

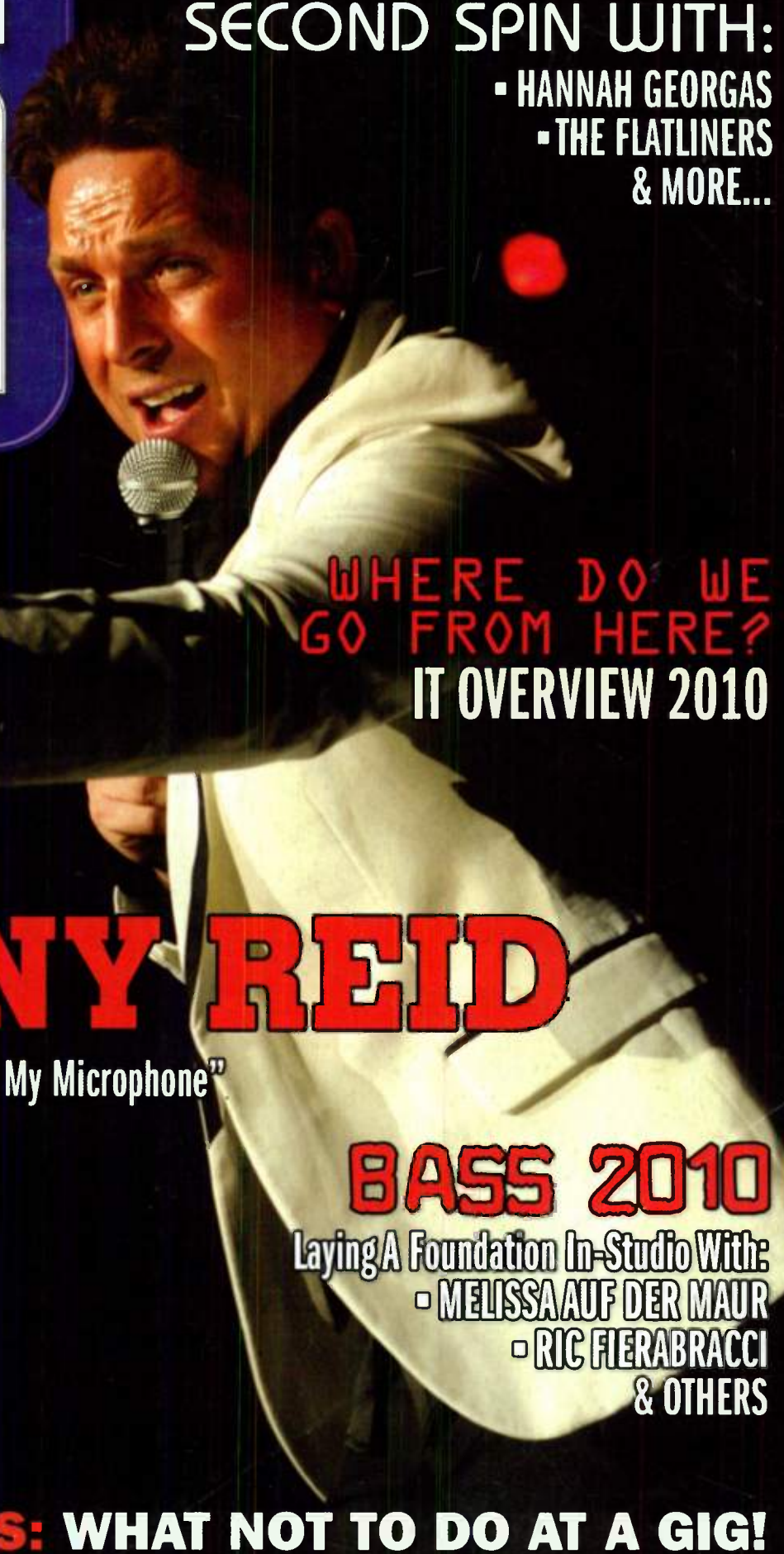
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GO FROM HERE?
IT OVERVIEW 2010

JIMMY REID

"G... An Audience & My Microphone"

BASS 2010

Laying A Foundation In-Studio With:

- MELISSAUF DER MAUR
- RIC FIERABRACCI
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PLUS: WHAT NOT TO DO AT A GIG!

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Vol. XXXII No. 4



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THE MUSIC IS WAITING FOR YOU... LET JIMMI GUIDE YOU TO IT!



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by Kevin Young

Though he's often billed as a "country" artist, Johnny Reid consistently brings equal parts rock, soul, and country to sold-out venues across Canada. With his upcoming album, *A Place Called Love*, he's ready to take his music worldwide.

38 Put The Needle To The Record

New Life For An Old Format

by Seth Hennessy

Like their digital counterparts, vinyl releases continue to rise in popularity and total sales. Is vinyl a good medium for your music? We've consulted a few industry faces to get some fresh perspectives on the throwback format.

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IT Overview 2010

by Eric Price

With the release of Windows 7 and Mac's Snow Leopard within the last 12 months, new hardware revelations and OS overhauls are likely a long way off. Still, Eric Price has some hardware and software tips to keep your machines primed for music making.

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Laying A Foundation In-Studio

by Andrew King

Once again, we've lined up a stellar roster of bassists to discuss the process of laying down a solid foundation in the studio. Of course, we've also asked for the lowdown on these players' live and studio set-ups to give you a few ideas for your own rig...

