, visit [www.musiccounts.ca](http://www.musiccounts.ca).



Photo: David Joseph - KPMedia

Songwriters Pam Belford (left) & Jason Barry perform at Tin Pan North 2009.

### NSAI Toronto Hosts Tin Pan North

From May 27-29, 2010, the Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI) Toronto Chapter will be hosting Tin Pan North, the 11<sup>th</sup> annual songwriting festival filling venues throughout the GTA. The artists gathered will be sharing live acoustic performances in rounds, sharing stories about the songs they've penned and who's recorded them. Visit [www.nsaitoronto.com](http://www.nsaitoronto.com) for more information.



Classified performs "Oh Canada" to open the 2010 JUNO Awards broadcast.



Michael Buble with two of his four JUNOs.



K'naan & Drake onstage performing "Wavin' Flag."

## 2010 JUNO Awards Rock The Rock

It was a big night for the Canadian music industry as The 2010 JUNO Awards took over St. John's for a giant party along George St. and at the Mile One Centre. CTV's broadcast was taken in by over 1.6 million viewers, up 31 per cent from the previous year.

Classified opened the show with a patriotic rendition of "Oh Canada" from George St. before Michael Buble warmed up the arena with "Haven't Met You Yet." Other performers to take the stage throughout the night were Billy Talent, Johnny Reid, Great Lake Swimmers, Blue Rodeo, and others, with K'naan and a slew of special guests closing the show with the inspirational "Wavin' Flag."

Buble had a big night, taking home four awards, while Drake, K'naan, and Metric garnered a pair each. Bryan Adams was awarded the Allan Waters Humanitarian Award while April Wine was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame.

For a full list of nominees and winners, as well as information on next year's edition of The JUNO Awards, taking over downtown Toronto, visit [www.junoawards.ca](http://www.junoawards.ca).

Photos: CARAS/Photo



## Making Big Noise For Those That Have No Voice

On Saturday, May 29, 2010, Drummers for Darfur will be gathering at 1 p.m. at Grange Park, Toronto to prepare to play and parade their way down to and along Queen St. West, ending up at Trinity-Bellwoods Park for an all out drum fest.

War Child invites everyone to help children in Darfur by grabbing a drum, or any other instrument, and coming out for this special afternoon of drumming through the streets of downtown Toronto.

The goal is to raise \$20,000 – enough money to help over 5,500 vulnerable children and youth access a high quality education, even while living in Internally Displaced Persons' Camps in Darfur. Money raised will help provide teacher training to 60 teachers, and education materials to students enrolled in War Child's Accelerated Learning Programs at the Youth Protection Centres.

Sign up at [www.warchild.ca/drummersfordarfur](http://www.warchild.ca/drummersfordarfur) and get your friends, family, and fans to sponsor you and raise cash for children in Darfur. The top fundraisers have a chance at some great musical prizes.



Amy Millan



Leif Vollebakk

## Busking For Change Takes Montreal

Busking For Change Montreal, hosted March 2, 2010, featured a full day of great music, with celebrated artists busking at pre-determined locations across Montreal to raise money for War Child. The list of participating artists is long, including Amy Millan, Leif Vollebakk, Winter Gloves, and more.

The event marked the return of a War Child assessment mission from Haiti, where the organization will be working to help the most vulnerable by providing support in trauma recovery, poverty reduction, and education to those children and youth that are most at risk. For more information, visit [www.warchild.ca](http://www.warchild.ca).



## KoSA Cuba 2010 Workshop & Havana Drum Festival

KoSA travelled to Havana, Cuba from March 7-14, 2010, to hold its annual workshop and festival. The program's itinerary was jam-packed with workshop classes, private lessons, and concert events giving KoSA Cuba participants an exciting, educational, and entertaining experience.

The week started with a conference and introduction to Cuban music by ethnomusicologist Dr. Olavo Alén, giving the participants an overall view of Cuban culture, music, and its various genres. Conga drum and timbale classes were hosted while Amadito Valdés (of Euená Vista Social Club) spoke about his philosophy and approach to soloing while demonstrating the clas-



sic way of playing Danzón. Participants were also given the opportunity to see various live performing groups throughout the week.

Visit [www.kosamusic.com](http://www.kosamusic.com) for more information and updates on next year's event.



Performers at the Delta Sydney.

## ECMA Announces Host for 2011 Event

The East Coast Music Awards, Festival, and Conference had an exciting run in Sydney, NS from March 4-7, 2010, bringing "One Big Kitchen Party" to Cape Breton and welcoming artists and industry members from the four Atlantic provinces and beyond.

Several exhibits were set up around the Delta Sydney, this year's host hotel, while the Conference sessions took place at the Membertou Convention Centre. This year's conference was called "Switched On - Tune In To The Business Of Music" and featured a range of development sessions including Export Training Workshops, live performance pitch sessions, and a keynote address led by Bob Harris of BBC Radio 2. Sessions included Cyber PR and Social Media, Marketing Music In The New Economy, Digital Distribution, and a DIY Indie Town Hall.

Of course, plenty of east coast artists were given the opportunity to showcase over the course of the event on stages like the Roots Room, Discovery Stage, Black Vibes Showcase, Loud Stage, Rising Star Showcase, and much more.

The event culminated with the Awards Gala, where Joel Plaskett ran away with six ECMAs. The night also saw the Rankin Family honoured with a special achievement award and the late Scotty Turner recognized with a lifetime achievement award. Other multiple award winners included Catherine MacLellan, In-Flight Safety, and The Motorleague.

The ECMA has announced that Charlottetown will play host to the 2011 East Coast Music Awards, Festival & Conference. "Charlottetown never disappoints as a committed supporter of this event, and is close to our hearts as the association's home base of operations," says Su Hutchinson, Executive Director of the ECMA.

For more information, contact the ECMA: 902-892-9040, [www.ecma.com](http://www.ecma.com).



(L-R) George Rondina, Guido Basso, Dave Restivo, Mike Murley, Steve Wallace & Jesse Capon.

## Number 9 & Musicians Recording For Charity

Number 9 Audio in Toronto is producing an album with world-class artists for a worthwhile international cause. Managing Director George Rondina called on musical director/producer George Koller and producer Jesse Capon to put together a lineup of jazz artists that includes Laila Biali, the Shuffle Demons, David Clayton-Thomas, Julie Michels, Norm Amadio, Guido Basso, Reg Schwager, Andre Roy, DK Ibomeka, Gord Sheard, Luisito Orbegoso, Jane Bunnett, Michael Shand, John McDermot, and more.

All proceeds from the sales of the album - tentatively titled *Jazz For Haiti* - will go towards the Red Cross' Haiti Earthquake Appeal. The studio and its staff as well as the musicians involved have donated their time and talents for the endeavor.

For more information, visit [www.number9.ca](http://www.number9.ca).



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Michael Renaud

## Michael Renaud Sung & Won

After viewing entries from hundreds of talented Canadian singers, Shure has announced that it has chosen Mike Renaud from Eastern Passage, NS as the grand prize winner of the Sing To Win Contest. Renaud wins a brand new Shure PG42USB microphone with PowerTracks recording software. "I greatly appreciate being chosen as the grand prize winner, especially with all the talented people that submitted videos. I'm totally looking forward to using the mic and recording software," says Renaud. Visit [www.shurecanada.com](http://www.shurecanada.com) for more.

## New Online Application System For FACTOR

FACTOR launched its new online application system on April 15, 2010. Details on all of FACTOR's programs are now available at [www.factor.ca](http://www.factor.ca). Costs incurred between April 1 and April 30, 2010 will be considered eligible for applications received before April 30, 2010, subject to all other guidelines.

## CMW Provides Opportunity For Spotlight Down Under

After a successful introduction to "Touring Down Under" at Canadian Music Week 2010, CMW is heeding the advice of its allies and returning to Australia. CMW struck a bilateral partnership with the One Movement festival in Perth to introduce new Australian acts to Canada and to develop and break emerging Canadian acts in Australia.

With over 200 artists, 100 speakers, hundreds of delegates, and thousands of music fans taking in One Movement for Music Perth from October 6-9, 2010, the opportunity is there for Canadian artists to showcase. To apply to be a part of the spotlight, contact [bessie@cmw.net](mailto:bessie@cmw.net) before May 31, 2010.



Fyve Aces, Trent University, Peterborough

Crush Luther

## Musical Mutiny With Crush Luther

Musical Mutiny was a battle of the bands with a social conscience, taking place at the Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto on Thursday, March 18, 2010 with support from War Child Canada. Bands representing different campuses competed in a final showdown at the Horseshoe Tavern. The winning band was Acid Tones from York University. Headlining the show was Toronto's own Crush Luther, longtime supporter of War Child Canada.

All proceeds from the show went to support War Child Canada. For more information, visit [www.warchild.ca](http://www.warchild.ca).



## YOUNG ARTISTS FOR HAITI

More than 50 of the country's brightest young artists gathered at The Warehouse Studio in Vancouver with producer Bob Ezrin to record a song dedicated to the recovery efforts in earthquake ravaged Haiti.

The initiative was completely voluntary for the artists and 100 per cent of the proceeds go to help the people of Haiti. The song, a rendition of K'naan's "Wavin' Flag" is currently available, with proceeds going to Free The Children, War Child Canada, and World Vision Canada. The song inspired contributions from artists including Nelly Furtado, Avril Lavigne, Sam Roberts, Kardinal Offishall, Jully Black, Jay Malinowski (Bedouin Sound-clash), LIGHTS, Serena Ryder, Emily Haines (Metric), Hawksley Workman, and many more.

"With the wealth of young artists coming out of Canada, it was obvious that this is something we had to do," says Ezrin. "K'naan's lyrics in 'Wavin' Flag' embody the pain, passion, and determination of the Haitian people and lend the hope of a brighter future. The response from the artists has been sensational, and I am so proud that together we may help to make a difference."

Young Artists for Haiti have expanded and grown, using Facebook as a means to reach the public. Other ways to support this cause include buying a "Young Artists For Haiti" t-shirt, stickers, the music video, and of course, the track. There is also the option for a simple donation. Visit the Facebook page "Young Artists for Haiti" or [www.youngartistsforhaiti.net](http://www.youngartistsforhaiti.net) for more information.

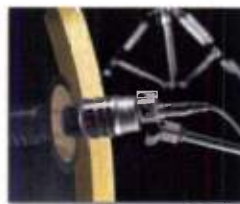


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**ATM250** Hypercardioid Dynamic Instrument Microphone. Tailored for **kick drum, percussion, brass** and other highly dynamic instruments.



**ATM410** Cardioid Dynamic Handheld Microphone. Rugged vocal workhorse, tailored for smooth, natural vocal reproduction, ideal for **live performance.**



**ATM350** Cardioid Condenser Clip-On Microphone. Designed to clip to **brass, upright bass, reeds, piano, snare, toms, and violin.**

**ATM75** Cardioid Condenser Headworn Microphone. For vocalists who can't be tied down - **live performances, presentations, houses of worship.**

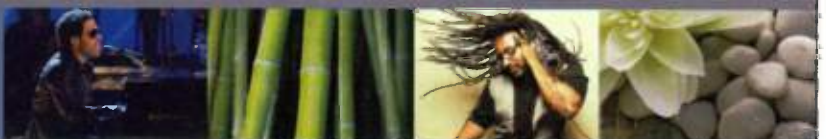


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Erikson Audio



## NXNE: Bringing Music To Toronto

Now in its 16th year, the North by Northeast Music Festival and Conference (NXNE) has become the Canadian festival destination for new and emerging talent – unsigned bands, indie favourites, and major-label headlining artists alike. This year the event will run from June 14-20, 2010.

NXNE 2009 presented over 600 international, national, and local acts at 50 official festival stages in downtown Toronto's club district. More than 250,000 music fans attended the festival, with thousands of industry professionals taking part in conference sessions. This year, NXNE Interactive will take place from June 14-16, 2010, covering topics like Social Media Circle, Marketing, How To Promote Yourself Online, and more.

This year the event will host about 650 bands and 40 films in about 50 venues around Toronto. So far, some of the bands that will be performing are APlotAgainstMe, De La Soul, Elliott Brood, The Stooges, The Kate Rogers Band, and others.

Visit [www.nxne.com](http://www.nxne.com) for all of the event details as they unfold.



Kate Rogers



PHOTO: LANA PESANT

CM cover artist LIGHTS, along with Shad, Down With Webster, and Grave Maker, are the first artists announced for the 2010 edition of the S.C.E.N.E. Music Festival. The daylong music event will be taking over St. Catharines, ON on June 27, 2010 and will feature local to international acts. Visit [www.scenemusicfestival.com](http://www.scenemusicfestival.com) for more information.

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## Need To Find A Music Store?

CocciSoftware has released MusicBiz, a free iPhone/iPad Touch/iPad application for anyone that travels and needs to locate music stores from any position around the world. With over 4,000 music shops listed around the world, MusicBiz is useful for musicians and sound engineers that tour in their own country or anywhere else around the world.

MusicBiz is available as a free download from the iTunes Store. Visit [www.coccisoftware.com](http://www.coccisoftware.com) for more.

Visit [www.nor.com/events](http://www.nor.com/events) for more events involving Music, Musical Instruments, Professional Audio, Lighting, & Production.

## ■ Rogers Spring Music Festival 2010

Hamilton, ON  
May 13-15, 2010  
[www.springmusicfestival.com](http://www.springmusicfestival.com)

## ■ 2010 Cape Breton International Drum Festival

Cape Breton Island, NS  
May 22-23, 2010  
[bruce\\_cbidrumfest@yahoo.com](mailto:bruce_cbidrumfest@yahoo.com),  
[www.capebretoninternationaldrumfestival.com](http://www.capebretoninternationaldrumfestival.com)

## ■ Montreal International Music Competition Violin 2010

Montreal, QC  
May 24-June 4, 2010  
514-845-4108, FAX 514-845-8241  
[info@concoursmontreal.ca](mailto:info@concoursmontreal.ca),  
[www.concoursmontreal.ca](http://www.concoursmontreal.ca)

## ■ 2010 PianoTexas Academy & Festival

Fort Worth, TX  
June 4-29, 2010  
817-257-7456, FAX 817-257-0178  
[t.ungar-pianotexas@tcu.edu](mailto:t.ungar-pianotexas@tcu.edu),  
[www.pianotexas.org](http://www.pianotexas.org)

## ■ 2010 COCA National Conference

London, ON  
June 16-20, 2010  
519-690-0207, FAX 519-681-4328  
[www.coca.org](http://www.coca.org)

## ■ NXNE 2010

Toronto, ON  
June 16-20, 2010  
416-863-6963, FAX 416-863-0828  
[info@nxne.com](mailto:info@nxne.com), [www.nxne.com](http://www.nxne.com)

## ■ MENC Music Education Week

Washington, DC  
June 24-29, 2010  
703-860-4000, FAX 703-860-1531  
[mbserv@menc.org](mailto:mbserv@menc.org), [www.menc.org](http://www.menc.org)

## ■ Summerfest 2010

Milwaukee, WI  
June 24-July 4, 2010  
414-273-2680  
[www.summerfest.com](http://www.summerfest.com)

## ■ Toronto City Roots Festival

Toronto, ON  
June 25-27, 2010  
416-960-1568  
[www.torontocityroots.com](http://www.torontocityroots.com)

## ■ TD Canada Trust Ottawa International Jazz Festival

Ottawa, ON  
June 25-July 5, 2010  
613-241-2633, FAX 613-241-5774  
[info@ottawajazzfestival.com](mailto:info@ottawajazzfestival.com),  
[www.ottawajazzfestival.com](http://www.ottawajazzfestival.com)

## ■ S.C.E.N.E. Music Festival 2010

St. Catharines, ON  
June 27, 2010  
[jennifer@scenemusicfestival.com](mailto:jennifer@scenemusicfestival.com),  
[www.scenemusicfestival.com](http://www.scenemusicfestival.com)

## ■ 2010 Montreal Musical Instrument Show

Montreal, QC  
July 9-11, 2010  
514-871-1881  
[info\\_simm@equipespectra.ca](mailto:info_simm@equipespectra.ca),  
[www.mmmis.ca](http://www.mmmis.ca)

## ■ TD Canada Trust Atlantic Jazz Festival Halifax

Halifax, NS  
July 9-17, 2010  
[www.jazzeast.com](http://www.jazzeast.com)

## ■ 33<sup>rd</sup> Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, BC  
July 16-18, 2010  
604-602-9798, FAX 604-602-9790  
[board@thefestival.bc.ca](mailto:board@thefestival.bc.ca),  
[www.thefestival.bc.ca](http://www.thefestival.bc.ca)

## ■ Home County Folk Festival 2010

London, ON  
July 16-18, 2010  
519-432-4310, FAX 519-432-6299  
[info@homecounty.ca](mailto:info@homecounty.ca), [www.homecounty.ca](http://www.homecounty.ca)

## ■ 22<sup>nd</sup> Beaches International Jazz Festival

Toronto, ON  
July 16-25, 2010  
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064  
[info@beachesjazz@rogers.com](mailto:info@beachesjazz@rogers.com),  
[www.beachesjazz.com](http://www.beachesjazz.com)

## ■ Guitar Workshop Plus

Toronto, ON  
Session 1: July 18-23, 2010  
Session 2: July 25-30, 2010  
905-567-8000  
[info@guitarworkshopplus.com](mailto:info@guitarworkshopplus.com),  
[www.guitarworkshopplus.com](http://www.guitarworkshopplus.com)

## ■ Hillside Festival 2010

Guelph, ON  
July 23-25, 2010  
519-763-6396, FAX 519-763-9514  
[info@hillsidefestival.ca](mailto:info@hillsidefestival.ca),  
[www.hillsidefestival.ca](http://www.hillsidefestival.ca)

## ■ KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Camp & Festival

Castleton, VT  
July 27-August 1, 2010  
514-482-5554  
[info@kosamusic.com](mailto:info@kosamusic.com), [www.kosamusic.com](http://www.kosamusic.com)

## ■ GMA Immerse 2010

Nashville, TN  
July 28-31, 2010  
615-242-0303, FAX 615-254-9755  
[info@gospelmusic.org](mailto:info@gospelmusic.org), [www.gospelmusic.org](http://www.gospelmusic.org)

## ■ 2010 Canmore Folk Music Festival

Canmore, AB  
July 31-August 2, 2010  
403-678-2524, FAX 403-678-2524  
[info@canmorefolkfestival.com](mailto:info@canmorefolkfestival.com),  
[www.canmorefolkfestival.com](http://www.canmorefolkfestival.com)

## ■ Guitar Workshop Plus

Vancouver, BC  
August 8-13, 2010  
905-567-8000  
[info@guitarworkshopplus.com](mailto:info@guitarworkshopplus.com),  
[www.guitarworkshopplus.com](http://www.guitarworkshopplus.com)

## ■ National Flute Association Convention 2010

Anaheim, CA  
August 12-15, 2010  
661-299-6680, FAX 661-299-6681  
[conventionservices@nfaonline.org](mailto:conventionservices@nfaonline.org),  
[www.nfaonline.com](http://www.nfaonline.com)

## ■ Guitar Summit 2010

Mont-Orford, QC  
August 16-20, 2010  
866-319-5754  
[info@theguitarsummit.com](mailto:info@theguitarsummit.com),  
[www.theguitarsummit.com](http://www.theguitarsummit.com)

## ■ Detroit Jazz Festival

Detroit, MI  
September 3-6, 2010  
313-715-0199, FAX 313-447-1249  
[www.detroitjazzfest.com](http://www.detroitjazzfest.com)

## ■ Country Music Week 2010

Edmonton, AB  
September 8-12, 2010  
416-947-1331, FAX 416-947-5924  
[country@ccma.org](mailto:country@ccma.org), [www.ccma.org](http://www.ccma.org)

## ■ Pro A/V Golf Tournament

Caledon, ON  
September 21, 2010  
905-641-3471  
[nduncan@nor.com](mailto:nduncan@nor.com), [www.proavgolf.com](http://www.proavgolf.com)

## ■ One Movement

Perth, Australia  
October 6-10, 2010  
+61 08 9336 2837, FAX +61 08 9336 1074  
[info@onemovementmusic.com](mailto:info@onemovementmusic.com),  
[www.onemovementmusic.com](http://www.onemovementmusic.com)

## ■ 23<sup>rd</sup> Ontario Council of Folk Festivals (OCFF)

Ottawa, ON  
October 14-17, 2010  
613-560-5997, 866-292-OCFF, 613-560-2001  
[info@ocff.ca](mailto:info@ocff.ca), [www.ocff.ca](http://www.ocff.ca)

## ■ Niagara Music Forum

Thorold, ON  
October 17, 2010  
905-641-3471, FAX 888-665-1307  
[www.niagaramusicforum.com](http://www.niagaramusicforum.com)

## ■ Percussive Arts Society International Convention

Indianapolis, IN  
November 10-13, 2010  
580-353-1455, FAX 580-353-1456  
[percarts@pas.org](mailto:percarts@pas.org), [www.pasic.org](http://www.pasic.org)

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## AKG K 271 MKII

AKG's K 271 MKIIs are closed-back studio headphones with a self-adjusting headband. Two metal bands bridge the two sides of the headphones with a headband that is automatically adjusted to the wearer's head via two elastic bands that control the contact pressure. A choice of leatherette or velvet ear pads adds to the comfort.