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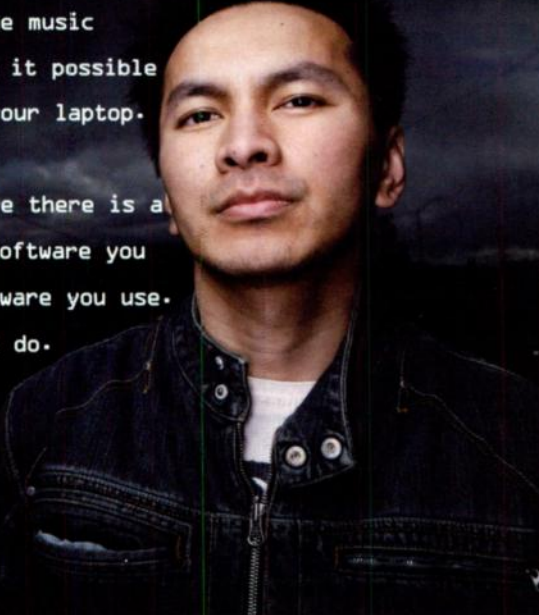
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Visit NWC On YouTube
Visit the Norris-Whitney Communications channel on YouTube for some great content from CM and its sister publications. We've just posted new vids with producer and Grady frontman Gordie Johnson, The Spades, and a recap of the recent MIAC tradeshow, featuring the latest from the Canadian music products industry.
www.youtube.com/norriswhitney



Pure Awesome!

Dear CM,
I just finished reading the latest magazine (Vol. XXXII, No. 2). Pure awesome! A quick delve into the mind of Xavier Rudd, a bunch of Q&A with various epic Canadian hip hop artists, and some wicked-funky triplet exercises for drummers! How did you read my mind? Well done, CM.

Matthew Danylczuk
Quadra Island, BC

Ed. Glad to hear you've been enjoying the content of late, Matthew. And, from one Canadian hip hop fan to another, make sure to check out Shad's TSOL if you haven't already - it's unreal.

13 & Counting...

Hi,
I thank you for such a colourful and delightful insight into my past with *Canadian Musician*. I'm sending my renewal today, as I enjoy your magazine as much today as I did back in 1997. If you ever need an area reporter for the Durham region, give me a call.

Regards, Willie Stubbs

Ed. Thanks a lot, Willie. Cheers to the next 13...

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What NOT To Do At A Gig: A Cautionary Tale by Andrew King

A few weeks ago, an unexpected message from a gentleman named Dustin Jones popped up in my inbox. The e-mail contained a story idea rooted in a rather "unfortunate" experience that plagued Dustin and his band, Dustin Jones and the Rising Tide, during a gig in northern Ontario last year – their first and, for a while, last, with a new booking agent. After some back-and-forth, it occurred to me that the story, on top of being rather (painfully) entertaining, was one that might serve as a word of warning for those new to the road.

What really sold me, though, was Dustin's willingness to share a not-my-finest-hour anecdote with others for their professional benefit. What's more, from what I know of Dustin's band and some of the folks with whom he's currently working, the story you're about to read wasn't a blatant disregard for professionalism, but rather a series of unfortunate events coupled with some slightly misguided decisions that could've befallen many, and unfortunately for this bunch of celtic punks, resulted in catastrophe.

THE STORY

Unfortunately, you're being treated to an

abridged version, but here we go. Dustin Jones and the Rising Tide have just been added to the roster of a reputable booking agent, ready to go to the next level of their career, and the first show they've booked together is seven hours away – or so they thought.

After nine hours on the road, the band is two hours late for their gig – a corporate Christmas party of all things. Arriving late, many attendees have already indulged in the sauce and begin recruiting the musicians for the party. The band decides to oblige its clients, and the party is underway before the show even starts.

The gig itself goes off without a hitch – the band plays well, the crowd loves it, the bar owner and staff are happy. Things are looking up.

Loading out, though, the three musicians are under the influence, meaning no one is able to drive and they have nowhere to stay. One of the members suggests retiring to their hotel room – the first the others had heard of such a place. After some arguing, it's chalked up as drunk talk, but not by the speaker, who sets off alone into the snowy abyss.

Dustin wakes up in the snow-covered van to find none of his band mates anywhere in sight. He calls one, who is apparently in their "hotel room." As it happens, the bar they'd

played is connected to a hotel. In his state the previous night, he genuinely believed the band was given a room and, as chance would have it, the room he tried was open. When Dustin arrives to check out the situation, so too does the hotel owner, saying the police have been called.

It's then that Dustin is told that the third member is at a hospital 45 minutes away. The hotel-staying member had filed a missing person's report the previous night, and as is standard procedure, the "missing person" was taken to the nearby hospital when found.

The police arrive and the hotel owner wants to press charges. The uninvited guest explains that he genuinely believed the room was his, and that the door happened to be open. The owner drops the charges – after collecting \$200 for the stay. They drive to pick up their friend from the hospital, and everyone is in the van, in one piece.

The aftermath? The band's management was initially understanding – after all, this was an alcohol-fueled freak happening that spiraled out of control. The booking agent, though, was far from impressed, as the club took heat from the hotel owner, which streamed back to him. The band was dropped from the roster after the show.

THE LESSONS

"Be professional" goes without saying, but sticking to this story particularly, there's plenty to be said. "There were definitely better ways this could've been handled," says Chuck Dailey, bassist with The Salads and, along with Darrin Pfeiffer of High 4 Records, Goldfinger, and 102.1 The Edge fame, a co-manager of Dustin and the Rising Tide. "But now he knows."

First off, as Dailey suggests, "You want to advance your gigs and know what's happening well before you arrive, right down to the smallest of details." This includes knowing where you're going. There's no excuse in this day and age to botch your ETA for any gig. Between Google Maps and GPS devices (a must for touring bands), it's pretty easy to get a reasonable drive time to any destination. Leave room for traffic and breaks and you'll avoid problems.

DUSTIN JONES (FAR RIGHT) & THE RISING TIDE



THE SALADS' CHUCK DAILEY



If you're without a tour manager, someone in the band has to step up as an official liaison for each gig. Until the show is over and you've settled with the promoter, someone in your band needs to be "on the clock" – a point man to communicate with the bar owner, promoter, other bands, sound guy, press, and so on. Choose someone well ahead of time. This is a must.

As for the booze, you're allowed to drink. Want to drink yourself stupid? That's fine. You can't, however, let alcohol interfere with your job – which is to show up and deliver your product in the form of a performance that people are expecting. If you've not tended to all of your responsibilities from load-in to payout, then you're still not off the clock.

Bear in mind that you're essentially an ambassador for everyone with a stake in your band – your managers, publicists, label, and even fellow musicians. Jones is the first to admit that his band's conduct reflected poorly on his team, which had its repercussions.

"Everyone involved with your band should have at least met once and had an opportunity to communicate directly," offers Jones. "Then, even if something small comes up down the road, you have someone in your corner." The real eye-opener for Jones, though, was that: "You always need to be prepared. Even if you're surprised or taken off guard, the 'anything goes' mentality can be a recipe for disaster."

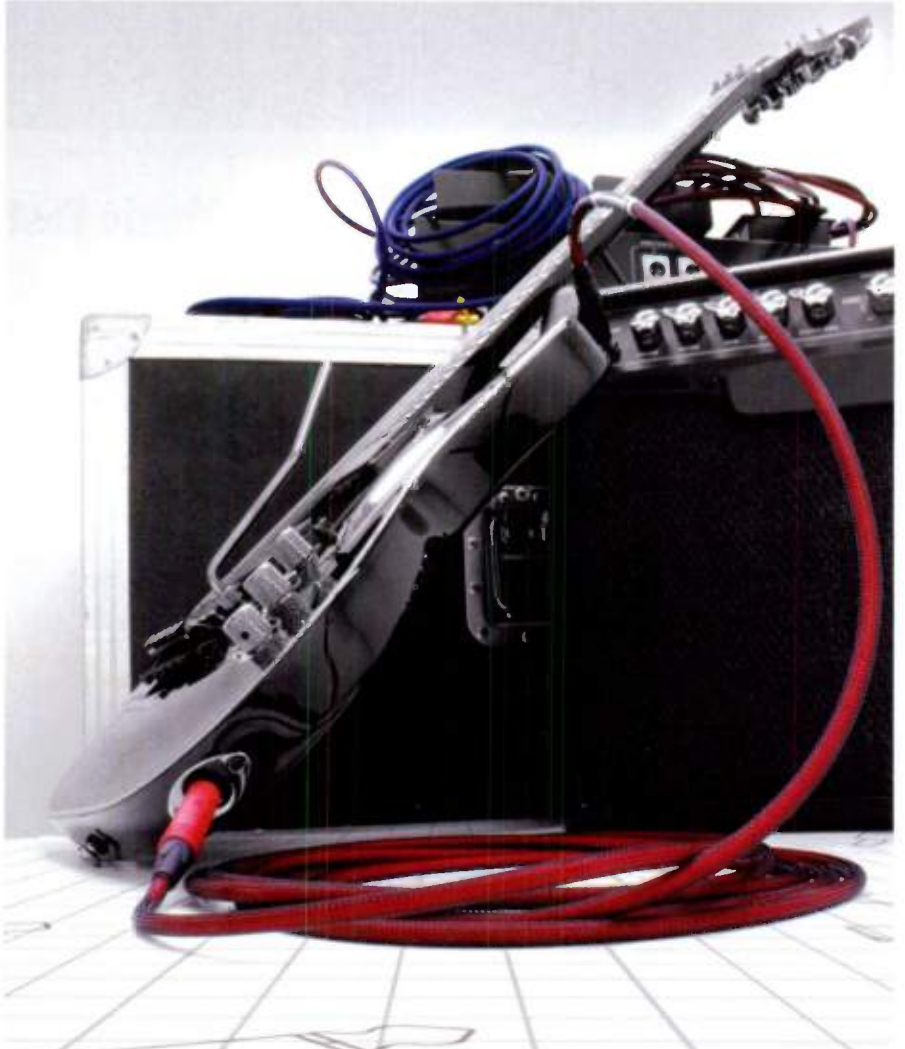
Luckily, both Dailey and Pfeiffer are no strangers to the road, and know that things go down that can take anyone by surprise. It's easy to point out the turning points in this story from a distance, and to some, it might not even warrant sympathy; however, when you've driven nine hours to turn people onto your band and hopefully make them supporters of your music, it's hard to turn down their requests.