Also provided is a choice of a 3 m straight cable and a 5 m coiled cable that use oxygen-free copper, are detachable from the main body with a mini XLR connection, and terminate at gold plated 1/8" jacks with threaded gold plated 1/4" adapter.

With a frequency response of 16 Hz to 28 kHz, the K 271 MKIIs are studio- and live-grade headphones that perform well. The tone is very pleasing and is optimized for the often harsh standards of engineers. The self-adjusting design does work, and is comfortable; however, the deliverance could be approached differently. The assembly isn't as visually pleasing as it could be, but is easily overshadowed by the performance. AKG has proved you can't judge a book by its cover. The headphones may not look elegant, but produce a tone and sound quality that is well above average.

can appeal to a DJ who is always telling the house tech to "turn it up" and is looking for maximum volume, they will not appeal to an engineer who is looking to pick apart a mix. The strive for volume has left the HP 700s with a midrange tone that colours the program material and therefore does not make them appropriate for someone looking for a critical reference headphone.

However, a collapsible assembly with universal joints makes for easy review of tracks being cued and tracks being played, and a 4 m cable gives the listener flexibility of use. When used in the right context, the HP 700s offer many features that appeal to today's DJs.

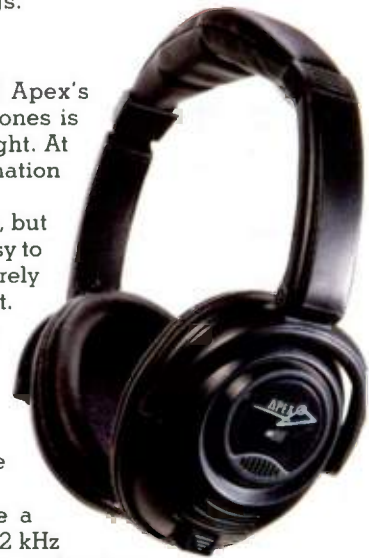
## Apex HP35

The most distinctive feature of Apex's HP35 folding closed-ear headphones is their compact size and light weight. At 148 g, it's no stretch of the imagination to picture them as comfortable.

They are not only comfortable, but their light weight makes them easy to wear, and they fit snugly and securely to your head, with little adjustment. Their compact and collapsible design is meant to aid in their transportation and they come with a detachable 3.5 m cable with nickel plated 1/8" jacks on each end with one thread to mate with a 1.4" adapter.

The 38 mm drivers produce a frequency response of 20 Hz to 22 kHz which is printed on the back of the packaging; however, as indicated on the packaging, the variance in dB in reference to SPL at different frequencies is 15dB. Acoustically the HP35s sound rather pleasing, but the steep jumps in their frequency response make them a bit questionable for critical listening. Although the program material will sound good, at certain points they may colour the sound you are referencing and could hinder the mix.

Despite a performance that could be a little tighter, the Apex HP35s are very comfortable and have a great tone for their price bracket.



## American Audio HP 700

Reviewing your tracks as a DJ on-stage does not require the same specifications that a studio or live engineer would typically ask for. Whereas most engineers look for a lower volume, less bleed, and a frequency response graph that is as flat as possible, DJs are often looking for more volume over a flat response or have worries of ambient noise and bleed.

The American Audio HP 700s are "designed for the working DJ." Built for loud, they offer 57 mm drivers, and pump out up to 107dB with a frequency response of 5 Hz to 30 kHz. While these specs



*"The Apex HP35 has been engineered for comfort, pleasing tone, and to limit ear fatigue. The 20 Hz-22 kHz frequency response spec (+/-15dB) may be confusing. In the critical 20 Hz-20 kHz range, the HP35's display a flat +/- 3dB, with -15dB occurring only at the extreme ends." - Tim Marshall, Yorkville Sound.*

# Headphone Round-Up

By Mark Desloges



## Audio-Technica ATH-M50

Audio-Technica's ATH-M50s are designed and built with the studio engineer in mind. Offering most of the standard features one looks for in a pair of monitoring headphones, the ATH-M50's also have a sense of style when it comes to the appearance and assembly.

Looks are not the most important quality to consider when choosing a pair of headphones, but they speak to the side of you that enjoys equipment that appeals to the eyes as well as the ears. A comfortable fit and large padded earpieces that rotate 180 degrees make for easy comparison of sounds off the deck to those at the mix position.

The closed back design and large pads provide excellent sound isolation. Powered by 45 mm drivers, they produce a frequency response of 15 Hz to 28 kHz that is quite pleasing to the ear. The 3 m chord is coiled and has gold plated connection points but lacks proper stress relief. Instead of a typical rubber stress relief they have used a coiled metal spring at the jack end of the cable.

Overall, the ATH-M50's are visually appealing and offer a quality sound that should get you through any mix.

*"The ATH-M50's are also available with a straight cord as the ATH-M50S, and both models are ideal not only for studio use, but any listening application." – Bill Kinal, Erikson Audio*

## Roland RH-D30

Roland's RH-D30 headphones are built for the high demands of today's professional performer. From DJs to drummers, they provide an excellent frequency response with the versatility of use on or offstage to provide a solid reference point.

The 180-degree rotating earpiece design allows the wearer to quickly remove one of the ear pieces to get a blend of the reference and live sounds. The 45 mm drivers provide ample power and an excellent frequency response of 7 Hz to 32 kHz, which is notably proficient in the low range at any level. While most headphones lose the



luster of the low end at lower levels, the RH-D30s cut through, leaving the listener asking for nothing. This is a breath of fresh air in a world of headphones that constantly fail to properly translate the program material to the player or DJ while on stage.

The ear pads securely fit over the entire ear to help eliminate unwanted ambient noise as well as provide comfort for the performers who must wear them over extended periods. The lightweight design aids in this endeavor and allows for a pleasant listening experience. Proper stress relief and a 3 m coiled cable, with 1/8" gold plated jack which is threaded to mate with the 1/4" adaptor, give peace of mind for performers who put their equipment to the test on the road. The Roland RH-D30s are an excellent choice for today's live musician.

*"We are pleased to see that our attention to detail when designing and building the RH-D30 headphones has been recognized, and thank the reviewer for his thoroughness." – Paul McCabe, Roland Canada Ltd.*

## Sennheiser HD 280 PRO

Any studio or live venue can pose many problems in regards to ambient noise, and can hinder the engineer by colouring the mix they are critiquing. While most headphones are designed to block out ambient noise, Sennheiser has hit the nail on the head.

Built with comfortable wide foam pads that cover your ears, the HD PROs boast an impressive 32dB of ambient noise attenuation, which greatly decreases the volume at which you must review your program material to be heard over the main mix. Not only does this aid in your critical listening, but it also provides superior protection to your ears from high SPLs – not only from the headphones themselves, but the surrounding noise of the studio or live venue. This is also helpful in recording situations – to prevent spillage from the headphones from bleeding into mics as you record.

One of the interesting points of this line of headphones is the ability to buy aftermarket replacement parts that are user serviceable and the ability to send them away to the manufacturer to have them converted into a miked headset.

Built for critical listening, the HD 280 PROs have a linear frequency response of 8 Hz to 25 kHz and provide a frequency response in printed graph form. Sennheiser has offered up a product worthy of its "pro" title.





## Shure SRH840

The SRH840s are designed and optimized for critical listening and studio monitoring. What immediately strikes the wearer of the SRH840s is how comfortable they are. No matter how extravagant your studio is, a long day can be quickly ruined by an uncomfortable pair of headphones. The wide padded headband and large ear pads provide an ergonomic fit and make long recording sessions more relaxing.

When plugged in, 40 mm drivers provide a frequency response of 5 Hz to 25 kHz that is custom tailored to picking out the fine details of a mix in the studio, or even in a live engineering setting. The 3 m coiled cable is detachable from the main body with a bayonet clip, and utilizes oxygen free copper and gold plated connectors.

The collapsible design and detachable cable make storage and portability a breeze. I should note that there is a cable on each side of the headphone, which, instead of being hidden in the assembly, is left protruding. Ultimately, the Shure SRH840s are quality professional monitoring headphones that will give the listener a comfortable fit and paint a clear picture of the music they are referencing.

*"Mark gives a fair review of our flagship headphones. To experience the design and craftsmanship that went into the SRH850's, we invite readers to try them out at one of our many retailers." – Mark Houry, SF Marketing*

## Ultrasone PRO 650

Ultrasone's patented S-Logic headphones use a decentralized driver position that gives the listener a more 3D representation of the program material. Using the S-Logic natural surround sound, the listener is able to perceive the same volume at lower sound pressure levels, which reduces stress on the ears and makes long sessions less painful and damaging to the engineer's ears.



The PRO series use Ultra Low Emission metal shielding to reduce magnetic emissions, which some medical boards have suggested can cause negative health effects. The gold plated 40 mm drivers provide an astonishingly beau-

tiful frequency response of 10 Hz to 25 kHz, offering superb sound quality and clarity.

Along with the great acoustic features, the PRO 650s come with an impressive arsenal of accessories. While most headphones come with a pouch and drawstring for transportation, the PRO 650s come with a zippered, moulded carrying case that has special compartments for the headphones themselves as well as all the spare parts from extra pads to the choice of two different cables. Both cables are 3 m in length with gold plated connectors and proper stress relief. Detachable from the headphone frame with a threaded 1/8" jack, one cable is coiled and the other is not. With a sense of precision and a technically advanced mindset, Ultrasone has delivered a top shelf headphone for today's modern engineer.

## Yamaha RH10MS

Always committed to the protection of its consumers' hearing, Yamaha did not break with tradition with the release of its RH10MS headphones. A large portion of the packaging has been used for health and safety information, which is often overlooked, which then results in product failure and permanent hearing loss.

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*Mark Desloges is the Owner of Drifter Productions ([www.drifterproductions.ca](http://www.drifterproductions.ca)), house tech at the Pavilion in Halifax, and the Assistant Tech Director for the Halifax Pop Explosion. He has toured North America doing FOH for several mid-level acts, and can be reached at: [mark@drifterproductions.ca](mailto:mark@drifterproductions.ca).*



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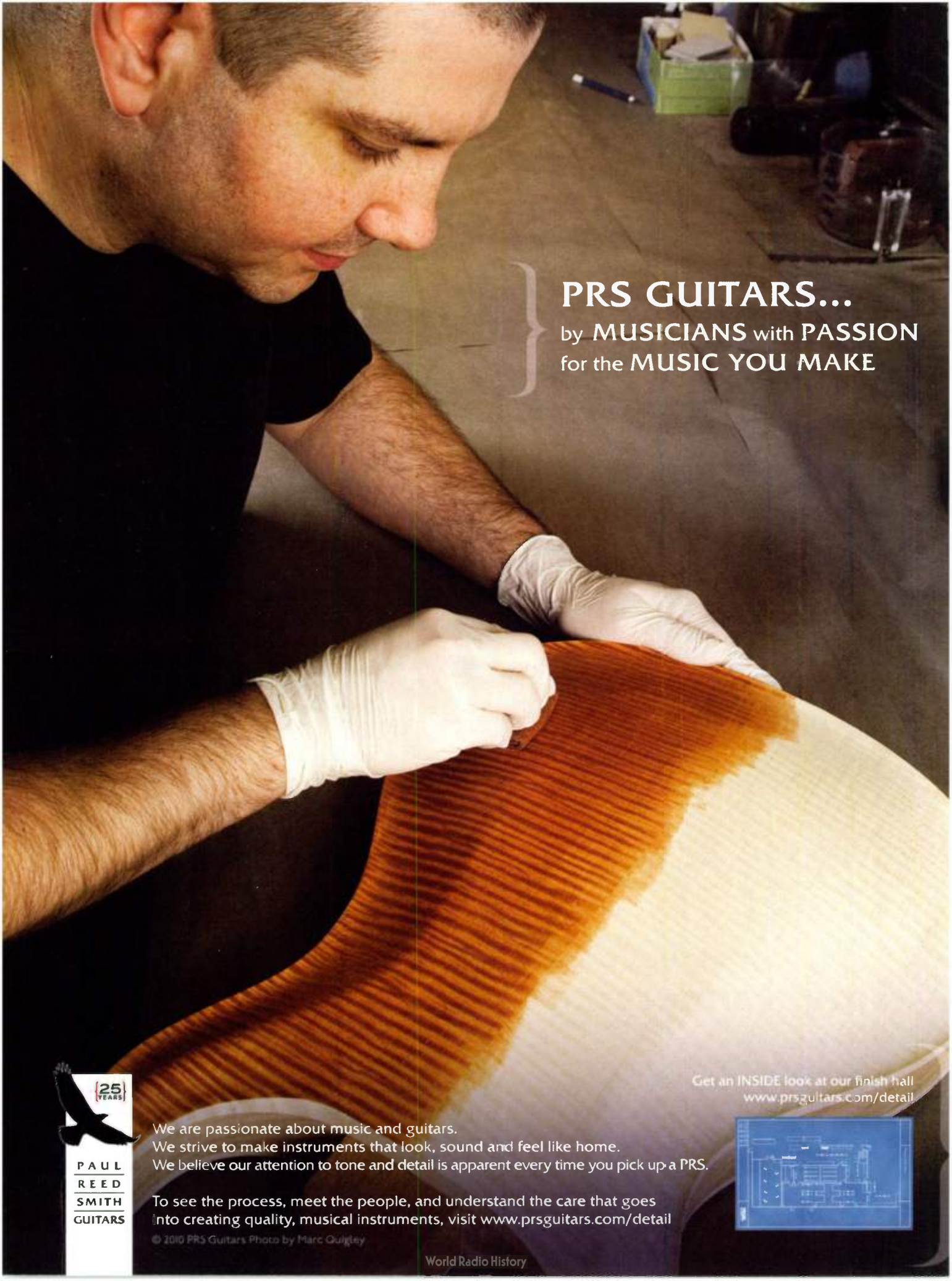


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Alan Mann is currently on tour as the guitarist for the band Stars, hitting cities across Canada and the US throughout May-June 2010. Visit [www.youarestars.com](http://www.youarestars.com) for dates. Also, look for his new solo LP out this winter. [www.alanmannmusic.com](http://www.alanmannmusic.com).

by Alan Mann

# SCORING A GIG AS A Sideman

Scoring a lucrative gig as a sideman can be tricky, with far more players than gigs available. It's a sad fact that sometimes, luck plays a bigger part in the music business than most of us would care to admit. That being said, it's important to always be prepared and ready for what may be waiting around the corner. When opportunity knocks, it rarely leaves a note!

Absorbing an artist's entire repertoire or even just a few tunes for a gig can be difficult. Interpreting a song live is often a totally different challenge than creating it in the studio. Challenges relating to instrumentation, amplification, staying practical with effects, and multiple instrument tracks can pose the problem of how to approach a track live. Often times, when a guitar (or whatever it is you play) part isn't featured on the original recording, a new part must be created, or you might be called upon to recreate a part played by another instrument. Either way, it is always crucial to straddle the line of what you believe to be the best piece of music for the song, as well as, most importantly, giving the artist what they want.

Let's look at a couple of Stars tunes to illustrate just what I mean. One of the first tunes I sat down to learn when picking up the gig as the band's touring guitarist was one of the band's first hits, "Ageless Beauty," from the album *Set Yourself On Fire*. The guitar part in the song is all down stroke power chords. Live, Amy Millan, the band's singer and guitar player, plays this part. Rather than double the part, I decided to try and voice the chords more like a piano part, and flat pick them

T	8						
A	8						
B	6						

Notation: Christopher Cargnello

with a simple arpeggio rather than strum them (see and hear below).

Here is another example. "Take Me To The Riot" was the first single off Stars' last record *In Our Bedroom After The War*. There is very little guitar on this song except in the choruses, and even then, it's mainly down stroke power chords played by Amy.

Having no real idea what the band wanted in terms of a guitar part, I again came up with something that complimented the keyboard part until it was time for me to really jump into the pre-chorus and chorus. In the pre-chorus, I'm doubling Amy

T	6				
A	7				
B	8				

with the power chords, generally playing the octave above or below her either on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> string. Then, in the chorus, I play the same chords except in the upper register, slightly changing the voicing. Have a look above to see what I mean. It's essential to remember that what's most important as a sideman is to support and lift the song and performance up as a whole as best you can. It's not all about you or any one person. Doing what you need to make the performance the best it can be makes the band, and in turn, you, look good.



by Nancy Walker

# SOLO JAZZ PIANO: Translating Lead Sheets Into Music

I've found that one of the biggest hurdles for jazz piano students is learning how to translate a lead sheet into decent solo piano playing. A lead sheet provides the melody and chord symbols to a song, and it's up to the piano player to turn this shorthand into real music.

Once piano players become familiar with chord symbol reading, the first foray into playing solo piano usually means playing the melody in the right hand, and playing root-position four-note chords in the left hand. Okay, that'll get you by in a pinch, but there are problems with this approach. First of all, the left hand makes a series of movements involving entire voicings leaping up or down a fourth or a fifth, which feels and sounds awkward. Secondly, depending on where the melody is played, some of your left hand voicings may end up being too low, sounding dissonant and unclear despite using the "right" notes for the chord (but try to fix that by playing both hands up an octave, and now you sound like a music box).

And of course there's the fact that, if you're playing right hand melody and left hand four-note chords, there's no room in there to add extensions on the chords – those nice ninths, elevenths, and thirteenthths that will give you that sophisticated harmonic "juice."

Your world will open up once you look at playing some of the harmonic accompaniment in your right hand, along with the melody. We can take this in steps. Using the beautiful Jule Styne/Sammy Cahn ballad "I Fall In Love Too Easily," we can see in Ex. 1 what the first four bars of the tune look like in lead sheet format, melody, and chord symbols only.

EXAMPLE #1 I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY STYNE/CAHN

F#m7 Eb7(b9) Ebm7 Abm7 Cm7(b9) G7(b9) Cm7

Let's start by creating our accompaniment using only the essential notes. By "essential," I mean the notes that will clearly and succinctly indicate the harmony of the tune. Obviously we need the melody; that's a no-brainer. We need the root to be played as the "bottom voice" of each chord. The other notes that are crucial to our accompaniment are what we call the "guide tones." Guide tones are the thirds and sevenths of the chords, and without them, we'd be "lost" harmonically.

(For example, if we intend to play a C7 chord, but leave the third out, we can't tell whether the chord is C7 or Cmi7).

Now let's take the same four bars of "I Fall In Love Too Easily," and use the guide tones to fill it out. In Ex. 2, we've got the root as our bottom voice, the melody as our top voice, and we've got a guide tone line in each hand playing the middle voices. If we think of those middle voices the same way we'd think of voices in a choir, and we attempt to move them as smoothly as possible from one chord to the next (this is called "voice leading"), then your solo piano arrangement sounds clear, and is easy to play.