THE FUTURE

"We've actually started working with the same booking agent again, due to the effort of our management," says Jones, personifying the "not how you fall but how you get back up" adage. Conversely, management gives credit to Jones & Co. for showing their true dedication and work ethic with subsequent self-booked gigs. "It was definitely a lesson learned. We haven't stopped partying by any means, but we're all more aware of keeping it together and keeping a closer watch over each other."

Perhaps as a testament to their conduct on the road (excluding the fateful night in question), Dustin Jones and the Rising Tide have booked a number of high-profile gigs this summer, including some Warped Tour dates, the Fred Eaglesmith Picnic, S.C.E.N.E. Festival, and more. They've also got a new disc of barroom-ready melodies set to drop in the fall, so maybe check them out at a future date to see what TO do at a gig.

Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.



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GREAT LAKE SWIMMERS ROCK DURING CMW 2010.

Submissions Open For Canadian Music Fest 2011

■ Artist applications are being accepted for Canadian Music Fest 2011, taking place March 9-13, 2011 during Canadian Music Week. The festival will include over 800 artists performing in 55 venues across the city over five nights. All artists who submit have the opportunity to be featured in the Spotlight section of the festival's website, as well as the chance to attend Canadian Music Week's 2011 TuneUp Conference for free.

Visit www.canadianmusicfest.com/application to apply.

The Edge Hosts Weekly Auctions For War Child

■ War Child Canada has teamed up with Toronto's 102.1 the Edge for Thursday 30 Presents: The War Child Rockin' Auction, a new weekly online auction of music memorabilia, autographed guitars, concert and festival tickets, and more. All proceeds raised from the auctions will go to support War Child. New items will be introduced weekly, with auctions open for bidding for one week.

The debut auction items included tickets to see Gord Downie live in concert and an Epiphone DR-100 guitar autographed by Downie. Visit www.edge.ca for more information or to check out items up for bid.



GORD DOWNIE

EleUke Hosts Worldwide Ukulele Contest

■ EleUke is giving away \$15,000 in cash prizes to ukulele players around the globe through its website. Prizes will be awarded in a range of categories, offering the beginning player to the ukulele virtuoso equal chances at winning, with the grand prize winner taking home \$5,000. The contest will run until October 31, 2010.

For contest details and rules, visit www.eleukeusa.com/contest.



PHOTO: WAYNE MAH

ME TO WE CO-FOUNDER CRAIG KIELBURGER

Me To We Philosophy Comes To CARAS

■ Me To We Style has teamed up with CARAS/The JUNO Awards to promote and develop the market for environmentally responsible goods and services. Its social enterprise is rooted in the "Me To We" philosophy, which is about improving our lives and our world by reaching out to others. The company operates with sweatshop-free manufacturing using eco-friendly fabrics, with 50 per cent of profits going to Free The Children. Finally, when you buy a tee, a tree is planted.

For more information, visit www.metowestyle.com.





KoSA Readies For 15th Annual Workshop

■ The 15th annual KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Camp, and Festival is set to run from July 27-August 1, 2010 at Castleton State College in Vermont.

The Canadian-born initiative offers drummers and percussionists a chance to live, learn, and work with renowned artists, helping attendees develop their musical and performance skills through hands-on tutoring. Attendees will also be treated to performances and masterclasses from the faculty. This year's artists include Memo Acevedo, Cindy Blackman, Mark Zonder, Dom Famularo, and many others.

Visit www.kosamusic.com for more information.



PHOTO: HOLLY SCHAEFFER

New Digs For SaskMusic

■ SaskMusic, the Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association, recently took over some new digs – both physically and online. The association's new office is located at 210 – 2300 Dewdney Ave. in Regina.

SaskMusic's new website boasts an attractive look with easy navigation to features like Event Listings, News, Funding, Music Directory, Resources, and more. New releases from members are also featured on the homepage. Visit the site at www.saskmusic.org.

Edmonton Welcomes Inaugural SOS Fest

■ SOS Fest 2010 will run in the heart of Edmonton's Old Strathcona live music district from July 9-11, 2010. The event will support the Alberta Music Education Foundation to strengthen Edmonton's local live music scene, as well as War Child Canada.

The 90-plus performing artists include Cadence Weapon, Danny Michel, Bill Bourne, Ten Second Epic, and others. The event was planned in part by members of the Ladies That Like To Folk tour, who received support from the Canadian industry after a Montreal tour stop found most of their gear stolen.

Visit www.sosfest.ca for more information.



DANNY MICHEL

Sennheiser Says Hear I Am

■ Sennheiser has announced the launch of the Hear I Am competition, which offers fans and bands the chance to attend and perform at music festivals around the world.

By visiting www.heariam.com, creating a profile, and encouraging friends and fans to share music, bands can win the opportunity to play live onstage at the Osheaga Music Festival, which takes place July 31-August 1 in Montreal, or CMJ Music Marathon, which will be held October 19-23 in New York. Additional festivals will be announced soon. Additionally, bands can win a chance to make a three-song demo with a major producer through www.picktheband.com.

Visit www.heariam.com for more information or to enter.





RYAN SWAYZE

Congrats To CM People's Choice Winner

■ Congratulations to Ryan Swayze, who took home the People's Choice Award at the 2010 Niagara Music Awards on June 15, 2010. *Canadian Musician* sponsored the award, with votes coming in from fans across the region. Check out a video interview with Ryan at: www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia.



Indaba Debuts In-Browser Recording Software

■ Indaba Music has introduced a new web-based digital audio workstation dubbed Mantis, which enables anyone around the globe to record, edit, and mix audio for free. The program marks increases in speed, stability, and usability from its previous incarnation, and offers CD-quality audio, recording directly to the web. Indaba Music Co-Founder Chris Danzig says: "For the first time, cloud-based audio production software is available for real musicians. Mantis is not a Flash widget for consumers to play with; it is a true digital audio workstation that musicians of all levels can use as everything from a mobile scratchpad to a complete recording and mixing solution."

For more information, visit www.indabamusic.com/mantis.



GREAT LAKE SWIMMERS' TONY DEKKER.

Pepsi Welcomes Refreshing New Ideas

■ The Pepsi Refresh Project is currently offering grants to individuals and organizations in Canada involved in the arts and culture communities (among others) to fund important projects.

The Pepsi Refresh Project is aiming to foster innovation in social good, and will award over \$1 million to help fund Canadians' ideas

to move the world forward in a positive way. Over 20 Canadian music artists helped roll out the initiative. Canadians can visit the project's website to learn more about the program and download a submission toolkit. Grants are available in six categories, including Arts & Culture, Neighbourhoods, and Education. Canadians will then vote on the best ideas and who receives grants.

Visit www.refresheverything.ca for more information or to enter.



STEREOS

MANAGE YOUR AFFAIRS WITH MARCATO MUSICIAN

■ Marcato Musician is a web-based artist management application that lets you keep track of your affairs in one place. There is nothing to install and your information is available 24/7 from anywhere with an Internet connection.

Users can manage their communications, stay on top of tasks and deadlines, schedule bookings and other events, keep track of contacts and venues, store files in a centralized file manager, automatically push upcoming gigs to social networking sites, and generate printable tour itineraries and press kits. Artists currently employing the service include Blue Rodeo, The Odds, Joel Plaskett, and others. The site is free for single artists or bands.

Visit www.marcatomusician.com for more information.





Metalworks Introduces New Programs For Musicians

■ Mississauga's Metalworks Institute has launched five new two-year programs designed for musicians. The new Music Performance & Technology initiative offers majors in Vocal, Bass Guitar, Drums and Percussion, Guitar, and Keyboard.

With flexibility and space for personal style, the programs allow students to enhance their performance skills while mastering technologies related to their chosen major. The full-time programs include 20-25 timetabled class hours per week, and cover a range of subjects like music business, studio techniques, instrument training, and more.

Visit www.metalworksinstitute.com for more information.

Five-Star's Big Beat Returns To Toronto

■ The sound of drums will rumble across North America once again on Sunday, November 7, 2010, as 15 Five-Star drum retailers, including Toronto's Just Drums, participate in The Big Beat and raise money for worthwhile causes. Last year's Big Beat drew 1,202 drummers and about 3,500 spectators in 11 cities and raised more than \$62,000 for charity.

The Toronto event will be held at The Sound Academy, with proceeds once again going to The Daily Bread Food Bank. More details will be announced in the coming months at www.fivestardrumshops.com and www.justdrums.com.



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Artists Enjoy The JUNO Effect

■ Performers from the 2010 Juno Awards have enjoyed the benefits of what's been dubbed The JUNO effect, seeing music sales and digital downloads increase by as much as 444 per cent after the event.

With an average audience of 1.6 million Canadians, performers from this year's broadcast included Drake, K'naan, Metric, Michael Buble, and others. Data from Nielsen SoundScan confirms sales spikes weeks after the broadcast, including a 444 per cent increase for sales of Blue Rodeo's "One Light Left In Heaven," as well as a 245 per cent hike for Great Lake Swimmers' "Pulling On A Line," 177 per cent for Johnny Reid's "Dance With Me," and 176 per cent for Metric's "Gimme Sympathy," among others.

More information is available at www.junoawards.ca.



PHOTO: CHRIS JPHOTO

METRIC'S EMILY HAINES PERFORMING DURING THE 2010 JUNOS.

"Wavin' Flag" Raises Over \$1 Million For Haiti

■ Young Artists For Haiti's version of K'naan's inspirational "Wavin' Flag" has surpassed the \$1 million dollar mark in funds raised for Haitian relief. The track, which features over 50 popular Canadian recording artists, has additionally topped the charts of radio stations across the country, received over 4.5 million video views, and amassed nearly 100,000 Facebook fans. All proceeds from the sale of the single, video, and t-shirts will benefit Free the Children, War Child, and World Vision. For more information, visit www.youngartistsforhaiti.net.



K'NAAN RECORDS A VERSE OF "WAVIN' FLAG."

Canadian DJ Show Announces 2nd Annual Event

■ The second annual edition of the Canadian DJ Show is set to take place in Mississauga, ON at the Delta Meadowvale from September 19-20, 2010. The show will build on last year's installment, providing a trade event for industry professionals and aspiring DJs.