EXAMPLE #2 I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY STYNE/CAHN

F#m7 Eb7(b9) Ebm7 Abm7 Cm7(b9) G7(b9) Cm7

\* NOTE: IN BARS 2 AND 4 ONLY THREE NOTES NEED TO BE PLAYED, BECAUSE ONE OF THE GUIDE TONES IS IN THE MELODY

We could leave it at that; the little arrangement sounds great using just those voices. But if you want to get more finesse happening, you can add some extensions to your chords, and some inner voice movement, still keeping the concept of voice-leading in mind, as shown in Ex. 3.

EXAMPLE #3 I FALL IN LOVE TOO EASILY STYNE/CAHN

F#m7 Eb7(b9) Ebm7 Abm7 Cm7(b9) G7(b9) Cm7

Granted, this approach doesn't work for every tune, depending on the movement of the melody, the tempo, and other factors. But for most tunes in the standard jazz repertoire, this is a good place to start.



Stephen Neville is the bassist from Ontario-based up-and-coming pop outfit The Balconies. Named a band to watch in 2010 by the *National Post*, you can now find the Balconies on a cross-Canada tour. [www.myspace.com/thebalconies](http://www.myspace.com/thebalconies).

**BASS**

by Stephen Neville

# FLIRTING WITH Fingerings

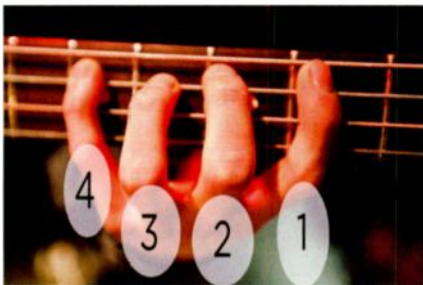
**B**efore I began playing the double bass, I had been playing the bass guitar for several years. The greatest initial challenge for me in learning the double bass was the absence of frets on the instrument! A double bassist must have proper spacing between fingers to play in tune, but also be able to shift accurately between positions, so you have to decide on fingerings to practice shifts. The value of preconceived fingerings carries over to the electric bass.

What makes a particular fingering good? Two parts: playability and musicality. A fingering with fewer shifts is easier for the fingering hand, while a fingering with fewer string crossings is easier for the plucking/picking hand. Ultimately, the best way to judge what is best is to listen to the result of each fingering variation to determine whether it works or not.

Usually a compromise between playability and musicality must be reached. For example: a one-octave G major scale. (Note: For all excerpts, a shift is represented by a dash.)

Ex. A: This first fingering is easy to play because it is in one position; but listen to the colour change at the top of the scale. The open G-string should not be played here.

Ex. B: This fingering is similar to a), but it involves a shift to avoid the open G-string, thus making it a better fingering choice.



Choosing a good fingering is merely making decisions on when to shift, and when to cross strings. Why are all these decisions necessary, and what are their benefits?

Predetermining fingerings will improve your chances of properly executing a part during performance, and will also enable you to focus on other performance-related details. Remember anything that helps with singing while playing, dancing/rocking-out while playing, accentuating dynamics, or focusing on ensemble playing will help you improve as a performer.

Thankfully, writing fingerings is a skill that improves with practice. With time, you'll discover patterns that work well, and will learn to reach solutions faster. A technique that I frequently employ in my parts is "blocking" or "barring," which refers to covering a fret over multiple strings with the

left hand. I particularly like blocking with my middle finger, because it's the strongest and fattest of all fingers (considering that my thumb is out of reach).

For example: one-octave G major arpeggio. (Note: For all excerpts, blocking/barring is represented by a circle.)

Ex. C: This is not a bad fingering, but the top two notes become difficult to articulate in faster tempos.

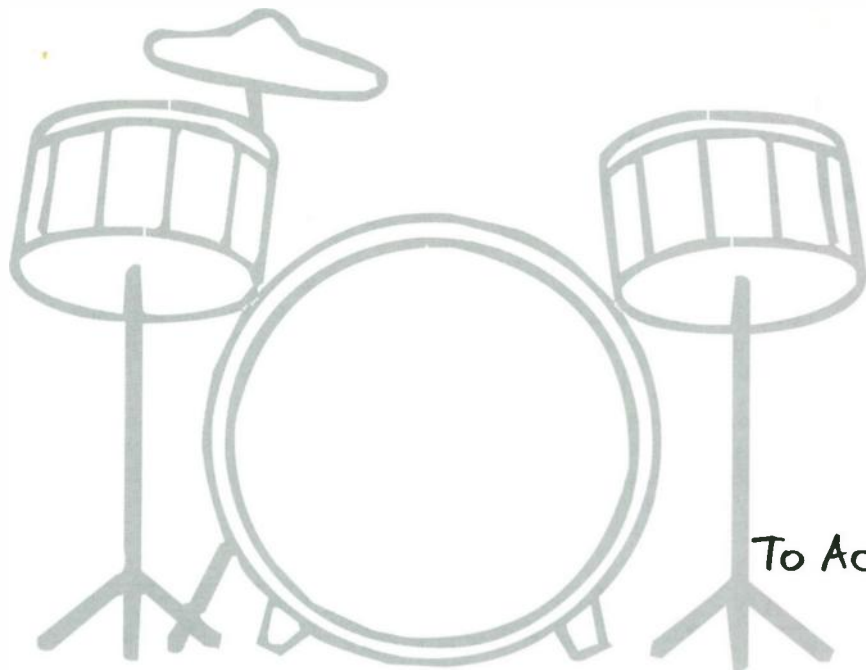
Ex. D: This fingering solution employs the same shifting pattern as the last one, but replaces the fourth finger with second finger. Why is it a good

idea to shift an extra semitone? Well, listen to the results. By blocking the top portion of the arpeggio, I know with certainty that the frets will be dampened. The result is that I'm able to execute this arpeggio faster and more accurately.

Now let's look at an example from a Balconies song. Notice the use of blocking within the passage. Here's the outro from "Battle Royale":



by Aubrey Dayle



# TRY IT SLOWLY

## A Great Way To Achieve Articulate Playing

**D**uring my many years of teaching drums, I have observed many bad habits that students find themselves battling. These habits often inhibit their playing both technically and musically. It is my job as an instructor to point out these bad habits in a way that can lead the students to correct them in an inspirational and positive way.

An interesting by-product of this process is that I can pinpoint periods in my playing past, and even some in my present playing, where I battled the very same bad habits that plague some of my students. Analysis of how I overcame some of these problems enables me to see, more clearly, what to do to eliminate them. One of the biggest issues with almost all of my students is that they do not spend enough time working on technical and musical concepts very slowly.

A gentleman by the name of Herbert Spencer coined the phrase "survival of the fittest" after reading Charles Darwin's theories in the mid 19th century. This term, along with "natural selection," are

phrases that people have used to explain why some species or social groups in the human and the animal world are more successful in their survival than others. Much of the material documented on these phrases has proven to be controversial; however, I have a somewhat different idea of how these phrases are applied to the practice and performance of music.

If we look back in history, as much as 1.5 million years ago, we find Homo erectus roaming the earth. This species, that is scientifically considered part of human evolution, would have been struggling to survive. The best and the brightest of this species did survive and passed on strong traits sociologically, and possibly genetically as well. One of those traits was the ability to learn and master essential survival tasks, such as hunting and gathering, the building of shelter, tools, and weapons, very quickly. The speed with which these essential tasks were mastered was a critical element to the survival of the individual or group. This is the very element that also creates havoc when endeavoring to learn and practice a

complex task such as musical performance.

This tendency to attempt to master a task very quickly is still very much an integral part of the character of the modern human being. Music students often work on material that is too advanced for them, or they practice exercises and compositions much too fast for the state of their technical and musical development. Their ego and drive to prove their abilities force them to do this. As a result, this drive actually slows down any improvement that they hope to achieve. Their drive to be one of the fittest actually diminishes their chances of musical survival or excellence.

I understood this tendency in myself for the first time when I studied with the great Canadian drum instructor Jim Blackley. During my first lesson he asked me to play basic swing time on the ride cymbal, with the hi-hat on beats two and four, and the bass drum feathering every quarter note. I launched into a groove at about 140 beats to the quarter note. He said fine, and then turned the metronome on and asked me to play the same thing

at 40 beats to the quarter note. I simply could not play anything consistently at that tempo. It was as if I didn't know how to play the drums at all! I realized that I would not be able to perform well at a moderate or fast tempo until I could comfortably play at a very slow tempo. I spent two years with Jim and we didn't do very many exercises quicker than 40 beats to the quarter note. That period changed my musical life!

This experience taught me the value of slow practice. It is important to reject that natural impulse to attempt to master a musical technique or concept quickly. It takes time for the mind and body to assimilate and organize information. It takes even more time for that information to be implemented in a way that produces a high level of performance. This will prove to always be the case, unless you are akin to Mozart or Buddy Rich.

Absorb as much information as you can, experiment, and have fun, but try practicing music slowly at first. You will be able to play articulately as slowly or as quickly as you want while remaining relaxed.



by Daniel Schnee

Daniel Schnee is a Toronto-based free jazz saxophonist who has performed worldwide with a number of Juno and Grammy Award-winning musicians. He has been internationally recognized as a graphic score composer, and is a former student of jazz legend Ornette Coleman.

# HOW TO X-RAY A Standard

**T**here are many ways to approach mastering a standard jazz song. Focusing on harmony, chord/scale relationships, transposition, modulation, walking bass line figures, and new arrangements are all valuable methods in the jazz musician's creative toolkit. And now, thanks to a bit of experimentation (and a few trillion hours of practicing), I have come up with an exercise that really facilitates the process. I call it "X-raying Standards."

## X-Raying Explained

To X-ray a standard is to take the rhythmic structure of a song's melody and ably play completely different notes and intervals over it. For example, if the melody of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" is a series of quarter notes followed by a quarter note rest [C C G G, A A G...], then the "X-rayed" version would be the same series of notes and a rest except with random notes such as [E $\flat$  B F A $\flat$ , D E C#... ] replacing the original ones. Now, the new "melody" sounds absolutely nothing like the original, but the rhythm will still make you think of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

Standard X-raying is valuable because it does five great things for us:

**First** of all, it separates the melody/harmony from the rhythm, which is burned into our brain from years of performance. X-raying gives us a much greater ornamental flexibility when we can do this with songs we have played for years and years.

**Secondly**, it gives us much more improvisational flexibility when sidestepping. We don't just have to play the melody note in the key a half step up; we can transpose the melody several times in smaller segments with much less difficulty.

**Thirdly**, it gives you a way to quote songs without playing the melody, which is handy when the harmony of the piece you are playing is radically different than the harmony of the piece you are quoting.

**Fourth**, it gives us a chance to further develop our time, as many standard melodies are more difficult to play with larger intervallic leaps or highly chromatic scales, such as symmetrical dominant.

**Finally**, it incorporates a type of independence in your thinking much like a drummer develops hand and foot independence on the drum set. If you can separate intervals, rhythms, melodies, and harmony at will, you have developed a skill that, managed well, can only result in high levels of creativity.

## In Practice

To begin with, take a small part of a melody like "C Jam Blues" and play it while continuously altering the melody with

added flats or sharps. This helps you begin disconnecting your mind's expectations of the melody and harmony structures you are used to. Then take the same melody and play notes chromatically, ascending by half steps up and down over top of the rhythm of the melody, just to get used to separating such a famous melody from its skeleton.

Once you have done this and have become comfortable hearing something different over such a well-known rhythm, begin playing completely random notes over the rhythmic skeleton, attempting to not repeat yourself along the way. This is initially a very simple exercise that can become as difficult as you need it to be for your own growth.

Repeat this process for any number of songs you have in your standard performance repertoire, including your own compositions as well. To start with, I recommend the following: "Impressions," "I Got Rhythm," "Giant Steps," "Cotton Tail," and "Satin Doll." Start without using the metronome, introducing it into the exercise after you can confidently X-ray each song. And, as I always recommend, keep a record of the metronome markings for each song you X-ray in your practice journal, as the tempos you can comfortably play each at will vary from song to song.

A fun way to approach this exercise is to X-ray two songs (without metronome), one after the other, then start blending the two together into a kaleidoscope of rhythms and intervals. Two good standards for this exercise are "Take the A Train" and "Oleo," or my current favorite duo, "Solar" and "Body and Soul." I recommend that practice sessions be interspersed with a few of these pairings to keep one's daily regimen lively.

One of the big difficulties you will face will be resisting the urge to ascend or descend where the original melody does. At first, following the general shape of the melody while chromaticizing it is fine, but it is best to eventually move away from this idea in order to achieve the highest level of melodic/chromatic independence.

Of course, you can do anything you want, but it is always in your best interests to maintain creative self-discipline and expand your palette. And once you go back to playing these songs as they were written, your ear will now have new views of how the melody can be ornamented or rearranged from moment to moment.

X-raying standards is admittedly a little bit of an unusual approach to the standard material we all play, but I believe that it will greatly assist your technique, ear, and arranging skills as you explore this process.



by Mike Herriott

# DEVELOPING YOUR RANGE:

## Part 2

### Exercise #2

This second exercise is one that I use for developing the extended upper register. This one uses a simple two-octave major arpeggio.

Starting on low G, play the major triad, 1-3-5; the second octave triad, 1-3-5; and then the tonic at the beginning of the third octave. What is important is how you think of this as you do it. The following is a list of objectives to keep in mind while doing this exercise:

1. Think of the series of triads each as a musical phrase: 1-3-5 (play the 5 longer and with direction, leading to the next 1), then 1-3-5 (again, the 5 leads to the final 1). The 1-3-5 also has its own natural musical direction that must be played.
2. Think of the second triad as if you are still in the first octave. In other words, although you are playing the second octave, in your mind, you want to be hearing the first octave. This helps to keep things nice and open.
3. Approach the tonic of the third octave (the last note) as if you want to continue; however, when you actually play it, it only needs to be a strong downbeat and doesn't have to be very long.

as being the easiest register on the instrument, it becomes your "comfort zone." In order to break away from this, it is necessary to adopt a moveable "comfort zone" so that no matter what register you are playing in, you always consider it to be "middle range."

### Taking Ownership of Your Pursuits

When setting out to learn something new, it is very common to feel as if the goal we want to achieve is beyond our reach. As long as we think that, it will remain so. What has to happen instead is that we must get a strong mental picture of that which we aim to achieve and then imagine ourselves making it happen.

When you set out to learn the trumpet, you must be a trumpet player from the start (and I'm not referring to all the beer drinking). The only way to picture yourself as a trumpet player is to listen to trumpet players that you admire and picture yourself doing what they're doing. In time, the picture will resemble more of you than anyone else.

In jazz, we do this with transcribing and learning the solos of great players so that we might gain some insight into what that person was thinking at the time of playing the solo. (Interestingly enough, someone once handed Kenny Wheeler a transcription of one of his own solos and, in his



4. Make sure that you rest after playing one set for as long as it took to play the set.
5. Having started with G major, by the time you get to C major, your G at the top of the staff doesn't seem as high as it did when you played it the first time. You're probably playing it more open and relaxed than you did the first time.
6. I always stop this exercise when the second 5 becomes "an issue" or doesn't speak properly. I won't tell you how high that is...
7. Always remain relaxed throughout this exercise. As soon as you tense up, you are working against yourself. Let the air do the work.

modesty, he said, "I can't play that!")

In taking ownership of our pursuits, we immediately become that which we are striving for. Otherwise, it will always remain beyond our reach.

### Your Best Teacher = Your Ears

In order to play high, we must appreciate why we do it. If it is a tool to be used when improvising, then it must be heard musically in your own heart and soul before doing it. If it used to play lead in a big band, then we must understand what that role is and do what we must to get into the heads of the great lead trumpet players. One of my favourite lead trumpeters of all time is Arnie Chycoski and I spent many an hour playing along with Boss Brass albums in order to try to understand his approach to phrasing and articulation.

Playing lead is not just about the high notes but, if they are in your bag, you can use them to make the most exciting moments even more exciting. Remember, strive for tone and let your ears be your guide.

Above is an example starting on low G. The dotted line indicates the musical direction of tonic to third to fifth:

One last thing to consider while doing these exercises is that, in order to develop our range, we must expand our concept of what the range is. If you think of your middle range



Yale Fox is a professional DJ and producer. He is also one of the world's only Social Nightclub Behaviourists. Visit [www.fraglerockdjs.com](http://www.fraglerockdjs.com) for more information.

by Yale Fox

# ADVANCED MIXING TECHNIQUES FOR DJs

## Part 2

In general, knowing the key of your tracks and mixing harmonically can have a profound effect on your dance floor. That topic is definitely a separate article because track choice can be used to raise and lower the energy of the dance floor and affect the overall atmosphere of the nightclub. With other genres such as hip-hop, where mixing doesn't typically last as long, it is not quite as important, because it is not as apparent.

The next frequency band is the mid-range. This typically contains the vocals, lead instruments, and certain drums such as toms. The mid-range usually remains untouched during a mix. Typically, the incoming song consists of several bars of music to mix with.

There will rarely be any lead vocals in this part. If there are lead vocals, you should consider a more creative way of mixing in, such as cutting. Mixing vocals over vocals just does not sound good and can be disorienting for your dance floor.

Highs are the high end of the spectrum; the snare drum, cymbals, and hi-hats are examples of sounds in this range. What's important with highs is minimizing any type of blatant clash. If the snares don't line up properly between two tracks, you can take them out of one channel by reducing the highs. Another useful trick when mixing in is to consider the voices of both artists.

If your current track has a female (typically higher) voice, you can take out some bass without affecting her voice. This can also make some room for the incoming bass. Likewise, if your track is a deep, male voice, you probably will not want to take too much bass out because it will be very noticeable to the dance floor.

Last but not least, a short note on panning. Panning re-

fers to where your sound sits in stereo-space. You can pan it all the way to the left, and the sound would only come out of your left speaker, and vice versa. Not every mixer has pan knobs on the individual channel. Many have pan knobs on the master mix. Do not get these confused. We are discussing the mixers that have them on individual channels, such as the RANE TTMS7-SL (pictured).

Panning affects how we hear sound in a 3D space, such as a nightclub. Additionally, it affects volume in a very specific manner.

As we pan to the left, volume decreases to about 50 per cent until the middle with most of it is coming from the left speaker. As we move entirely to the left, it moves back up to 100 per cent volume, but exclusively comes out of the left speaker. The same applies in reverse.

Knowing this can help you figure out interesting ways to bring in a mix, such as sweeping it in from a side. Additionally, you can kink your ongoing track slightly to the left, and your incoming track slightly to the right. It can also be a very useful way to remove any potential clash between songs.

Finally, keep in mind that the only rule is that there are no rules. These are just very basic and generalized ideas about some of the more technical forms of mixing, which I have noticed over the years.





PHOTO: JENNIFER TZAR

by Meaghan Smith

## THE PATH TO MY Voice

**W**hen I was five years old, my schoolteacher sent my class home one afternoon with an assignment. We were to draw a picture of ourselves as grown-ups in our chosen professions and write a sentence about what we were going to be. I knew exactly what I was going to draw.

Blue and green crayons colored my long fancy dress, a peach crayon filled in my blushed cheeks, a brown crayon for my eyes and long hair, and a black crayon depicted a microphone in my hand. "When I grows up, I want to be a sanger!" is awkwardly printed along the top of the page. I meant: "When I grow up I want to be a singer!"

I had always loved to sing, but by the time I was 15, I had developed a healthy dose of diffidence and shyness. My childhood confidence was long gone and I became a closet singer. My passion for writing songs and singing them continued, but for an audience of one – myself. When it came time to graduate from high school, I knew my fear of singing in public would inhibit any dream I had of being the singer I had drawn all those years ago. In fact, the drawing itself was what I was more comfortable with. So I decided to pursue my love of visual art and became an animator.

But after three years of drawing all day everyday, I began to feel artistically burnt out. I turned to my guitar more and more for the creative outlet of writing songs and singing them. One night, my sister called and told me about a horrible day she had just had. As soon as I hung up the phone I wrote a song for her, but I knew she would never hear it. I was too nervous to sing it even for her! I was heartbroken.

Stage fright became my worst enemy. I sang alone in my room and

felt the rich sound of my voice slicing through the silence. I could see my sister's day being brightened by the song I wanted to sing for her. I began to imagine larger groups of people hearing me. I would close my eyes and there they were, cheering for me and loving my songs. Finally, my aspirations of singing in front of people overtook my fear of the stage and I decided to conquer it.