Last year's show featured exhibitors and guest speakers from across Canada and the US. Like last year, CDJ Show guests will be able to demo the latest gear from several manufacturers, take part in training, seminars, and round tables, and network with other professionals. Gear on display will include turntables and mixers, digital DJ systems, PA systems, lighting equipment, wireless mics and in-ear systems, DAWs and other software solutions, audio interfaces and controllers, monitoring, and much more.

For more information about the event, visit www.cdjshow.com.



Recipients Of 2010 Fred Sherratt Award Announced

■ MusiCounts has announced the 12 recipients of its 2010 Fred Sherratt Award. The scholarship, named after broadcast pioneer Fred Sherratt, annually recognizes the achievements of graduates of post-secondary music programs across the country. The 12 winners were honoured June 14, 2010 at the annual ceremony at the MuchOnDemand studio. Each winner of the 2010 award receives a \$3,500 scholarship and all-expenses paid trip to Toronto for a reception and tour of MuchMusic and CHUM Radio.

Visit www.musiccounts.ca for a list of award recipients and their biographies.



SABIAN Introduces WashRide.com

■ SABIAN has officially launched WashRide.com, a website discussing a style of drumming where the driving consistent beat traditionally played using a hi-hat or ride stroke is instead played in a crashing style. The site introduces the concept of wash riding, and helps users find the right SABIAN cymbal – crash, ride, or special effect – for their playing styles using comparative videos with crisp audio. Additionally, the site boasts a forum for drummers to discuss their sounds.

Visit the site at www.washride.com.

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For more information, visit www.roland.ca/vs20



Oshawa Comes Close To Breaking Records



JUAN CORONADO (LEFT) & JACK DE KEYZER ONSTAGE.

■ Hundreds of guitarists, air guitarists, and music fans united at Oshawa, ON's General Motors Centre on May 27, 2010 for an attempt at breaking the official world record for the most guitarists (6,346) and air guitarists (1,437) playing in sync in one location.

Unfortunately, both records were missed, but the event still drew a good turnout and treated guests to a concert with guitarists like Jack de Keyzer, Juan Coronado, and Protest The Hero's Tim Millar and prizes including a Gibson Les Paul. "Upon reflection," says event organizer Rick Forsey, "I feel the event was a huge success. Bringing the community together in this way is magical and there certainly are not enough events like this available to everyone."

Visit www.breaktheguitarrecord.com for more information.

Honey Jam Ready To Take Over T.O.

■ PhemPhat's Honey Jam 2010 Artist Showcase will be taking place at Toronto's Mod Club Theatre on Sunday, August 15, 2010. The all-female showcase kicks off at 8 p.m., with proceeds from ticket sales supporting YWCA Toronto's programs for women and girls. The show will feature special guest DJs Melboogie and Tasha Rozez and will be hosted by MuchMusic's Sarah Taylor. The 2010 edition marks Honey Jam's 15-year anniversary.

For more information on the event, including the soon-to-be-announced artist listing, visit www.honeyjam.com.



PHOTO: MICHAEL ALBERSTATI WWW.ALBERSTATI.COM



Ableton Challenges Students To Get Creative

■ The Ableton Summer Music Challenge invites music students to get creative with their music over summer vacation and perhaps help their school in the process. Students under 18 can upload their tracks, and then share them with friends via their social networks. The tracks with the most plays by August 31, 2010 will be juried for a chance at prizes for both the student and school, including Ableton software, Novation hardware, a SoundCloud Pro account, and Loopmasters sample collections.

For more information or to take part, visit www.abletonsummermusicchallenge.com.

■ **TD Canada Trust Atlantic Jazz Festival Halifax**

Halifax, NS
July 9-17, 2010
www.jazzeast.com

■ **2010 NPM National Convention**

Detroit, MI
July 12-16, 2010
240-247-3000, FAX 240-247-3001
npm@npm.org, www.npm.org

■ **33rd Vancouver Folk Music Festival**

Vancouver, BC
July 16-18, 2010
604-602-9798, FAX 604-602-9790
board@thefestival.bc.ca,
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, www.homecounty.ca

■ **South County Fair 2010**

For Macleod, AB
July 16-18, 2010
403-388-4414
www.scfair.ab.ca

■ **22nd Beaches International Jazz Festival**

Toronto, ON
July 16-25, 2010
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064
info@beachesjazz.com,
www.beachesjazz.com

■ **Guitar Workshop Plus Toronto**

Toronto, ON
Session 1: July 18-23, 2010
Session 2: July 25-30, 2010
905-567-8000
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ **Hillside Festival 2010**

Guelph, ON
July 23-25, 2010
519-763-6396, FAX 519-763-9514
info@hillsidefestival.ca,
www.hillsidefestival.ca

■ **KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Camp & Festival**

Castleton, VT
July 27- August 1, 2010
514-482-5554
info@kosamusic.com, www.kosamusic.com

■ **GMA Immerse 2010**

Nashville, TN
July 28-31, 2010
615-242-0303, FAX 615-254-9755
info@gospelmusic.org, 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,
www.canmorefolkfestival.com

■ **Guitar Workshop Plus Vancouver**

Vancouver, BC
August 8-13, 2010
905-567-8000
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ **National Flute Association Convention 2010**

Anaheim, CA
August 12-15, 2010
661-299-6680, FAX 661-299-6681
conventionservices@nfaonline.org,
www.nfaonline.com

■ **Guitar Summit 2010**

Mont-Orford, QC
August 16-20, 2010
866-319-5754
info@theguitarsummit.com,
www.theguitarsummit.com

■ **Detroit Jazz Festival**

Detroit, MI
September 3-6, 2010
313-715-0199, FAX 313-447-1249
www.detroitjazzfest.com

■ **Country Music Week 2010**

Edmonton, AB
September 8-12, 2010
416-947-1331, FAX 416-947-5924
country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

■ **Music & Advertising Fall 2010**

Chicago, IL
September 15-16, 2010
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **Barrie New Music Fest**

Barrie, ON
September 16-17, 2010
info@newmusicfest.ca,
www.newmusicfest.ca

■ **Pro A/V Golf Tournament**

Caledon, ON
September 21, 2010
905-641-3471
lberreta@nor.com, www.proavgolf.com

■ **Billboard Mobile Entertainment Live! Fall 2010**

San Francisco, CA
October 5, 2010
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **One Movement**

Perth, Australia
October 6-10, 2010
+61 08 9336 2837, FAX +61 08 9336 1074
info@onemovementmusic.com,
www.onemovement.com

■ **Celtic Colours International Festival 2010**

Cape Breton, NS
October 8-16, 2010
902-562-6700, FAX 902-539-9388
info@celtic-colours.com,
www.celtic-colours.com

■ **24th Ontario Council of Folk Festivals (OCFF)**

Ottawa, ON
October 14-17, 2010
613-560-5997, 866-292-OCFF, 613-560-2001
info@ocff.ca, www.ocff.ca

■ **Western Canadian Music Awards/Breakout West 2010**

Kelowna, BC
October 21-14, 2010
204-943-8485, FAX 204-453-1594
www.westerncanadianmusicawards.ca

■ **Montreal Drum Fest 2010**

Montreal, QC
October 23-24, 2010
888-928-1726
www.montrealdrumfest.com

■ **Billboard Film & TV Music Conference**

Los Angeles, CA
October 27-28, 2010
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **WOMEX 2010 (World Music Expo)**

Copenhagen, Denmark
October 27-31, 2010
+49 30 318 614-30, FAX +49 30 318-614-10
www.womex.com

■ **Billboard Touring Conference & Awards**

New York, NY
November 3-4, 2010
646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ **PASIC 2010**

Indianapolis, IN
November 10-13, 2010
580-353-1455, FAX 580-353-1456
percarts@pas.org, www.pasic.org

■ **CINARS 2010**

Montreal, QC
November 15-21, 2010
514-842-5866, FAX 514-843-3168
www.cinars.org

■ **Midwest Clinic 2010**

Chicago, IL
December 15-18, 2010
847-424-4163, FAX 847-424-5185
info@midwestclinic.org,
www.midwestclinic.org

NEW ON THE CM WEBSITE

- FREE DOWNLOADS
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VISIT www.canadianmusician.com

The advertisement shows a screenshot of the Canadian Musician website. The website interface includes a navigation menu with categories like 'Home', 'Features', 'Columns', 'Reviews', 'Interviews', 'Live', 'Music', 'Videos', 'Galleries', 'Archives', 'About Us', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area displays several articles, including 'Canadian Artists Update' with a photo of a woman, 'A Moment From The Future, Annie Ken' with a photo of a man, and 'Billy Talent 3 by Luther Hanning' with a photo of the band. The website also features social media links for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Korg SV-1 Stage Vintage Piano

By Ian Ratzer



If the past ten years are anything to go by, this is the age of the vintage keyboard enthusiast. It wasn't too long ago that anyone on a quest for the classic tones of decades past had two options. The first was to pay top dollar for temperamental antiques and shell out for regular maintenance and moving; the other was to settle for digital equivalents and accept heavy compromises in sound, functionality, and design.

Then things started to change. New sampling techniques and real-time acoustic modeling made tones from those Hammond organs, Rhodes and Wurlitzer electric pianos, Clavinets, and early synths much more attainable. Recently, Clavia stormed the vintage scene with their bright red line of Nord products, grabbing a big share of the attention away from the venerable Japanese manufacturers. But Korg's latest entry in the vintage revival market is poised to give the Swedes a run for their money. The new SV-1 Stage Vintage piano is, as they say, a pretty big deal.

From the moment one sets eyes on it, it's clear that this instrument is like nothing we've seen before. An oval cross-section body flanked by a pair of rounded end-blocks frames an otherwise standard-looking weighted keyboard, while the panel of controls is tilted steeply toward the player, presenting the most intuitive interface I've ever seen on an electric keyboard.

In the place where keyboardists are used to seeing an LCD screen and a matrix of navigation and function buttons, the SV-1 offers a friendly set of clearly-labelled controls that do exactly what they say. Using the old-school rotary dials to pick out and tweak a sound is easier than twiddling the knobs on a

string of compact guitar pedals. The steampunk-inspired visual experience is heightened by toggle buttons reminiscent of classic synths, soft orange LEDs, an amp-style power switch, and a proud little 12AX7 tube mounted behind a clear porthole.

Convenient as it all is, don't expect to spend much time fiddling with the top panel. The SV-1 is above all else a player's board, and the quality of its sounds ranges from good to breathtaking. The sounds from every tiny moving part of the real instrument's mechanism are so carefully reproduced that it's easy to forget that this is, at its heart, a digital instrument.