I started by singing for my college roommate. She had to be facing the opposite wall, but at least we were in the same room. Eventually, another friend was invited to listen too. I was now singing for two people! Soon a small crowd would gather in our dorm to hear me play.

Check out a video interview with Meaghan Smith on the CM Multimedia page, [www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia](http://www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia).

I graduated from college and moved to Halifax to work as an animator. Being in a new city where I knew no one helped me find the confidence to at least get onstage, knowing that if I performed atrociously, I could just move back to Ontario. For four years I battled my stage fright. Little by little, night by night, mistake by mistake, my voice began to shine through. Finally, I could sing in front of people the way I sang alone. It was the most freeing feeling in the world!

But now I had a decision to make. Was I going to take this seriously and try to make this a career for myself? I wanted it. I had wanted it my whole

life! I knew what I had to do. I had to make a record that represented me and go for it! After months of struggling to write in any style at all, I found myself frustrated and dispirited. So I did what I always do when I need a pick-me-up. I went to see a friend's show.

After his set, I poured my heart out to him and expressed my feelings of disappointment and failure. He gave me the best piece of advice I have ever received. He told me to go home and write the worst songs I could. It was such shocking advice that I decided to give it a shot. I can't tell you how much fun it is to write and sing bad songs! Finally I was enjoying myself again, writing and singing. I realized that if I knew how to write a bad song, I knew how to write a good one. If I knew what didn't suit my voice, I knew what did.

It felt like my soul was finally cracking open. I reached in and pulled out all the emotions I could. My voice caressed the words so easily and naturally. I finally felt myself in my songs. I had found my voice.

Here I am now with that record, *The Cricket's Orchestra*, available across North America on a major label. I have toured with artists such as k.d. lang, Ron Sexsmith, Sarah McLachlan, and Chantal Kreviazuk. I usually sing to crowds of approximately 1,500 and will sing to 40,000 people this summer at Lilith Fair! I am finally here and loving every minute of it!

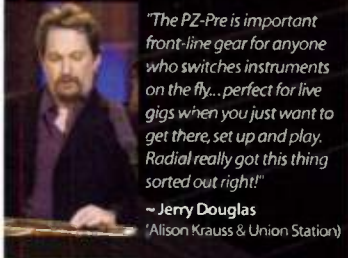
So to my five-year old self and anyone else on their own path towards their voice, just keep on going. It could be the most fulfilling adventure you'll ever go on.



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 ~ Tommy Emmanuel  
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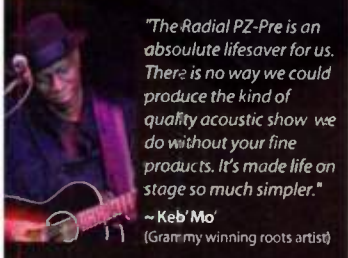
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"The Radial PZ-Pre's sound is only rivaled by it's user-friendly features... a must have for the acoustic musician that is serious about tone on stage."  
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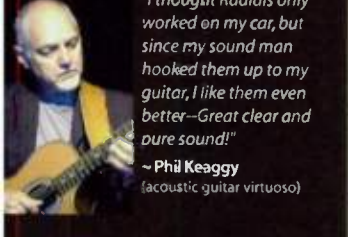
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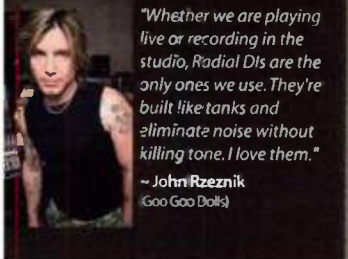
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 (acoustic guitar virtuoso)



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 ~ John Rzeznik  
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World Radio History



## Looking Into

# LIGHTS

BY KEVIN YOUNG • PHOTOS BY LANA PESANT

If you're unfamiliar with Lights, a quick trip to her website will tell you pretty much everything you need to know. To say she's an efficient communicator is a bit of an understatement.

What you don't get there, you could just as easily get from her manager, Jian Ghomeshi, should you happen to run into him downtown Toronto. To be honest, Ghomeshi's enthusiasm about Lights and her music nearly surpasses his young client's own level of excitement about her recent success.

Ghomeshi is probably best known as a CBC Radio personality, scourge of Billy Bob Thornton, and former member of Moxy Frivous, but for the better part of the past decade, he's been quietly, carefully, managing Lights, mostly, by letting the artist - formerly known as Valerie Anne Poxleitner - grow into her own, on her own.

"Back then, I thought 'I want to do whatever I can to help this girl! And I believed, passionately, that I saw talent here that I'd never seen. At the age of 12 she was already recording demos in her basement, playing all the instruments on all the songs.' The young artist's metamorphosis took time, however. "The goal is to get to the point where you find your own voice," Ghomeshi says. "She went through Lights the pop singer, the goth rocker, the punk, the new wave kid..." Then, about four years ago, he says, she penned "February Air," and everything began to fall into place.

Lights (left) with keyboardist Adam Weaver & drummer Maurie Kaufmann.

## ILLUMINATION

Though she's legally changed her name to Lights Valerie Poxleitner, the singer/songwriter does have still another alter ego: Capt. Lights - interstellar warrior woman/super heroine who fights super villains while roaming the space ways in a tricked out starship. Down here on Earth, however, she travels a bit more humbly, trading in her starship for a van, and her ray gun for a keytar...

As we speak, Lights is on her way to a gig in Windsor, ON. "It's our first show in Canada this year. We've been on tour all year, through Europe and the States opening for Owl City," she says. "I'm so excited."

She is. And she's a fast talker to boot, which makes transcribing our interview a bit challenging. But even as a disembodied voice emanating from a laptop, and even after several listens, I should add, Lights' enthusiasm is refreshingly, genuinely contagious - much like the airy, hook laden synth pop she's swiftly becoming known for.

And she has every reason to be excited. Since taking home the 2009 JUNO for Best New Artist on the strength of her six-song, self-titled 2008 EP, the 23-year-old singer put a lot of ground behind touring in support of the EP's follow up - her full-length debut, *The Listening*, released in September of 2009.

Co-produced and co-written with Thomas "Tawgs" Salter and Dave Thomson, *The Listening* pairs up songs from the EP with songs from later sessions, but the two different projects had a great deal in common. "It was the same process," says the singer. "The EP was the best stuff I'd written up to that point in my life. I consider the EP an appetizer. I thought, 'I've got some great songs, and I know I need to put out a full-length record, but I thought I'd put [the EP] out to start building a foundation.'

The EP did far more than build a foundation. The videos for her singles "February Air" and "Drive My Soul" made a significant impact at MuchMusic, hitting number three and number one on the Much Countdown, respectively, gaining the young singer national recognition. While Much may not be the be all and end all it once was in terms of breaking young Canadian acts, the attention certainly didn't hurt. And when you're a girl from Timmins, ON playing in a field that includes both new sensations with the stature of Lady Gaga and heritage institutions like Madonna and Gwen Stefani, you're unlikely to get any of that attention unless you really have something going on.

## STELLAR

Given the fact she JUNO Award and an earlier Indie Award win at CMW 2009 came about well in advance of the album's release, it's fair to say the EP garnered a bit of heat - enough that you might wonder if Lights felt the kind of pressure upon the release of her debut that many artists do when they release a second record. After all, sometimes when you've had the appetizer, the meal seems redundant. For her part though, Lights just went along doing what she does, and didn't worry about how the album would be received. "I just continued on, writing every chance I had," she says. "There was really no pressure, no stress."

Within a year of the EP's release, Lights again had a fistful of songs she considered strong enough to finish her debut. The EP was enough to give listeners a pretty fair idea what she was about, she explains, but not the full picture. "I still felt some kind of artistic leeway to be brave with the other songs and step out a little bit."

That didn't mean making a jarring change of direction so much as fine tuning her sound. As with her previous songs, the newer tracks



## QUICK FLASHES

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MOTU interface  
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### MAURIE KAUFMANN (DRUMS)

Ludwig kick drum (22x14)  
Ludwig floor tom (16x16)  
Ludwig tom (13x9)  
Ludwig Supraphonic 402 chrome snare (14x6.5)  
Ludwig Supraphonic snare (14x5)  
SABIAN AA 15" hi-hat  
SABIAN AAX 19" dark crash  
Zilco 20" cymbal  
Gibraltar 8606 snare stand  
Gibraltar 8607 hi-hat stand  
Ludwig Speed King pedal  
Pearl kick pedal  
Behringer 502 mixer



# LIGHTS

on *The Listening* mine a similar, distinctive vein of insidiously catchy, keyboard heavy pop. But every song, she says, represents a lesson learned – some personal, some in terms of process. Some, in fact, that happened almost incidentally, a byproduct of the process that informs both Lights' songwriting as well as her choice of the sounds she chooses to bring her songs to life. "It's all a process of wandering," she says. "To find my sound, to find the right sound in sound banks. The same goes for songwriting. You're waiting to stumble across a melody that makes you feel right. Then you start to work with it."

If she's a bit of a nomad creatively, it comes naturally – a product of having missionary parents and living in a variety of countries, from the Philippines to the Caribbean, as a child. "The way that I was raised set me up in an optimal way for the life that I'm leading – that nomadic lifestyle, the ability to leave things behind and not cling to some established foundation. I guess that it's parallel to how I am creatively. It's really conducive to the way I write, too. It's a process of sitting down, analyzing where you're going, and trying to resolve it."

With some songs, that resolution proved somewhat elusive – "Pretend" for example, both the sixth and thirteenth track on *The Listening*, the latter as a reprise. "I wrote 'Pretend' years before this came out, and made so many attempts at recording it and still couldn't get it right. It was so raw and honest just with the piano. I did the first version, the reprise (track 13), in Logic, just my vocals and piano, and kept scrapping everything else I tried to build around it except the piano and vocals."

Eventually, she and Tawgs came up with a version they liked. "We managed to pull it together by approaching the song from a different angle. It's actually in 6/8, so I laid in the vocals and the organ in 6/8 and the rest of the production in 4/4. If we had recorded it in 4/4, my vocals wouldn't have synced up the same. It's complicated, a really strange way to go about the song, but we nailed it."

As much as it's important to be able to let things go, to pick up and move on, even the most nomadic of personalities have some few items they'd rather not part with. For Lights, that's how she felt about the demo for "Pretend." There was just something about the original stripped down track that made it impossible to leave behind. "You don't need the production to get that song across. I felt it was important to include it in the record as well, because it's as honest as it gets."

If anything, the juxtaposition of the two versions of "Pretend" on the record says more about Lights than any other single track on *The Listening*. Although her music is probably most easily described as pop, there's too much meat on its bones and quantifiable potential in her songwriting to let it go at that. When Lights talks about the recording process, the genesis of a song, or tripping through the sound banks of her MicroKorg to find sounds, she never sounds uncertain. Though difficult to describe, that's a quality that translates to her music itself – a surety in both the arrangements and lyrics that's undeniable. They are lean, without being stark. And though there's a fair bit of ear candy on all the album's tracks, it is artfully placed in a way that never obscures the central hooks, or diminishes her voice.

Strip away the bubbly synth bits, the production, the quirky fashion sense, and you're still left with a truly talented young songwriter who's material would be just as memorable without any of the packaging surrounding it – one who isn't afraid to step out on a limb, and occasionally, fall on her face.

## GROWING BRIGHTER

Ghameshi wasn't the only industry veteran struck by Lights' innate potential. Her agent, Jack Ross, a founding partner and Senior VP of The Agency Group Canada, was equally quick to recognize Lights' unique talents. But both Ghameshi and Ross stress that they had wanted to give Lights an opportunity to realize her own vision. "Jian and I both come from a real pro artist background," says Ross. "We're not 'Svenfali-type' music professionals. We really believe in helping artists realize their vision. She certainly does, has from a very young age, and continues to."

That doesn't mean there weren't rough patches along the way. With many artists, regardless of age, it takes time to grow into themselves – into both their sound and their identity as a songwriter and performer.



Weaver behind the keys.



Kauffman at the kit.

Patience has been a key element of Lights' development – not only on the part of Ross and Ghameshi, but for the artist herself.

With some pop artists, the live aspect, says Ross, is the last thing to be considered. "For us, we thought the best thing we could do for Lights is help her develop live, and use that as one of the pinnacles to build her career from; to take the obvious charisma and star quality that Jian and I always saw in her and help her learn how to transfer that, to find the right musicians to play with that could do something really unique."

Ross continues: "There were tough shows, where the response wasn't great, where there were a lot of technical difficulties. But she always took

those situations and learned and grew from them. The tough gigs, early on, are just as important as the successful gigs."

Lights calls Ross and Ghomeshi her champions – the kind of team members any musician would be fortunate to have as advisors. "They've been there the longest; they saw in me, when I was 15, something that nobody else did. I would not be here without them."

Their support has been crucial to this point, she continues. "I'm fortunate enough to be able to be myself, and to have people like them behind me saying that that's okay, because there's no one else who can do that. And that's another thing. They've never, ever, even once implied that they wanted me to be anyone other than myself."

For Lights' part, she's taken that opportunity and run with it. "It's been non-stop. We did the Warped Tour last summer, a Canadian tour with Keane in September. In November, we did a headlining tour across America in small venues. November was our headlining tour across Canada..." And over the past few months, the opening slot on Owl City's tour has taken her to Europe for the first time.

The headlining Canadian tour, she explains, was her first opportunity to incorporate video into the live set, in the form of her Capt. Lights

early on. "I know the story of the Internet sensation has been written by me and you and everybody over the last decade, using various bands for examples. This was one of those, but was very much that the music did the talking. I mean, we have a glamorous and fabulous website for Lights now, but it didn't look like that then. It was just a picture of her and her music. We had a million hits before even talking to labels, even before Old Navy played her," he says, citing Lights' song, "The Last Thing on Your Mind" which was featured in an Old Navy ad campaign in 2008.

"There are still no shortcuts," Ghomeshi continues. "It's still about having the goods and the chops. You can be famous for a day or a year, but what has always been the priority for me is to build a long, sustained career for this human who is incredibly talented and for whom it would be such a waste to rise too quickly and fall off. If anything, my job, as I see it, was to not have this happen too fast."

Fair enough, but to be blunt, that's exactly the kind of effusive manager speak that an artist's detractors sometimes seize upon as an excuse to dismiss them as something less than genuine, which, if you aren't a fan of what Lights does, you just might be tempted to do. You would, however, be missing the point.

Bottom line, Ghomeshi's enthusiasm is justifiable. It isn't just fuelled by Lights' potential, but by her work ethic, dedication to learning the craft of a songwriter and performer, and a willingness to explore every option available in an effort live up to her potential.

Not only did she know what she wanted, she strived for it, relentlessly. "Half the battle in life is knowing what you want to do," says Ghomeshi. "She knew not only what she wanted to do, but what she had to do. She works her ass off. She's never been lazy about this. From the time she was 14 until she was 18, we had a deal. Each month she would write and record a new CD for me – I've got a backlog of about 500 songs Lights has recorded. Each month it would be six to ten songs. They would vary wildly. Some were great. Some weren't. Four years she did this."

To this day, he says, and against his advice, she rarely takes a day off. But then, Lights' fascination with sci fi, with music, with sounds and stories, are all part of the same world for her. Beyond talent, that's what sets her apart.



episodes, her aforementioned alter ego and the protagonist in a series of online comic strip/animations she has developed in tandem with Tomm Coker, co-director/screenwriter of 2007's *Catcombs* and artist on Marvel Comics' four-issue *Daredevil Noir* mini-series.

Of all Lights' recent accomplishments, this, she says, is one of the ones that she's most proud of. "It is honestly one of the coolest ways to be creative, but still implement the music and my other interests," she says. Fair to say, in other words, she's a bit of comic geek. Given the adventures posted on Lights' website, her album's *Watchmen*-esque cover art, her Wonder Woman meets Galactic Warrior sense of style, and more than a passing fondness for plastic ray guns as home décor, perhaps more than just a bit of a geek.

"I've always been a fan of sci-fi," she says. "I guess my mom passed that on to me and my dad passed on the musical part. There are pretty much limitless bounds in science fiction. It makes me feel like I can be as creative as I want."

Lights' online presence is a good gauge of just how creative she can be. But again, comic book trappings and appearances aside, what resonates with her fans – who she likes playing *World of Warcraft* with and who have formed a Lights Guild in the game – is her music. Ghomeshi calls attention to the hits Lights' original MySpace page began generating

If you don't have a sense of yourself as an artist, it's unlikely anyone else will. More than ever, it's important for a recording artist to telegraph who they are to both their existing and potential fan base in every way they can – to show fans not only what you're doing, when, where, and how, but to make them rabidly curious about what's next and keep them coming back to find out. "The only way to drive that home," says Lights, "is to get your live chops up. If you come out to a show, you can see it in action."

Regardless of what genre of music you make, that's the lesson here: to break out of the pack and be heard above the noise, you really do have to work to exceed expectations on pretty much every level – onstage, on record, and online. "It's so crucial to communicate on all those levels. That's how people learn about artists they like and learn everything about them. The way I feel, the more you know about somebody, the harder it is to forget about them."



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

# FESTIVAL QUEST

## A LOOK AT GRASSROOTS MUSIC FESTIVALS

BY KRISTIAN PARTINGTON

"There's art and music, young man, to be found in the hills, mountains, and plains of this grand nation," a voice told me while I dozed on the couch on a particularly dismal February afternoon. The grey bleakness of the dark winter had taken a brief hold of me and I clearly needed something fresh to set my sights upon. I snapped to and pictured sun-drenched weekends upon grassy farm fields in valleys with names like Shelter or Happy, where timbre stages house musicians who play music for the sheer love of it, and everyone is a potential dance partner. I thought of the care-free feeling that embraces a music festival fan when they know there are no deadlines or timelines except those that dictate when the music onstage ends and the jamming at campsites begins.

I've always loved that feeling and the thought of it inspired me on that dreary afternoon to set out on a quest, of sorts, to discover what I could about what makes certain places along the Canadian summer festival circuit special.

See, I've been to a fair number of festivals of all shapes and sizes over the years. One of the best weekends of my teenage years was spent running around Mosport Speedway east of Toronto in a mind-altered frenzy during the great Edenfest experiment of 1996 with 90,000 other music fans. There was something like 70 bands on the bill that weekend: The Tragically Hip, Porno for Pyros, The Cure, Live, Bush, and the list goes on. As great as that weekend was, however, and as high on my list of musical experiences it ranks, I also learned there are things about massive, commercial festivals that can take away from the music and alter the experience for the worse. By the time rabid fans started flipping school buses and burning everything in sight on the final day of Edenfest, I realized there's something to be said for the grassroots festival that sustains itself year after year without the chaos and annoyances of the larger offerings.

So I set out to learn what sets some apart from others.

It's a well-known fact that the Maritimes are blessed with an abundance of musical talent and a population known as much for its hospitality as it is for its love of a good party. There's a vibe in Newfoundland that nurtures solid musical talent all year long and Nova Scotia and PEI have their share of gatherings, but I was seeking something a little different, a bit quirky, really, and in that vein I stumbled upon Sappyfest, a budding festival in its fifth year of taking over the

streets of Sackville, NB. Like many of the east coast festivals I've heard about — Stanfest in Canso, NS or the Evolve Festival in Antigonish, NS — Sappyfest seems to embody the true sense of musical community.

"It's like having a wedding reception without the vows," says Paul Henderson, one of the three original Sappyfest organizers who, somewhat reluctantly, helped get the event off the ground when some friends were looking for a way to celebrate their intertwined musical talents. "We are primarily musicians or work with musicians and we started it to showcase our friends. It offers some sort of context to bring our friends to this little small town which we live in and we find quite beautiful," says Henderson.

What makes Sappyfest special, like so many small festivals across the nation, is that despite its growth, it's managed to maintain a down home feel. The primary venue may be a massive tent that covers the main street of town and not Jon Claytor's back yard, which was the original intention when the event was first conceived, but it makes no difference because Sackville becomes everyone's backyard for a weekend. All good festivals, I've found, started out with a similar story, somebody decides to throw a party with some live music, word spreads, and the event takes on a mind of its own. Revelers fill the hotel rooms, Guerilla camping is everywhere, yet everyone, from the fans to the artists, is respectful and treated that way in return.

I spoke with a few musicians throughout my quest. Jay Malinowski, the effervescent frontman with Bedouin Soundclash, spoke simply of the "atmosphere" at various festivals throughout his career that stick out in his mind. He recalled Vancouver Island Music Fest where his band took to the main stage after legendary folk singer, Don McLean. "I remember that festival being so great... everything about it just felt so local," he says. I suppose there's nothing like 12 minutes of "American Pie" to bring a crowd together.

As an emerging band still on the cusp of making a name for itself, Bedouin also had the opportunity to play the Hillside Festival in Guelph, ON — arguably one of the biggest "down home" festivals going. "At Hillside," he said, "there's always something interesting going down on every stage and it still has that grassroots feel to it."

He recalls playing the side stage at Hillside in 2004, before playing a workshop that night and Feist, who was just becoming an international name

# artists

to remember, closed the night down. For Bedouin Soundclash at the time, this festival was a great opportunity to get their name out there. Within a year, they would hit the big time and the rest, they say, is history.

Malinowski's experience with these and the many other festivals he's been to highlights one of the main benefits of the festival circuit for artists: the artist networking and collaboration and the chance to hit a stage in front of people they might not otherwise be exposed to.

ArtsWells, a small festival that overruns tiny Wells, BC thrives on the idea that emerging artists are looking for a chance gain some exposure. As a small festival that attracts around 1,000 people, there isn't a huge budget to pay the bands, but it seems to make no difference. According to the Artistic Director, Julie Fowler, they had around 80 acts on the bill last year.

"For the artists, it's a great opportunity for networking with other artists and out of this comes different collaborations or artists touring together and just making those connections," says Fowler. "Getting that sense of community I think has been the biggest benefit for the artists who've participated and I think that goes for a lot of the festival goers as well."

She likens ArtsWells to a summer camp for musicians and poets where no act is placed upon a higher footing than another. There are no headliners, so to speak, and artists must accept that this festival won't make them rich in the monetary sense.

"The whole town becomes a festival," Todd Menzies, a singer-songwriter friend of mine said to me as we discussed this earthy little place. "People camp out anywhere and everywhere. The river they use to pan for gold becomes a gathering of people - jamming, swimming (clothing optional), drinking, and smoking. They have poetry readings in this little old church and it gets packed with people overflowing out the front doors onto the grass where you can lay back under a huge shady tree and listen. It was definitely a festival that changed my life forever."

This interaction between artist and fan is a common occurrence throughout the Canadian festival circuit, especially at the small festivals that have yet to grow out of themselves, and this is what I love.

"There isn't a huge divide between the fan who purchased a ticket for the festival and the artist who's performing," says Fowler. "It's like this big family coming together every year" - not unlike the vibe I got from the Sappyfest crew in Sackville.

As my quest moved forward, a theme began to emerge - one that centred on the idea that a group of people converging together, wrapped in a shared bond through music, can become the truest form of community, a family even.

I decided to speak with David Sheffield about this emerging theme. As a board member with The Shelter Valley Folk Festival, a pure, no-logo event that sweeps over the rural landscape outside of Grafton, ON, Sheffield has watched this theme emerge as the festival has evolved over the past seven years. He attributes the allure of Shelter Valley to the fact that the core values, as defined by the organizers, are strictly adhered to, the main one being a desire to offer a weekend gathering where everyone feels instantly at home.



Elliott Brood



Nadie & The Turks

PHOTO: ANJA KARPIUSKI



Bedouin Soundclash

PHOTO: MATT BARNES

PHOTO: JOHAN CASTELL



ArtsWells Festival

PHOTO: CHRISTINA ZEMNER



ArtsWells Artistic Director Julie Fowler.



A look at the Shelter Valley Folk Festival.

# FESTIVAL QUEST

"The thing that people remark on the most is kind of a sense of community — it's difficult to find exactly what that means, but what we see is that the people who are involved in organizing it are very much like a family," he says, echoing the sentiments of many of the small festivals I discovered on my quest.

"Right from the beginning, Shelter Valley sort of grew up quickly, and that couldn't have happened without the generosity of many of the performers," says Sheffield. "The musicians that have played there are often sort of sympathetic to the small festival... and the different perspective."

Over the years the likes of Serena Ryder, Justin Rutledge, and Garnett Rogers have graced the stage in the fields of Shelter Valley, as has the iconic Canadian instrument known as the Six String Nation Guitar.

Sheffield relates how Rogers, a long-established Canadian singer-songwriter, remarked after his set last year that Shelter Valley is what festivals used to be, going so far as to say he was born again from the inside out while playing onstage. The right festival brings out the best in the artists who are fortunate to spend time on the stage there, it would seem, and this experience carries them forward throughout their career.

Marc Sasso, of Toronto's Elliott Brood, thought back on some of his many festival experiences as a music fan and then as a member of a band that has grown in prominence over the past eight years. For Sasso, the first festival Elliott Brood ever played in the streets of Dawson City, YT, stands out as the gem of his festival career.

"Dawson City Music Festival is pretty amazing," he says. "We had a great time playing there. It's small enough that you can interact with everybody and take in the town and everything that's going on. You know, you're playing right in the middle of this small town, which is pretty great. Dawson is just special — it's kind of like, intangible."

As much as he tried, Sasso struggled to put into words the atmosphere that so captured his imagination that first festival gig. After my conversation with him I'd venture to say he would agree that a sense of community and hospitality hung like an aura around Dawson City that year he recalls and that is the beauty of these festival gems I've been exploring.

Another event in the north Sasso mentioned takes place under the midnight sun on the shores of beautiful Long Lake outside of Yellowknife, NT. For half the year northerners are beholden to a sense of perpetual darkness but come summer, the light shifts and eternal sunshine is a gift that means the party in Yellowknife rolls on around the clock, or so I've been told.

"With six months of darkness, northerners look forward to Folk On The Rocks (FOTR) and often plan their holidays around the third weekend in July each year," says Lynn Feasey, Artistic Director with FOTR.

The festival prides itself on a number of attributes that are similar to the other festivals I've discovered. Its success relies heavily on the enthusiasm of an army of volunteers, for example, and Feasey says this is what helps the festival retain its grassroots feel after 30 years. Also, like Shelter Valley, ArtsWells, or Sappyfest, it seems that FOTR speaks to a fundamental core value of most humble musicians. They play not for notoriety or riches, but for the chance to be a part of something different, something more pure, say, than many of the larger festivals that have been forced to conform as time has passed.

"For a performer from the south, it may be the journey 'north,' our beautiful site, and the midnight sun that lures them," says Feasey of the unique draw for artists to Yellowknife, "but we hope it's the warmth and generosity of not only our community and our unique, diverse culture but also that of each musician that joins us in collaborative spirit, that has a lasting impact on them."

For northern musicians, the opportunity to network with those from the south and the rare chance to play with and learn from their southern peers is one of the greatest benefits to taking part in FOTR. Like other festivals, the workshops — those opportunities where musicians experiment and learn from each other on the fly in front of a crowd — usually produce some of the most memorable moments of the weekend.

This collaboration and interaction among artists is a key component of the magic that is produced by the most memorable of festivals on the Canadian circuit. Every one of the artists I've spoken to brought up this point.

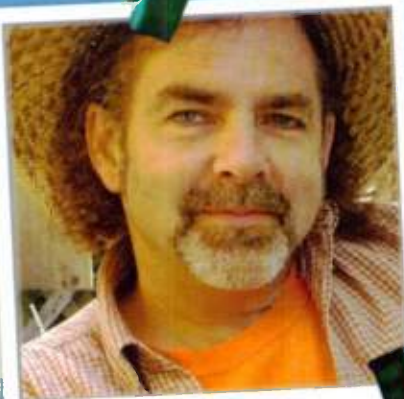
**N**ova Scotia's Stanfest was brought up as place "with a really great vibe" when I spoke with Nudie of PEI's Nudie and the Turks. "There's a real community feel there, you know? The musicians are all hanging together... and you're hanging out with the people that came to see you, which is really great. With things like the ECMAs (East Coast Music Awards), which are great, there are all these musicians, but you're busy. You don't get a chance to see each other often," he says when comparing other types of music events to the contained environment of the music festival.

A festival, he says, "is the best opportunity to see all these people that might be on your radar." At that point, the networks of musicians that are so important in the Canadian music scene form and expand. "When the lean times come in the winter months, after the festival season is over, when you hit their town, they help you and when they hit your town you help them. That's the reality of being a musician," says Nudie. In every corner of the country there are gatherings, large and small, where traditions are built and huge families are brought together through their passion for music and the love of the experience.

As a fan who'll find any excuse to be a part of one of these gems — camping and partying, dancing, and singing my fool heart out — there's no shortage of places for me to explore. My little late-winter quest illustrated this fact beautifully.

But for the artist out there hoping to get on the bill somewhere, there's a lot more at stake than just a great party. Every festival presents the opportunity





David Sheffield, Archives Coordinator for the Shelter Valley Folk Festival.

PHOTO: MICHAEL GANNON



Folk On The Rocks



Lynn Feasey, FOTR Artistic Director.



Under the tent at Sappyfest.



Sappyfest Co-Organizer Paul Henderson.

to showcase your talents before a new sea of faces while sharing your time with musical peers – those same people working to make it in a savage industry. The key to getting on the bill at a festival is nothing short of perseverance.

"You gotta' create your own breaks," Nucie tells us. "You gotta' just get out there and play."

Sure, as a band you can submit your package to the artistic committee at any given festival, but nothing is more attractive to artistic directors than word of mouth promotion. As Nucie put it, "You're kind of pissing up a rope with submissions. They have to see you somewhere or they want somebody to tell them: 'You gotta' get these guys.'"

Sasso told me that when Elliott Brood got on the bill for that festival in Dawson City, the band got lucky when the right person heard their music and the snowball was then set in motion. "I think it's people liking your music and talking to other people," he says. "As much as you want to get into those festivals, it's got to be somebody else that likes you for whatever reason and they decide they want you there."

"Everyone has an idea of what you should do," Bedouin's Malinowski tells me as we discuss how emerging bands can make their own destiny. "but really

it has to come from you. Flaying shows is the best way to do it. Just play. Don't worry about playing some place too much. Just play and your true fans will always come out."

And sitting on the barstool at one of these gigs by an unknown artist in some small town there may sit a person with a connection to any number of the countless great festivals this country has to offer, and that person might offer you a slot on a bill.

Before a timbre stage in a grassy field or on the main drag of some Canadian town on a warm summer night, I might just find myself dancing barefoot to the music of this previously unknown artist, and the great summer festival cycle will continue forward.

My quest will be fulfilled. ■

*Kristian Partington is a freelance writer with a love of music, travel, the outdoors, and generally, all that is good in life. From his home in Norwood, ON, he dreams big and follows his passion for the written word. [pwritingstudios@gmail.com](mailto:pwritingstudios@gmail.com).*

# USING SOCIAL MEDIA

## TO YOUR ADVANTAGE



**BY ASHLEY FOLEY**

With a technology-driven generation on the rise, the international music industry has jumped onboard the social networking bandwagon. Never has it been easier to utilize online tools for self-promotion and communication. If you've got your various pages up and working, we've got some industry insight to help you maximize their potential via the type of content you're sharing with your fans and beyond. If you're an artist or industry professional who is not yet active in the many social networking communities in cyberspace, quite frankly, it's time to get started. And don't worry – we can help you with that, too...

### **How Social Media Helps The Music Industry**

"Social networking offers a way to communicate with your fans on a daily basis," says BC-based country music artist Jessie Farrell. Farrell is well-known for going above and beyond with regards to her social media skills, and the industry has taken notice. In fact, she was chosen to perform a skit on the very subject with Reba McEntire and Martina McBride at the CCMAs (Canadian Country Music Awards) last year.

"I have someone who advises me on web strategy, who also advises other artists, and I've learned and ultimately gotten so much from it. I get so much positive feedback online and I didn't expect to interact with so many fans on such a wonderful level," she says.

"It's a way to leverage your message," says pop/country artist Dave Carroll from Nova Scotia, who recently released his third "United Breaks Guitars" video. He used YouTube to broadcast his trilogy of music videos regarding his Taylor Guitar that was damaged during a flight with United Airlines, which has brought him international recognition through media outlets such as *Reader's Digest*, CNN, and *Rolling Stone*. "Social media and [social] networking allow you to do that in ways you never could before. It allows you to thrive as an independent musician."

Putting it more simply, Eric Alper, Director of Media Relations and Label Acquisitions at E1 Music Canada, says: "Social networking is the greatest thing that's happened since sliced bread. It's a way to have a relationship with your fans and other people in the industry and it's very immediate."

Point and case: the band Stereos, from Edmonton, who worked for over five years to get their music to the masses, and finally stuck gold with their appearance on MuchMusic's *disBAND*. This opportunity allowed Stereos to be heard on a national scale.

"As far as the world is concerned, we broke overnight," says Pat Kordyback, lead singer of Stereos. The TV show finally put them in front of their intended audience. "It was something that we couldn't really do on our own, so it basically just launched us completely and it changed everything overnight," he recalls. "The next day, people recognized us on the streets."

Stereos are now active on Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, among other social networking communities. Kordyback says every artists should be "as active as possible, especially at first, to engage people. There are a million other bands and you have to give [your fans] what they want, in a sense." If you have fans who are constantly asking you questions to see what you have in store for them, then you should be thankful, and "feed that side of the industry as much as possible."

"If you feel like connecting with fans is a burden, then you probably shouldn't be in a band," says Kordyback, adamant that sacrificing the connection with fans (your customers) through social media is not an option. Even when the guys from Stereos are tired, they would rather be exhausted but still spend a few hours on Facebook and Twitter, replying to messages from fans, than to go back to their old day jobs.

Social networking has provided artists with a great tool for marketing, promoting, and advertising. Facebook Events allows people to sign up and interact with other fans before and after shows; however, it is important not to ask too much of your fans without giving something in return. This is why responding to messages and offering free downloads and contests are so vital – they create an equal, yin-yang relationship with fans.



KORDYBACK (CENTRE) & HIS STEREOS BANDMATES.



JESSIE FARRELL

Derek Bachman, Program Manager and FACTOR Regional Evaluations Coordinator for the Saskatoon office of SaskMusic, also values social media for providing a faster method of communication, a strategic marketing tool, and an easy way for artists to promote themselves internationally. "Essentially, it's an electronic press kit without [the artist] sending me a CD or me going to their website," he says in regards to the plentiful amount of artist information found online through Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube alone.

# SOCIAL media

## You Can't Have One Without The Other

Obviously, the most popular tool in social media, among fans and artists, is online activity; Facebook, Twitter, and (maybe to a lesser extent now) MySpace all being at the top of the game for creating virtual replicas of one's self online.

"It's a tool in the toolbox," says Bachman, breaking down the three networks and their uses. Facebook, he says, is changing the way bands and artists present themselves through Fan Pages, Groups, and Events. Twitter is the easiest method to send direct updates, such as tour cancellations or changes while on the road.



SASKMUSIC'S DEREK BACHMAN



ERIC ALPER OF E1 ENTERTAINMENT CANADA

## SOCIAL NETWORKING COMMUNITIES AT A GLANCE

### With Derek Bachman and Eric Alper

#### MySpace:

- Fast and easy: within five seconds you can view a bio, hear some music, read some reviews, check tour dates, and get connected with other pages (website, Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- You are not required to "sign up" or "become a friend" to view information.
- Like an electronic resume.

#### Facebook:

- Now working with iTunes so music purchasing is available.
- Personal profiles can only hold up to 5,000 friends; however, Fan Pages and Events make connecting with fans easy.
- A shorter bridge: more information is shared, such as videos, photos, tagged photos by fans, bios, etc. and responding to posts and inbox messages is easy.

#### Twitter:

- Offers higher security settings and people can follow and have as many followers as they desire (as long as the numbers fall within an 80 per cent balance ratio)
- It is easy to give out information quickly with the 140-character maximum cut off, which can also update your Facebook statuses.
- Re-Tweeting allows fans to advertise for you, creating a larger social network.

Justin Bieber has used social networking to inform fans of riots at concerts or gigs that are at maximum capacity to avoid overcrowding, injuries, and disappointed fans. This method is being used by artists worldwide, from private gigs by indie bands to electronic artist deadmau5 Tweeting during his performance at the Winter Olympics 2010, warning people not to come to his show because the line was six blocks long and security was not allowing anyone else in.

"Facebook and Twitter are used to communicate and have kind of merged," by allowing Tweets and Facebook status updates to act as one, says Bachman; however, he makes it clear that one won't be replacing the other anytime soon.

MySpace, he goes on, is still a great tool to get a preview of an artist's or band's music, as well as check out their image and brand. "If I hear about a new band, the first thing I do is still go to their MySpace page," he says. "If a promoter is calling me and asking me for suggestions of bands, I send them MySpace links, because it's instant."

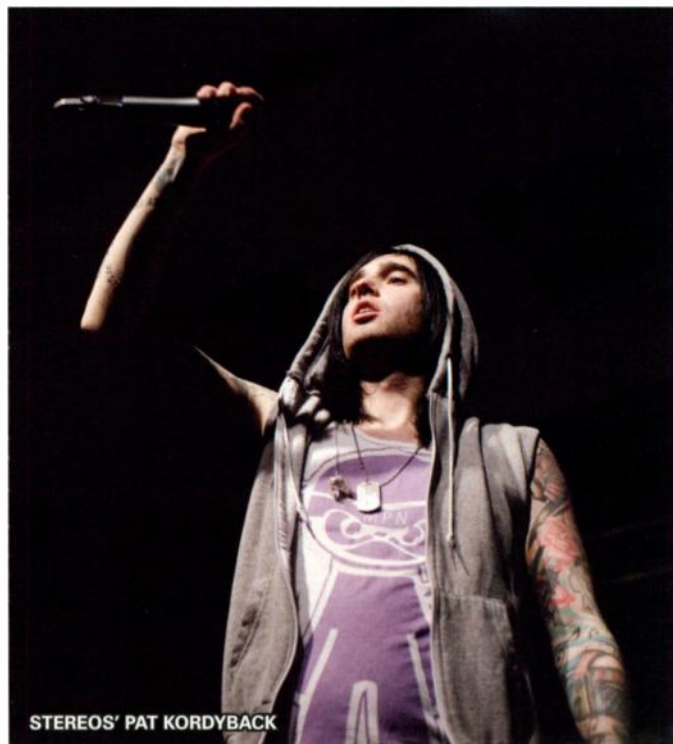
## How Close Is Too Close?

Farrell devotes a couple of hours a day to replying to Facebook and Twitter messages and keeping her fans, or "web friends" as she calls them, in the know. As a result of her hard work in pleasing her fans, they return the favour by sharing and advertising her music online. "I feel like my fans online are relentlessly loyal. They're such cheerleaders for my music," she says with gratitude.

She admits that being in the country music genre has a lot to do with her devotion to social networking. Country musicians are known for connecting with their fans. Social media allows all Canadian artists to reach across our great nation in a way that requires far fewer Air Miles. Farrell strives to become a virtual version of Garth Brooks through social networking.

"Everyday I think of Garth Brooks, and what he's achieved in person, I try and do online," ensuring that if she's had a request for a fan birthday phone call or to send flowers for an anniversary, she makes sure to fulfill it. "Garth Brooks had this opportunity to be everywhere, and I don't get to be with millions of people all the time and do these things in person. I'm trying to adapt to what he does by doing a lot of that stuff online right from my hotel room, or from the bus, or from home."

On the other hand, some non-country artists feel differently about appearing as an approachable, friendly artist online. Alper brings up the issue in artists such as



STEREOS' PAT KORDYBACK

PHOTO: JESS BAUMUNG



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# SOCIAL MEDIA

Led Zeppelin, who arguably became famous in part due to their mystique, and the fact that they would never do in-depth interviews or share personal information. These artists, he fears, may become a rare species because of a fan base always demanding and prying for more information.

Stereos, a median between the two extremes – Led Zeppelin and Jessie Farrell – face challenges in their online activity. Kordyback admits fans “demand a lot more entitlement,” and from Stereos’ perspective, social networking goes farther than portraying an online persona. Sometimes, it can go so far as to being invaded for information pertaining to their daily lives. Kordyback says he can’t believe how quickly people can find out things about their personal lives before it ends up in gossip magazines via photos shown in their personal friends’ profiles on Facebook or unintentional tagged photos of Stereos.

## Are You Connecting, Or Just Creating “Noise?”

There is a fine line between connecting with fans and creating what Bachman and Carroll refer to as “noise.”

“You have to be smart about it and selective with getting the news out there, otherwise, it could just become noise,” Carroll says, explaining that if you are constantly filling them



with nonsense information, then when you actually have something valuable to say it might be lost in a sea of noise.

While social networking is beneficial for artists, in providing an opportunity for everyone to have their own voice, Carroll explains the Internet is crawling with artists dying to get their music heard. This creates a problem where fans and industry professionals are forced to cut through the noise and risk *your* message being lost in the mix. Creativity, he advises, is what catches people’s attention – not knowing what you ate for lunch.

Alper believes newer artists do not have a “filter” separating the information fans *need* to know, versus what they *want* to know. “Sometimes they’re just letting their fans know everything.” In other words, the information cannot be forced. As an artist or industry

professional, you shouldn’t be updating your Facebook status or Tweeting just for the sake of writing something. Give your followers a reason to read it. Lure them in.

“The key for “United Breaks Guitars” was that it was so relatable,” says Carroll, who uses a different approach to social networking, primarily and most successfully through YouTube. “Humour is huge. Humour has a good way of drawing people in and making people want to come back and tell their friends.”

The information in his trilogy of music videos carries a meaningful message, focus, and purpose. Carroll did not upload a revengeful video diary, hoping people would tune in. Instead, he created quality music videos, with the help of volunteers, with a goal of reaching one million views. His topic at hand is funny, relatable, and has a clear objective. With solid planning, he has become more successful than expected. “It was so relatable that it was a worldwide phenomenon.”

## Mastering The Art

Achieving and maintaining a positive web presence isn’t easy. As with everything else in this business, it takes time, patience, and effort. Avoid building that presence in the same manner you may have run your personal social networking accounts before becoming a recognizable artist or band member.

“I’ve seen some people who are really good at it, but some aren’t. Some create the page and expect it will get all these views and hits,” says Bachman, suggesting every artist spend a few hours a day “cross-networking” and building an online persona. “How willing you are to use it is how successful you might be with it.” He adds that having the motivation to recruit followers, friends, and fans is the key to social networking.

“I feel strongly that you have to have a relationship with them,” says Farrell, relating back to the yin-yang compromise. She says you should “honour” and “respect” your fans, treating them as close friends you would welcome into your cyber home. “Ask them what they think about things and you’ll find that they will come back to your shows and they will be loyal.”

Be warned, though: social networking cannot and will not replace the physical and existing means of exposure. You still need to pitch to radio, tour, send some mailings, and the whole lot. Social networking isn’t meant to replace actual networking – it can only enhance it.

“There’s still a lot of things you have to do in coordination with the social media,” says Bachman. “It’s the combination of everything that helps artists find success.” ■

Ashley Foley is an Editorial Assistant with Canadian Musician.

## DOS & DON'TS OF SOCIAL MEDIA with Eric Alper

### DO:

1. Follow people outside of your comfort zone, such as another time zone, province, country, or even genre. “You might find that you’re getting a really great response and that might be used for a possible future gig, or at least maybe some airplay down the road.”
2. Connect with your fans through personal messages for birthdays or other celebrations, and follow your fans to check out what they’re interested in. “I would definitely keep track of who is following you and make sure that you’re following them as well,” he says.
3. Don’t be afraid to get down and personal with your fans. “Be as personal as you possibly can. Don’t try to manipulate the system, because there’s nothing really to manipulate,” he says. “You should treat them with the utmost respect because they could be going to any band possible, but they chose you.”

### DON'T:

1. Send an automatic thank-you notice (aka Spam). “The impression is, ‘You don’t have to thank me because I already know who you are.’ So don’t spam me with your welcome message.”
2. Involve religion or politics, if at all possible. Even in the case of elections and political or religious music, try to keep everything clean and in moderation. “Sometimes people just want to hear the music.”
3. Remember the 3 Ps. Don’t say, write, or post anything you wouldn’t share with your Parents, your Principal, or the Pope. “Don’t put anything on Twitter that you couldn’t say to somebody’s face. And if your mother were to read this stuff, would she be disappointed in you? Because it’s going to come back and it will bite you, and then you’re going to have to do some explaining.”

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# All Things FAXE 2010

SIX STRINGS,  
INFINITE COMBINATIONS  
BY LEVON ICHKHANYAN

The blending of genres is not new to the musical or guitar communities. John McLaughlin, Paco DeLucia, and Al DiMeola joined forces in 1980 and first captured their synergy in the famous *Friday Night in San Francisco* recording of 1981. In 1999, Santana released *Supernatural*, which blended his electrified blues guitar with the pop talent of Rob Thomas of Matchbox 20 fame in "Smooth" and The Product G&B in "Maria Maria," making the album Santana's biggest ever. More and more, this blending of styles is making its way into mainstream music.

# AXE 2010

The musicians featured in this year's feature are no strangers to mixing it up. Pavlo, Rik Emmett, and Oscar Lopez recently formed a trio and produced their Juno-nominated *Trifecta* album. Gary Melvin and Roberto Angelucci are the new-generation musicians added to legend Frankie Valli's musical entourage. Devin Townsend is equally proficient in extreme metal genres as he is in ambient music and hard and progressive rock. Regardless of their differences, they all agree that it's all about making great music that they can be proud of.

## THE P.R.O. TRIO

Pavlo, Rik Emmett, Oscar Lopez; three names that you might not expect to see side-by-side; however, the three virtuoso guitarists formed the P.R.O. trio to create their own blend of music captured on *Trifecta*.

Pavlo Simtikidis, known professionally simply as Pavlo, is a first generation Canadian of Greek descent. With eight albums (two of them gold), a DVD, and a Juno nomination behind him, he has hit the top 10 on the *Billboard* charts, fills concert halls, and counts some childhood guitar heroes among his friends.

Emmett, best known as the lead singer and guitarist of Triumph, has loads of accolades: gold and platinum albums, a best-guitarist Juno, and inductions in many halls of fame. He is considered by his peers as one of the most proficient and versatile guitarists around, moving beyond rock guitar by incorporating blues, jazz, classical, bluegrass and flamenco techniques into his playing styles.

Lopez immigrated to Canada from Spain in 1979 and calls Calgary home. Maintaining the Latin roots from his homeland, Lopez journeyed through the new sounds he discovered in Canada, blending them to form his own signature sound, which garnered him two Junos, the SOCAN Hagood Hardy Jazz/Instrumental Music Award, and two wins for the Hispanic Excellence Award as the Hottest Latin Guitarist.

It all began with Pavlo's vision: "I was inspired by the McLaughlin, DiMeola, DeLucia trio, not just because of their virtuosity, but because of the mixing of styles, genres, techniques, and culture. The three of us are very different in background and upbringing. This is what excites me."

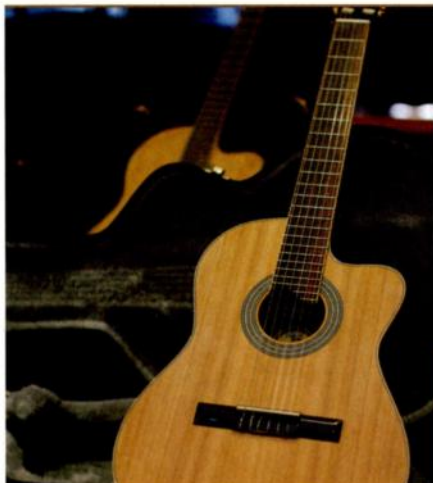


Pavlo, Rik Emmett & Oscar Lopez.

"Practically speaking," adds Emmett, "our trio was formed through the connection of our common booking agent, Darcy Gregoire, and once we settled on a shared vision, we realized that we would have to work to our own strengths and musical tendencies, and not chase the models that might have suited other talents and career paths. The idea[s] for our philosophies and direction grew out of our song writing collaboration, more than anything else."

The first meeting took place one summer afternoon at Pavlo's parents' house in Toronto with lots of food, drink, and music. "We started to jam a little," recalls Pavlo, "realizing instantly that the chemistry was there. It's a lot easier said than done, to collaborate with others, and I mean to truly collaborate. You have to have some natural attraction (musically speaking of course). It's something you cannot manufacture; it's either there or it's not. We have it in spades."

"Oscar and Pav had played a bit more together than I had with Pav, and I had never played with Oscar before that," says Emmett, "So I was following their leads and trying to figure out [my role]. Oscar calls me the Crazy Glue, but I think of my role more as the white cream icing in between the two chocolate Oreo biscuits, holding it all together." Lopez adds, "We all knew that this project was going to require work, but we were ready."



to the body, 24-fret fingerboard, and warm as hell!" - Pavlo

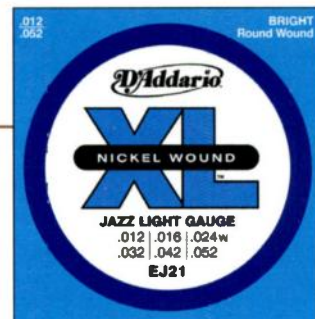
### Pavlo

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### RIK EMMETT (for *Trifecta*)

Live: Godin Ultra 6 - "Love it. Perfect guitar for my role in this trio."

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### OSCAR LOPEZ

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## sharing the wealth

"Find your voice, and then use it as firmly, loudly, yet quietly as possible." – Devin Townsend

"Love music first! Then, be on top of the business." – Robbie Angelucci

"Determine what it is you want to do with music. Most of the time it's not enough just to say, 'I like to make music and I want to make a living doing it.' You have to be honest with yourself and understand what it is you want to say with music, and then explore what's needed to accomplish that." – Gary Melvin

"If you get a chance to find yourself on the edge of the cliff that separates success and failure, or the known or unknown, prepare in advance for what your reaction will be. If you do not want the responsibility, turn around and go home. If you want it, don't step off the cliff – do a cannonball." – Devin Townsend

The three went to the studio, agreeing to let the music lead them. "Trifecta is a true collaboration in the sense that we locked ourselves up in a house with a studio for a week where all we did was write and immediately go to the basement and record," says Pavlo. "Every song is a true collaboration. You can very easily hear the different backgrounds and the different styles come out virtually in every song, but most importantly reinforcing the composition itself."

Emmett continues: "I think we consciously tried to just be ourselves – to work to the strengths of Pavlo, Emmett, and Lopez. I think our repertoire remains very accessible to a wide audience, without going too far into guitar or self-indulgence. But at the same time, it maintains enough pure and musical "guitaristry" that it might satisfy the ears of musicians, too."

After finishing the album, the trio set out on a cross-Canada tour. "In my opinion," states Lopez, "this trio is the real deal. Every time we play, we get better and better." The audience agrees – if sold out shows at almost every venue is any indication. "The audiences have been very receptive," says Pavlo. "A highlight? In Calgary, we sold out the Jack Singer at 1,700 seats and sold 415 CDs in a time when no one is buying albums anymore."

Following the tour, the trio will take stock of where they're at, and what their respective calendars will allow. Future plans include touring Europe, Asia, the US, a possible live DVD, and maybe another album with a different angle.

Thinking on this overall experience so far, Emmett reflects, "It has been extremely gratifying, and a wonderful gift to get in middle age. It's also a nice thing when one sticks to relying on their instincts, and you get such a positive embrace from the public. It has been an amazing experience: truly fulfilling to have such a strong acceptance from the various levels and regions of the hugely diverse Canadian market."

"This recording has given us much satisfaction," continues Lopez. "Wherever it takes us, we will be there having a great time playing our music." Pavlo sums it up: "I am very proud of the music we composed together. It is an honour to be sharing the stage with two very talented guitar players that have influenced thousands of musicians. Let the music lead us."

## A New Generation For The Classics

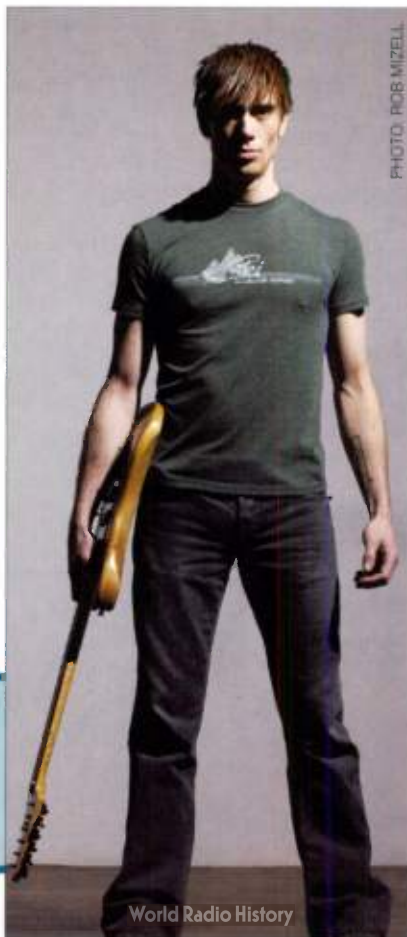
A few months ago, I had the opportunity to see Frankie Valli at Massey Hall in Toronto. I was surprised to see two young guitarists shredding up the stage, giving a new and hip edge to the '60s classics. It was a blending of ages, and the respect that Valli showed these young guitarists was apparent.

### Gary Melvin

Carruthers S6 (Strat-style)

Carruthers T6 (Tele-style) "I simply love the guitars John Carruthers makes. They're damn near perfect."

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# AXE 2010

Gary Melvin started playing guitar at 13. "After taking lessons for a few years and playing in bands with friends and at school, I decided to make music my career, and began studying and learning how to make that happen." In August 2002, Melvin graduated from the University of North Texas with a Bachelor of Music degree in Jazz Studies. Upon moving to Los Angeles, he studied in the Graduate Studio/Jazz Guitar program at the University of Southern California.

With his sophomore album *Spare Time* under his belt, he recorded the single "Taking Over Me," which was featured on three separate episodes of the most successful soap opera of all time, *The Young & The Restless*. "My influences started with rock, pop, and what was on the radio, but they have grown to cover just about everything. I had teachers and mentors early on who taught me to appreciate every kind of musical expression, and if I didn't like what I heard, how to respect and at least understand what elements I didn't like so that I could learn from it."

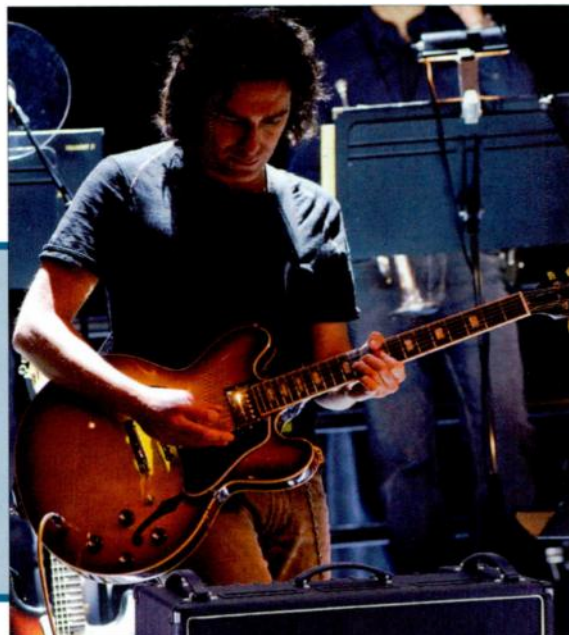


BOSS SD-1

"I use a very simple rig ... just a few pedals: a BOSS Super Overdrive, Chorus, and Noise Gate. That's pretty much it. I depend on my fingers for everything."  
- John 5

## Robbie Angelucci

Fender Telecaster  
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BB Preamp  
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Vox Wha  
EHX Deluxe Memory Man  
Guytone VT3 Tremolo  
TC Stereo Chorus



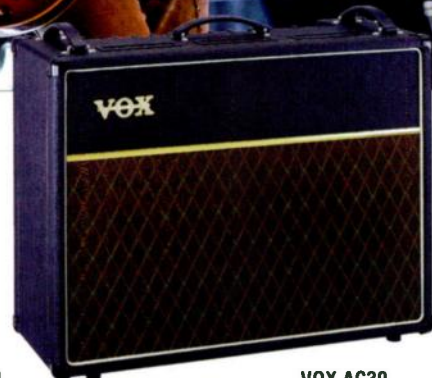
Roberto Angelucci was born in Abruzzo, Italy. Always interested in music as a young boy the guitar captured his heart after watching Michael J Fox play "Johnny B. Goode" in the movie *Back To The Future*. "Since that day, I fell in love with the guitar. When I started, I listened to mainly '70s rock: Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple... To this day, my heroes are still from that era. As I am getting closer to jazz and blues, people like Robben Ford, Pat Metheny, and Mike Stern also interest me."

At the age of 20, Angelucci moved to the US to attend Musician's Institute in Los Angeles. "I'm fortunate that I've been playing guitar for a lot of different bands and artists: Taylor Dayne, All 4 One, Wayne Brady, and now for a year-and-a-half, touring with Frankie Valli. I got referred to audition for him without even knowing who he was!"

Melvin explains: "The gig entails being true to the guitar parts from the original recordings, as well as incorporating modern approaches and whatever changes Frankie makes to his music. I played both acoustic and electric guitar for him - rhythm parts and solos. I approach solos from a melodic point of view. Unless the situation really calls for a blazing fury of notes, I stick to melodic statements that build. I prefer substance to flash."

"We travel throughout the US and Canada mainly, with 60 or 70 gigs per year," adds Angelucci. "Every time we play this music, I can see a huge and enthusiastic response and that's what music is all about." When not performing with Valli, Angelucci is busy working on a follow-up to his solo debut *A Guy With An Accent* and the CD release of his rock band Amberside.

After four years with Valli, Melvin moved on to work on his own solo project. "I've written music for almost as long as I've played guitar, but a few years ago, I started writing rock, pop, and singer/songwriter style songs, and began singing as well. I'm currently working on my second album of material, entitled *Trust*. Being an artist (as opposed to a sideman) is a different animal, but I enjoy it and I'm especially happy about how this new album is coming together."



VOX AC30

## Talking About Technology

"My excitement with technology is the speed ... the faster I can get my ideas out, the more automatic and indicative of the source it becomes. My challenges over the next two years are mastering my current formats and keeping abreast of updates. I hear the music clearly as it comes, so it behooves me not to learn how to operate at the most efficient and fastest level." - Devin Townsend

"Technology is great - especially in the recording world. Finally everybody can afford equipment to record their own ideas and they can easily become records." - Robbie Angelucci

"Technology hasn't really changed the way that I play, but all the wonderful advancements over the last 10 years have made discovering new music, as well as sharing my music with people, a lot more convenient and easy." - Gary Melvin

## QUICK Q&A with JOHN 5

Aside from being an accomplished solo artist and heralded guitar virtuoso in his own right, John 5 has also written, performed, and collaborated with a diverse range of artists, including Marilyn Manson, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Meat Loaf, Garbage, Rob Zombie, and many others.

**CM: Can you give us a quick breakdown of your current live/studio set-up?**

J5: The secret weapon is my Fender J5 Telecaster. It's my favorite piece of equipment. I use a very simple rig. I just use my Telecasters, Marshall JCM900 amps, and just a few pedals: a BOSS Super Overdrive, Chorus, and Noise Gate. That's pretty much it. I depend on my fingers for everything.

**CM: Do you feel you're continually improving on your instrument? If so, can you explain the importance of that continual improvement and education?**

J5: Education is the most important thing to me. I try to learn something new everyday. Lately, I've been studying flamenco and also gypsy guitar style playing.

**CM: Considering the calibre of players with whom you've had the chance to collaborate, can you comment on the benefits that such collaborations have on your playing?**

J5: I'm like a sponge; I love learning and getting as much knowledge that I can from these people that have been in the business and doing it longer than me. They've been down this road so many times they know what to do and what not to do so I always ask questions and ask for advice and listen to what they have to say so I don't make a mistake in my career.

**CM: You've got a new solo record dropping with some monster collaborators. Considering you have several solo records to your credit, are there any new directions you've explored on this latest one?**

J5: I always try to expand on each record. I do a lot of different styles on this record and it's very diverse. It will be a treat to any listener because there are so many different styles, sounds, and places to go on this record. People are going to love it.

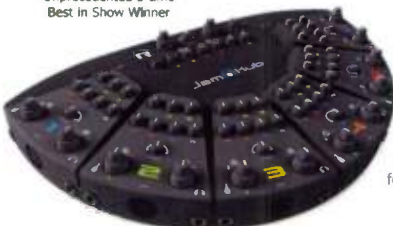


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# AXE 2010

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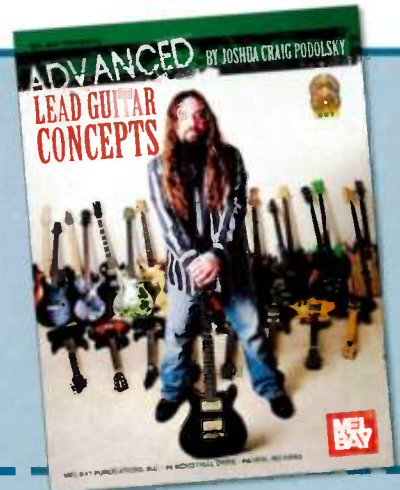
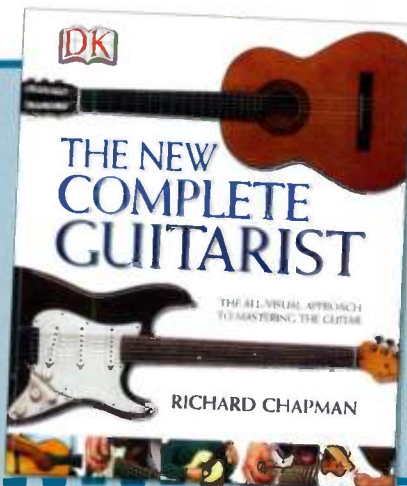
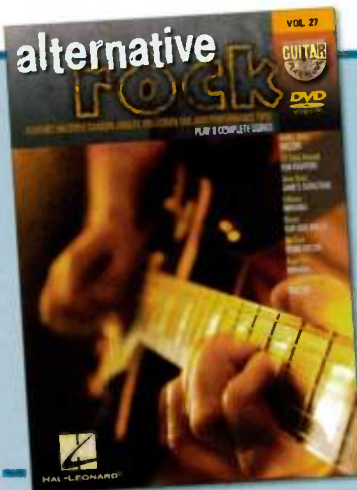
## Metal's madman

Vancouver's Devin Townsend picked up the banjo at the age of five and began playing guitar when he was 12. When he was only 19 years old, the young Townsend was recruited by Steve Vai to perform on his *Sex & Religion* album and subsequent world tour. Townsend went on to form numerous groups including Strapping Young Lad, Devin Townsend Band, and currently is working on the third album in the four-part series under the moniker of the Devin Townsend Project.

He's also a sought-after producer with credits including Lamb of God, Darkest Hour, Misery Signals, and Soilwork. "A good producer orchestrates the intention behind the project into something tangible that the audience can participate in. In terms of guitar performance, sometimes that means loose, sloppy, and off the cuff one-takes, and in other cases, it means meticulous surgical precision. The proper way of recording gets decided as the personality of the record begins to appear. Pre-production is generally when that sort of call is made."



"For amps, I am using two Fractal Axe FX rackmount modelers. I have been constructing my patches for almost six months and am still a ways away." - Devin Townsend



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MATT HEAFY **TRIVIUM**  
MATT RUBANO **TAKING BACK SUNDAY**  
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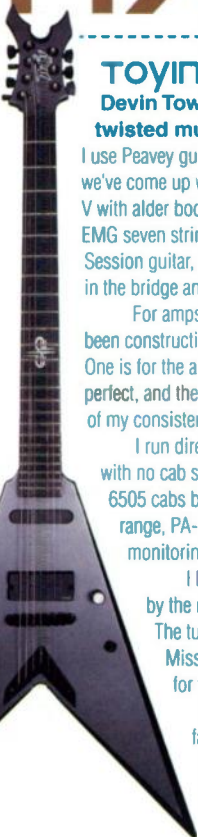
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MIKE HAST **WALLS OF JERICHO**  
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MOGWAI  
NATHAN EAST **ERIC CLAPTON/  
HERBIE HANCOCK**  
NEIL FALLON **CLUTCH**  
OSKAR CARTAYA **JENNIFER LOPEZ**  
OTEIL BURBRIDGE **ALLMAN  
BROTHERS BAND**  
PAT O'BRIEN **CANNIBAL CORPSE**  
PAUL GRAY **SLIPKNOT**  
PEPPINO D'AGOSTINO  
PHIL DEMMEL **MACHINE HEAD**  
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SHAUN GLASS **DIRGE WITHIN**  
STEPHEN CARPENTER **DEFTONES**  
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# AXE 2010



## Toying Around with Townsend

Devin Townsend walks us around the tools that bring his twisted musical ideas to life:

I use Peavey guitars now exclusively. I have been working hard with them, and we've come up with two guitars. One is a metal beast – a seven-string, 28" scale V with alder body, 2.2" mahogany neck, one EMG 707 in the bridge and a new EMG seven string single coil in the neck. The other is based on the Peavey Session guitar, and is essentially a Strat-style guitar with Dimarzio Tone Zones in the bridge and neck, and an SA in the middle.

For amps, I am using two Fractal Axe FX rackmount modelers. I have been constructing my patches for almost six months and am still a ways away. One is for the amp sounds, and the other is for effects. The modeling is close to perfect, and the cabinet impulses I am building leave no room for error in terms of my consistency live.

I run direct to the front of house, but also split my signal before stage with no cab sims going into four custom Peavey cabs, modeled around the 6505 cabs but with V30 speakers. The second two cabs are 2 x 12 with full range, PA-style speakers for my effects. These cabs are for my onstage monitoring only, and are not miked.

I have a pedalboard that is being replaced in the next few months by the new Fractal pedal board, and it is powered through a MIDI cable. The tuner is on the display, and I run four expression pedals made by Mission that feel like real, sturdy wah-type pedals. It's my perfect rig for what I do.

For Acoustics, I use Alvarez Yairi guitars, and they are my favorite acoustics I've played. I love them.

Townsend considers his various collaborations over the years as the situations that allowed him to realize his own strengths. "By playing with Vai, I was able to conclude my weaknesses as a player, but also have a mirror for my strengths in other places. With a band like Meshuggah, when we toured with them, I realized that to try and be Meshuggah is a futile quest. The world already has a Meshuggah, so I had best be working on being the best Devin Townsend I can be."

Townsend's music can be categorized into many subgenres such as melodic progressive metal with influences of jazz, blues, progressive rock, industrial, and classical. "I have a very broad taste, and my participation with many different styles is only indicative of an honest appreciation for those different things, rather than a 'wearing different hats to prove my versatility' kind of trip."

With respect to the different approaches that appear to come out of each of his projects, Townsend states that there is no difference. "The only real change is age. The music is a cathartic expression of where I end up finding myself. When I was 23, that process sounded like *City*. When I was 35, *Ziltoid*. At 36, *Ki ...* and so on. Each record in a way is a reaction to the prior one. As I get older, the anger or hostility or sensitivity doesn't ever go away, but it changes and morphs, and in many ways is refined. There is no difference, only another aesthetic."



Levon Ichkhanian is a Toronto-based recording artist, composer, producer, music contractor, and multi-string instrumentalist. He is currently playing lead guitar in the smash hit musical *Jersey Boys*. For more information, visit [www.levonmusic.com](http://www.levonmusic.com).



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PHOTO: TORY ZIMMERMAN

by Dan Hill



# DECONSTRUCTING THE LONG & WINDING MYSTERY OF WRITING A HIT SONG (SORT OF)

Part 1

**S**ongwriting exposes the conundrum of needing to sound fresh and original while not coming across as being so far outside the margins that people scratch their heads.

Make sure your song has a compelling story, something that resonates with the listener, but also ensure its universality has an element that's, well, original, slightly off kilter, even twisted. "Every Breath You Take," for instance, is one dark, obsessive song – borderline pathological. But we can all somehow relate to what Sting is essentially saying. A step too far is Queen's song "Fat Bottomed Girls." Fabulous idea (talk about an unforgettable image!), but it seemed too bizarre for the mainstream to fall in love with it.

Country music legend Keith Stegall has written more hits than I can begin to list, including, with me, our biggest single together, "I Do (Cherish You)," which climbed to number one on the US country charts for Mark Wills, became a pop smash for 98 Degrees, and is a standard track on my newly released CD *Intimate*.

One of the greatest songwriting lessons Keith taught me revolves around the all important "trigger" line. "You have to set up the title," Keith explained, writing these words, "If you're asking if I love

you too much," to bang home our hook: "I do." While I'd unconsciously grasped the importance of a trigger line (for instance, in my set-up of the final chorus of "Sometimes When We Touch" with "but then the passion flares again..."), I'd never truly realized how vital trigger lines could be until I'd written dozens of songs with Keith. There's a larger lesson here, too: no matter what you've written, you can always learn. Lastly, a song is only as strong as its weakest moment.

In 2009, I finished my second book, *I Am My Father's Son: A Memoir of Love and Forgiveness* (Harper Collins), many years after writing and publishing a novel in the early 80s. Even though a 1,000-page first draft of a book is a crazy amount of work compared to the effort required for a three-minute song, a pop hit is the trickiest of all art forms to master. You can write an eminently readable book that spans several hundred pages, and even if it takes a few wrong turns along the way, the reader will stay with you.

Not so with a song. One wrong word, one bland chord sequence, or one inexpertly scanned phrase (imagine if the Rolling Stones had written "I Can't Get Any Satisfaction") – it's game over. The listener has changed the station, the A&R man has tossed your demo, or Josh Groban has skipped to the latest Diane Warren song. Invariably, a hit song has

to be rewritten *ad nauseum*, right up to the moment you're banging out vocals in the studio. If it suddenly strikes you that a particular phrase isn't rolling off your tongue perfectly, or if it doesn't sing flawlessly during playback, redo it, because the sound of the words is as important as their literal meaning.

But above all, think of songwriting – whether discovering that initial germ of an idea or relentlessly polishing its final version until it sounds heavenly to your ears – as a wonderful, creative adventure. Embrace it. Love it. And most important of all, write, write, write. Every day.

Don't worry if not all of your songs pan out. I write 50 songs for every one that gets cut (whether it's by me or by another artist), but rather than viewing it as striking out 98 percent of the time, I simply think: "This is the best job in the world." To create, and to make a living off your imagination, is a rare privilege – something to be cherished.

One last observation: Songwriting is like sex. You always feel the urge when you're supposed to be doing something else. So, the next time you're supposed to show up at the dinner table at six o'clock sharp, turn to your piano or guitar at 5:50 p.m. Because you're not supposed to be writing, your creative unconscious will relax, and the words and music will start rolling. Trust me.



by Brian Moncarz

Brian Moncarz, a Producer, Engineer, and Mixer from Toronto, has a list of credits that include Moneen, Circa Survive, Silverstein, plus engineering gigs with Bob Ezrin (Pink Floyd, Kiss) and David Bottrill (Tool, Silverchair). Brian and David have launched Rattlebox Studios, a funky space to record in Toronto, and Brian also runs [www.emixengine.com](http://www.emixengine.com), an online mixing and mastering service, and teaches audio production at Ryerson University. [www.brianmoncarz.com](http://www.brianmoncarz.com).

## GETTING A GREAT PERFORMANCE As An Engineer

**I**n the last issue, we discussed the importance of capturing a great performance in the studio as a producer. We talked about the importance of pre-production, creating a positive atmosphere in the studio, and getting great energy out of musicians. This issue we are going to take a look at the technical side to capturing great performances.

### The Big Picture

Last time, we discussed that musicians will play better if they are hearing inspiring tones while tracking. How do you get these inspiring tones? About 10 years ago I attended a demonstration by Eddie Kramer, Jimi Hendrix's producer, and he played the multitrack sessions for the *Axis Bold As Love* album. As he performed a faders-up mix of one of the tracks, it was amazing to hear how similar it sounded to the finished master. Someone in the audience asked how he did it and he replied by stating that he believes that you should get the best tones possible while tracking, so that when you push the faders up, it immediately sounds like a finished record.

That's a philosophy that I've since come to adopt. Not only will you inspire the musicians you are recording to play better, but when their managers, record label execs, booking agents, etc. come to check out rough mixes, they will also be inspired and excited. In theory, it's a great philosophy, but how do you go about practicing it? Let's take a look at individual instruments and talk about getting the best tones out of them.

### Kick Drum

A great recording starts with great drum sounds, and the kick drum is the anchor to an exciting track. Getting a kick drum that sits properly in the mix is always a challenge, but if we are to get great performances while overdubbing bass and guitars, it is key that the kick drum sound is incredible. Often times I'll build a tunnel around the kick drum out of packing blankets. This will minimize

the bleed from the other drums on to the kick drum mic and will allow me to EQ the kick without affecting the tone of the rest of the kit.

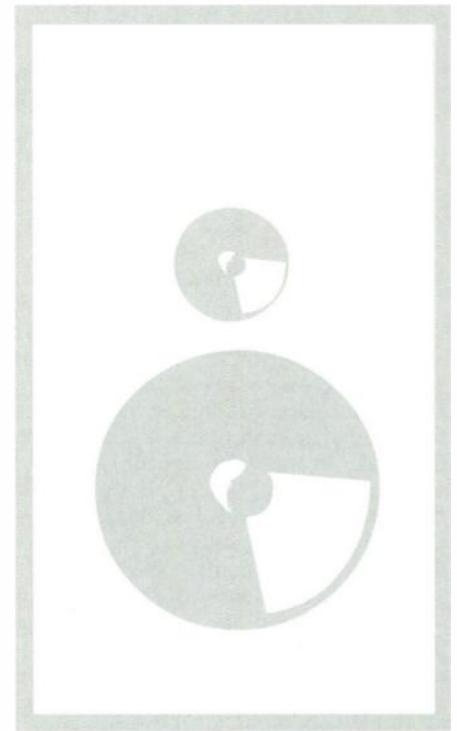
The key to a great sounding kick is achieving a balance between top end attack and bottom end fullness. I will often use multiple mics to achieve this – dynamic mic on the inside of the kick for attack and a condenser mic on the outside to capture bottom end. I'm not really concerned with the sound of each mic; I'm more concerned about the sound the mics make when blended together. Finding a good balance will get you a great kick sound and will give you the foundation you need to capture great tones from other instruments.

### Bass

I find that bassists like a lot of bottom end in their tone. When you stand in front of an 8x10 bass cab, you are hit with a huge amount of bottom. The key is to capture this bottom and have it translate through the studio monitors. Like the kick drum, I'll usually use two mics on the bass amp – one dynamic to capture the mids and low mids and one condenser to capture the bottom. You can also try the Yamaha sub kick mic. It does an amazing job of capturing sub frequencies. If you don't have access to these types of mics, you can always use a plug-in, like the Waves R-Bass, to add subs to your bass track. When the tone is great, the bassist will play with more precision and energy, guaranteed.

### Guitars

I always find it helpful to record guitars with effects. The way a guitarist hears their tone through the studio monitors will always affect the way that they play. A lot of guitarists love to use delay pedals. I find that recording guitars with delay pedals (or other effects) in the signal chain will allow the guitarist to perform their parts to the delay. In other words, the delay will affect the way the guitarist plays. If you add the delay after the fact, using outboard gear or plug-ins, you will not get the same passionate take.



### Vocals

Capturing an exciting vocal is arguably the most important ingredient in the recording process. Making the singer comfortable in the studio and providing them with a great headphone mix will always make for better vocal takes. Take time to build a killer mix for your vocalist. Add reverb or other effects to the vocals (in the monitors only; if you like the effect, print it to its own track). Listen to your vocalist's wants and needs.

Recording vocals is different to other instruments. You are relying on the human body to produce sounds. If the body is nervous and tense, the vocal cords will be restricted and you will not get that great performance you need to capture. If the headphone mix is great and the singer is comfortable in the studio, their vocal cords will open up and you will get inspired performances.

### Finally....

Getting great performances in the studio is not an easy task. As a producer, making your clients comfortable and keeping them happy will help you achieve better performances. As an engineer, getting inspired tones will push the musicians to always perform at their best. When you mix the two approaches, from both the producer and the engineer, you will get great performances and exciting recordings. Good luck!



by Peter Janis

## CONTROLLING FEEDBACK ONSTAGE USING PHASE To Your Advantage

**A**nyone that has played an acoustic instrument onstage knows that feedback can be a serious problem. But what few realize is that there are solutions beyond radically altering the EQ that can help eliminate it. The following looks at the various problems and solutions at hand. For simplicity, we will discuss an acoustic guitar. But the same principles apply equally to a violin, mandolin, banjo, and contra-bass.

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, we need to first identify the problems we're facing. There are basically two types of feedback that occur on stage: high frequency whistles and low frequency resonance. Both are caused by the sound emanating from the loudspeaker being so loud that it overtakes the instrument by feeding itself back through the pickup, causing the sound to feed back into the PA system, forming an audio loop. This endless cycle is called a feedback loop, or feedback for short.



High-frequency feedback is often caused by sound from a wedge monitor going directly into the instrument's microphone. This can also occur with piezo-type transducers. The usual fixes for high frequency feedback are to turn down the volume, reposition the microphone, or employ some form of equalization to eliminate the problem frequency.

Low frequency feedback occurs when bass energy from the speaker system causes the instrument to vibrate. This is

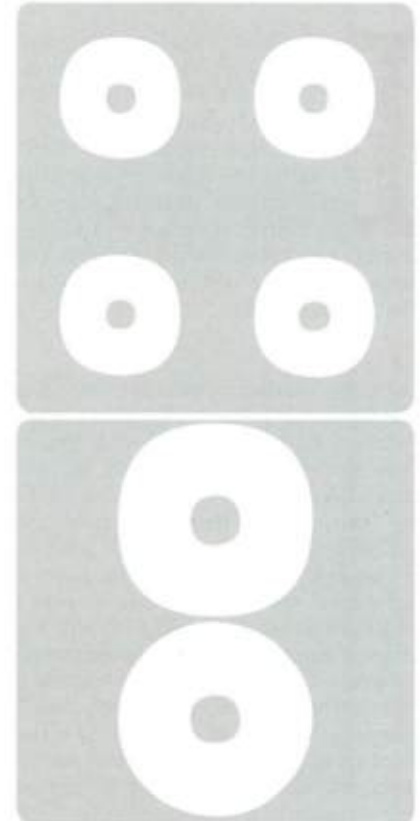
also known as resonant feedback. The sound system causes the soundboard (top of the guitar) to vibrate in sympathy with a particularly loud bass frequency. The vibration is picked up by the instrument pickup and recycles itself as feedback. Some musicians will seal the sound hole using a rubber plug. This can reduce feedback, but also degrades the sound quality of the instrument.

### The Downside To Using EQ To Solve Feedback Problems

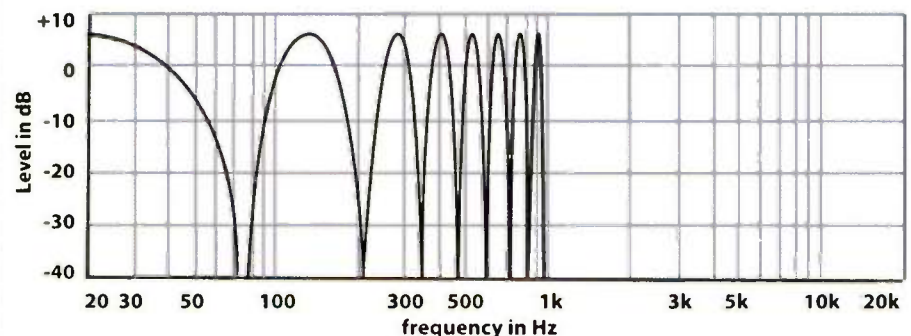
The most common approach to eliminating feedback is to use some sort of notch filter to find the offending frequency and remove it with a narrow band EQ. The problem with this approach is that it winds up being a catch-22 type of situation. For instance, if you reduce mid range to eliminate feedback, you are actually removing the "meat" or most important part of the sound out of the monitors. To make up for the loss in the mid range, folks invariably will increase the stage volume and guess what ... more feedback. Catch-22.

To make matters worse, some folks will introduce a form of automatic feedback filtering system to "magically" solve the problem. These devices introduce a series of very narrow filters that rapidly move around to squash feedback as soon as it occurs. The resulting sound is best described as comb-filtered (see image below), an effect that studios spend thousands of dollars trying to eliminate!

Does this mean that using an equalizer is bad? Of course not. The number



one rule with EQ is and will always be that the least is best. In some situations, the only option you may have will be to introduce some radical EQ curves into your monitors, but when you do so, keep in mind that you are moving further and further away from the natural sound of the instrument instead of actually solving the problem.



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Kevin Sinclair is a partner in SpinCount, a radio promotions firm founded by his wife, Kimberly Sinclair. Based in Nova Scotia, SpinCount is known for its innovative and successful radio campaigns. For information about radio promotions generally, and SpinCount specifically, please visit: [www.spincount.ca](http://www.spincount.ca).



by Kevin Sinclair



# RADIO FRIENDLY

## A Guide To Radio Tracking Part I

In the 1996 movie *That Thing You Do!*, The Wonders become accidental radio stars when a song by their ad hoc band gets picked up by a radio station in their home town of Erie, PA and rockets to the top of the charts across the country. The Wonders turn out to be one-hit wonders and things quickly go sour for them. In real life, how do real songs get onto real stations?

### Radio Stations Need Content

Radio stations need content, that is, music for their programming. Stations look for music that will hold their attention. If they play the wrong music, the listeners will find the next station on the dial, a disaster in the highly competitive world of radio. These decisions are largely made by Music Directors (MDs).

### How Music Decisions Are Made

MDs receive hundreds of singles weekly from major labels, small labels, and artists. They must listen to the music and decide what works for their station's format (Hot AC, Rock, etc.) and what will keep their listeners engaged. If the listeners are happy, they will keep the dial on that station, the station gets good ratings, and the advertisers line up to pay. Different stations have different decision-making procedures, but often, the process involves a music meeting where qualified people at the station listen to new music and decide which songs make the cut and which do not.

Given the sheer volume of music submitted, is it any wonder MDs as often as not take the easy way out and

simply play the songs they get from the major labels, who's stars have built-in name recognition and who have proven they can motivate fans to buy records?

But even with prestige, resources, and deep pockets, record labels themselves must compete for airplay. How then can independent artists hope for a hearing, let alone get their songs onto a playlist in such a competitive environment? In the struggle to get on radio, independent artists can arm themselves with the same tool the major labels use – radio tracking.

### What Is Radio Tracking?

Radio tracking is a specialized promotions effort that targets radio stations generally with one song by an artist or band with the intention of convincing the station to add that song to its playlist. The song is then released to the targeted stations. Over the next weeks and months, the promoter (tracker) contacts the station's decision maker, usually the MD, by phone and email, to advise the MD of the release, provide background on the artist, and to keep the MD informed of the song's progress on other stations – all with the goal of persuading the MD to listen to the song. If the sound is right and the MD

is impressed, the song may find room on the station's very limited playlist.

### Song Selection, Station Selection (Beyond Genre)

The first responsibility of a radio tracker is to assist in song selection and preparation of a list of radio stations selected to maximize the possibility of radio play. In addition to subjective factors such as likeability of a particular song or an artist's voice, songs selected for radio generally hit certain objective markers. Tracks three to four minutes in length are desirable for radio, and hooks should be catchy and frequent. The tracker may advise an additional run through production to produce a radio edit of a track that misses any of these markers.

Additionally, the song must have a sound that the station likes to play. Artists desiring radio play are advised to listen to the stations they want to target to learn the station's sound, and take this information with them into the studio. A song that is ready for radio is often referred to as "radio friendly."

A successful radio campaign begins before the release by skillful selection of the right radio stations for a particular single. In selecting stations to target for a

release, the tracker takes into account both the stations' format and the artist's goals, informed by the tracker's experience and knowledge of the stations seeking songs in the targeted genre. Even stations within the same format may look for different sounds within that format, for example, up-tempo AC, or alt rock.

### How Are Songs Distributed To Radio?

Technology has changed the way songs are sent to radio. In the recent past, release to radio involved physically mailing albums and one-sheets, followed by phone calls, faxes, and telegrams. Things are different now, and in many ways, easier for independent artists.

Once a list of stations for the release has been determined, singles are sent to radio via DMDS. The letters stand for: Digital Media Distribution System. This is the same method used by major record labels to send singles to radio. A track sent out on DMDS contains a radio-ready file of the song, along with an electronic press kit prepared for the artist by the radio promoter, containing images of the artist and relevant background information such as biographies and industry recognition.

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- 3 an instrument designed to entice the ear and stir the spirit.
- 4 the embodiment of Yamaha's commitment to craftsmanship and quality.
  - the NEW CP1 from Yamaha.





## Orange Rockerverb II Guitar Amp

■ Orange Amps has released the new Rockerverb II, which builds on the company's Rockerverb family formula. The new Rockerverb II series includes new middle control on the clean channel, a redesigned combo with new front-mounted controls, and a 50-watt 1x12 model with new spec 2xEL34 valves. All models are built using chiming tube-driven reverbs, tube-driven effects loops, and distortions. The new amp boasts improved reverb tone and an enhanced Valve F/X loop.

For more information, contact Efkey Music Instruments Ltd.: 514-633-8877, FAX 514-633-8872, [howardk@efkeymusic.com](mailto:howardk@efkeymusic.com), [www.efkeymusic.com](http://www.efkeymusic.com).

## Levy's Vampire & Werewolf Guitar Straps

■ Pop culture's fascination with vampires and werewolves provided the inspiration for the designs on Levy's Leathers' new printed cotton guitar straps. Pictured is model MSSC8V, available in six original designs.

For more information, contact Levy's Leathers Limited: 800-565-0203, FAX 888-329-5389, [levys@levysleathers.com](mailto:levys@levysleathers.com), [www.levysleathers.com](http://www.levysleathers.com).



## Zaolla Silverline Artist 500 Guitar Cable



■ Zaolla Silverline has introduced the Artist 500 guitar cable. In the Artist 500, Zaolla Silverline combines its silver-core cable with a new plug – a silver-core version of the Show Saver by G&H Industries. The Artist 500 is suitable for professional studio musicians, home recordists, live performers, and more.

It is designed around a solid-silver centre conductor and an enamel-coated stranded copper ancillary conductor in a hybrid configuration. Conductive PVC combines with a traditional copper braid to provide EMI, RFI, and electrostatic rejection. Similarly, foamed polyethylene separates the conductor from the shield without adding stiffness. The Artist 500 is manufactured in lengths ranging from 3-30 ft., with 6" and 12" pedal patch cables available.

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).

## Rotosound Double Decker Rotos String Set

■ Rotosound's R9 and R10 Rotos nickel on steel guitar strings are now available in value twin set packaging. They are made using nickel on steel and manufactured with quality control to ensure consistency, strength, and durability. The new Double Decker packs are coded R9-2 and R10-2, and reduce packaging by approximately 70 per cent compared to buying two separate packs.

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).



R9-2



R10-2



## Peavey Impulse 12D Loudspeaker Enclosure

■ Peavey has announced the new Impulse 12D powered loudspeaker enclosure. This new product features a true ribbon driver and a 12" Peavey Black Widow loudspeaker engineered with dual voice coil, push-pull technology, and a neodymium magnet.

A Woofer Servo circuit monitors back-EMF and controls cone motion, ensuring the cone's movement mirrors the driving signal from the power amp. The new ribbon driver – a Peavey design based on the ribbons used in the Versarray line array – provides 90-degree horizontal and 30-degree vertical coverage, with sonically transparent reproduction.

The Input section features two input channels and a line output, with a mix of I/O options such as combination XLR-1/4" jacks, RCA, and install-ready Phoenix connections. Input channels one and two also have mic/line source switches and gain controls. The Auto-Off function automatically shuts off the power when it no longer detects a signal, while the Line Out allows the user to chain multiple units or send the input signal to another source.

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).

## ToadWorks Fat City Dual Overdrive Pedal

■ ToadWorks USA has announced the release of a new Dual Overdrive pedal, Fat City. Two years in development, Fat City is the company's next step in analog overdrives. With two unique flavours of OD, an independent clean boost, and the ability to stack the overdrives, Fat City gives bedroom players and working musicians an affordable, reliable method of reproducing overdriven tones normally found in high-end tube amplifiers.

ToadWorks entered the boutique effect market in 2001. All ToadWorks effects are handcrafted in the US.

For more information, contact ToadWorks USA: 415-462-5539, [www.toadworksusa.com](http://www.toadworksusa.com).



## Tycoon Percussion Signature Series



■ This year, Tycoon has introduced several new Signature Series hand percussion instruments developed in conjunction with its top endorsers, including Martin Verdonk's Las Vegas Tambourines, Cabasa-Shaker, Tri-Egg Shaker, Swing Shakes and Easy Shakes, and Robert Fishbone's wooden Fish clapper.

Along with an already broad assortment of Signature instruments such as Ralph Irizarry's Timbales and Dancing Drum's African Drum Collection that have been released in previous years, these new instruments expand the range of available percussion sounds and instrument designs.

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).



## Grover Pro Percussion G3 Concert Snare Drum

■ Grover Pro Percussion Inc. has announced the release of its new G3 Concert Snare Drum line. All Grover G3 Concert Snare Drums feature 10-ply maple shells, the choice of six hand-rubbed lacquer finishes, chrome plated tube lugs, steel or die cast rims, the new Grover G3 triple strainer, and four types of snares: black coated cable, uncoated steel cable, high carbon spiral snares, and an extra set of gold coated cables. The new snares are manufactured in both 5.5" x 14" and 6.5" x 14" sizes.

For more information, contact Grover Pro Percussion Inc.: 781-935-6200, [www.groverpro.com](http://www.groverpro.com).



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### Roland V-Combo VR-700 Keyboard

■ Roland has added the V-Combo VR-700 to its family of keyboards. Suitable for players who want an all-in-one keyboard, the Roland V-Combo VR-700 features real-time performance capabilities and a host of onboard sounds, including Roland's Virtual Tone Wheel Organ Modeling, all accessed through the user-friendly interface.

The Roland V-Combo VR-700's Ensemble section contains performance sounds including Roland's 88-key multi-sampled grand piano, electric piano, strings, brass, and much more. Roland's Virtual Tone Wheel Organ Modeling uses COSM technology and physical harmonic bars to give the Roland VR-700 an organ sound. The 76-key waterfall-style keyboard with split function and Roland PK-Series pedalboard option offer a simulated organ experience.

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

### Martin Guitar LX Jimmy Buffett Guitar

■ The Martin LX Jimmy Buffett guitar features the same "go everywhere" design and materials as the LXM "Little Martin": a modified 14-fret shape and short 23" scale, with an HPL body matched to sitka spruce top bracing, a modified low oval Stratabond neck, tropical hardwood fingerboard, and micarta belly bridge. The LX Jimmy Buffett is fitted with chrome tuners, a corian nut, and a compensated Tusq saddle.

Delivered in a fitted gig bag, each Martin LX Jimmy Buffett guitar bears an interior label with Jimmy Buffett's signature. A left-handed version of the LX Jimmy Buffett is available at no additional charge.

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



## Warwick Thumb SC Single Cutaway Bass

■ The brand new Warwick Thumb Single Cutaway Bass is a combination between the Warwick Thumb NT and the single cutaway design.

The Warwick Thumb SC is a suitable instrument for jazz, funk, and R&B. A passive MEC soapbar humbucker has been designed for the Warwick Thumb SC, along with two 3-way switches, and 3-band MEC electronics. This guitar is available as a left-handed version with no additional charge for both 5-string and 6-string versions. Other features include a neck-through design, 5- or 6-string broad neck, fretted or fretless fingerboard, Warwick tuner, and security locks.

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

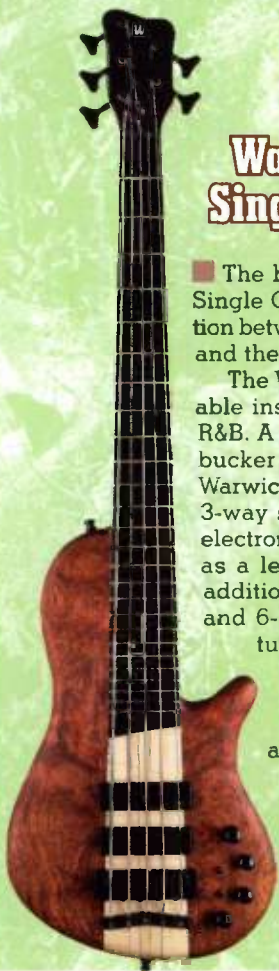


## Nord Piano Pedal

■ The Nord Piano can use the new Nord Piano pedal, providing the functionality of all the three pedals found on an acoustic grand piano.

The Nord Piano pedal functionality allows you to "play the pedal" in the same fashion as on an acoustic grand. The soft pedal (also known as the una corda) makes the sound significantly softer. The sostenuto pedal in the middle provides the latching sustain functionality that sustains only held notes when activated. When you activate the sustain pedal, you can hear pedal noise and the dampers being lifted from the strings. The force with which you operate the pedal will influence the levels of the components and you can even add percussive sounds from the mechanism by just striking the pedal itself.

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



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www.roland.ca



## Eastwood Airline Folkstar Resonator Electric Guitar

Eastwood Guitars has started to ship the new Airline Folkstar Resonator guitar. The new Airline Folkstar Resonator is based on the early '60s model though it features many upgrades and improvements.

This chambered mahogany 24 3/4" scale guitar features a biscuit resonator cone with a Piezo bridge pickup and an NY mini-humbucker neck pickup, which are controlled by a blend potentiometer.

The Airline Folkstar is available in red or black and features the retro rubber body binding. The bolt-on maple neck with rosewood fingerboard is set up with #12-52 bronze resonator strings.

For more information, contact Eastwood Guitars Inc.: 905-702-8291, michael@eastwoodguitars.com, www.eastwoodguitars.com.

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For more information, contact SF Marketing: 514-780-2070, FAX 514-780-2111, [info@sfm.ca](mailto:info@sfm.ca), [www.sfm.ca](http://www.sfm.ca).



## Mojave Audio MA-101fet Cardioid Condenser Mic

■ Mojave Audio has announced the MA-101fet Condenser Mic. The MA-101fet is a suitable choice for recording acoustic instruments such as guitar, piano, and wind instruments, as well as percussion and drum overheads. The MA-101fet features both omni and cardioid polar patterns by way of interchangeable capsules and with its 3-micron thick, .8" diameter gold-sputtered diaphragm, this new microphone is a versatile recording instrument.

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## Los Cabos Drumsticks Standard & Clean Sweep Brushes

Los Cabos Drumsticks has entered into the world of brushes with the launch of two new products.

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For more information, contact Los Cabos Drumsticks: 506-460-8352, FAX 506-474-2415, [info@loscabosdrumsticks.com](mailto:info@loscabosdrumsticks.com), [www.loscabosdrumsticks.com](http://www.loscabosdrumsticks.com).

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<b>Piano/Keyboards*</b>	<b>Bagpipes*</b>
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\* The ability to play a secondary instrument would be considered an asset.

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**Important dates:**

- Recordings for preliminary round must be received by June 30, 2010.
- Final live auditions will be held September 20 to October 1, 2010. The Canadian Forces will assume travel, meal and accommodation costs for candidates invited to the final auditions.

## Les services de musique des Forces canadiennes

Annoncent les auditions suivantes pour les postes de musiciens de la force régulière :

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\* La capacité de jouer un instrument secondaire est considérée comme un atout.

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**Dates importantes :**

- La date limite de réception des enregistrements pour la phase préliminaire est le 30 juin 2010.
- Les auditions finales auront lieu du 20 septembre au 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 2010. Les Forces canadiennes assumeront le coût des dépenses de voyage, de repas et de logement pour les candidats invités aux auditions finales.

# ShowCase

If you are an unsigned artist and would like to be a part of Showcase, please submit your EPK at [www.sonicbids.com/cmshowcase](http://www.sonicbids.com/cmshowcase).

Selected artists will also appear on the *Canadian Musician* website, [www.canadianmusician.com](http://www.canadianmusician.com), with one song streaming in MP3 format.

by Ben Conoley



sleepy driver

**Where:** Fredericton, NB  
**What:** Alt-roots  
**Visit:** [www.sleepydriver.ca](http://www.sleepydriver.ca)

Fredericton, NB's Sleepy Driver may have just recently released their first full-length (2009's *Steady Now*), but the roots/alt-country rock band plays with the confidence and skill of veterans. That's probably because the band's singer/songwriter has taken his time in assembling a group of proven New Brunswick musicians from various musical experiences and backgrounds.

The culmination of their styles isn't too far removed from the recent re-emergence of '90s college rock in the vein of The Gin Blossoms and The Replacements (see "Like a Weapon"), however, they also flirt with a more roots-based sound on songs like "When The Lights Come On," though even that song makes room for some horns. There's also a noticeably dark thematic tinge to a lot of the songs, and despite the varying tempos, there's enough consistency amongst the songs on *Steady Now* to leave any doubters behind.

It's also one of the few albums I've heard that's going to appeal equally to a fan of Pixies as it will to a fan of Johnny Cash, which anyone from a small town knows is essential to getting noticed in a small town. And get noticed they've done, picking up the Rising Star award at 2009's Harvest Jazz and Blues festival in Fredericton.

**Where:** Kelowna, BC  
**What:** Progressive Indie Rock  
**Visit:** [www.wearethecity.ca](http://www.wearethecity.ca)

Kelowna, BC's We Are The City is a quirky group of young men playing often-times moody indie-pop. The band consists of Cayne McKenzie on vocals/keyboards, David Menzel on guitar, and Andy Huculiak on drums.

Not feeling the need to enlist a bassist, the band still manages to pull together a full sound that can be as melancholic as Radiohead at one moment, and full of cabaret-style excitement the next. At times, their sound runs the risk of coming off as a little self-indulgent, but just as that thought enters my mind, the band pulls the million directions in which the song is seemingly traveling back to a focused conclusion.

The band's debut album, *In A Quiet World*, has only been on record shelves since mid-January 2010, and while the band members certainly sound as though they're still trying to figure out where they want to go, this critic is very interested in seeing where they end up.



we are the city



hopeful monster

**Where:** Toronto  
**What:** Psychedelic Chamber Pop  
**Visit:** [www.hopefulmonstermusic.blogspot.com](http://www.hopefulmonstermusic.blogspot.com)

[I]f anything, I'm including Hopeful Monster in this issue's Showcase as a plea for Jason Ball to record another album under the moniker, however, fans of the playfully psychedelic indie-pop project shouldn't hold their breath.

After all, it was six years between 2008's *Metatasking* and 2002's *Hopeful Monster*. While Hopeful Monster might have a sparse resumé, Ball has extensive experience in Canada's independent music scene, including stints playing with Lily Frost, The Wilderness, The Heavy Blinkers, and the Guthries.

Ball recorded the group's first album while living in Nova Scotia, enlisting the help of members of Matt Mays & El Torpedo as well as those of his previously mentioned partners. Since then, he's packed up and moved to Toronto where he recorded *Metatasking*. With Beach Boys-worthy harmonies and what can only be described as pure pop genius, Hopeful Monster is one of Canada's best-kept rock n' roll secrets. Ball, if you're reading, consider this column an official plea to keep making music as Hopeful Monster, because nobody else is coming close to the sounds you're capable of.

Ben Conoley is a freelance journalist living in Fredericton, NB. He has written for chartattack, Exclaim!, Alternative Press, and more. Ben is also a proud member of the Polaris Music Prize jury.



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