The equally plentiful Wurlitzers and Clavinets are also among the best heard to date, especially when routed through the amp simulator, EQ, and subtle, usable effects. The grand pianos are solid and functional, and the organs and synths are well selected, if not very programmable. Two big surprises here are a gorgeous CP70 and a rare Pianet T. The instrument's mechanical noise layer (which can be turned down if desired) was so believable that I found myself wondering why my damper pedal rod wasn't squeaking.

For those wondering if the SV-1 can replace their master keyboard in a complex MIDI set-up, the answer is: probably not. Mod and bend wheels, key splits, and multi-timbral operation are conspicuously absent, as are nerdy specs like digital out and in-depth synth editing. In their place are practical features for the gigging professional: a headphone jack in front, balanced XLR and 1/4" outs, support for 3-pedal piano operation including great half-damper effects, and a removable music stand.

Still, with both the 73- and 88-key models retailing well over \$2,000 CDN, it's possible to feel like something's missing. Key splits would have been

practical for live playing, as would more than 36 memory slots. The included editor software works like a charm for rearranging sounds in memory and tweaking more effect parameters than available on the front panel, but Korg's Enhanced Definition Synthesis engine is completely hidden from the user. Korg's remedy for this is to provide Soundpacks, collections of new programs put together using the same built-in waveforms. The first of these provides some nice alternatives to the preset sounds as well as some great layer combinations. Still, it remains to be seen just how many more truly unique voices can be spun out of the same samples.

Chances are, however, that none of this will matter much to anyone who sits down in front of an SV-1, touches a single button to summon a suitcase Rhodes, and digs into the keys, unleashing the best-modeled electric piano I've played. The SV-1 is going to stir up serious competition in the old-school keys market – and that's great news for vintage buffs everywhere.

Ian Ratzer is a sound designer at Electronic Arts and keyboardist in Montreal-based pop band First You Get the Sugar.

Distributor's Comment

The SV1 is spearheading Korg's new approach of a great sounding, streamlined old-school interface geared towards playing and easy tweaking. There's more under the hood, so stay tuned to www.korg-canada.com for news and operating system updates that address the reviewer's concerns.

Steve Knowles
Product Manager
Korg Canada

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World Radio History

Magix Music Maker 16

By Ian Ratzer

GarageBand users come in many shapes and sizes. Some love the program's bare-bones, user-friendly interface for charting out new demo songs. Others are happy casually dragging around instrumental loops until the perfect backing track leaps from their speakers. But they all have one thing in common: they're running a Mac.

For many Windows users, a lightweight, music creation-oriented workstation with a sleek and simple interface, an ample collection of loops, and a battery of software effects and synths has seemed elusive, largely because Microsoft doesn't place one under your fingers when you buy its OS. But Magix, makers of pro-level DAWs Samplitude and Sequoia, have had an elegantly-positioned solution on the market for years – one that deserves a closer look from Windows users. Music Maker is a lightweight but surprisingly powerful package that does all of the above and more at a misleadingly low price.

The heart of Music Maker 16 is Magix's simple multi-track environment. Each track channel features built-in graphic EQ, compression, and reverb, followed by two user plug-in slots, sends to two FX channels, and a stereo panner. This is complemented

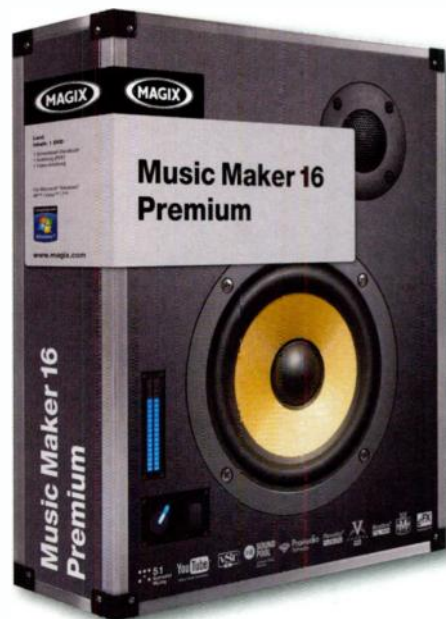
Magix's own guitar amp and stomp box simulator, can be applied to any channel, and in MM16 Premium, can be added to as needed thanks to DirectX and VST host functionality.

Music Maker's collection of basic but fresh-sounding virtual instruments includes a few drum sequencers, a sample-based synth full of basic sounds, and an ambience creation tool. Simple video support, integrated CD ripping, and functions to publish creations directly to MySpace and YouTube round out the package. For a few bucks more, the Premium edition adds 5.1 surround mixing, a 4-band parametric on each track, a few more effect and instrument plug-ins, a higher maximum track count, a rack of mastering plug-ins on the main out, and a versatile pitch editing mode that makes retuning and harmonizing vocals a snap. These added features are well worth the price difference, especially considering that the base edition costs about as much as dinner for two, and the step-up to Premium is roughly equivalent to a decent bottle of wine.

Music Maker's 16 doesn't refer to maximum track count or bit depth, which top out at 64 (96 for the Premium version) and 24, respectively. This software has seen 16 versions in as many years, which has allowed its features to be iterated on and polished. Clichés about German efficiency and design aside, the interface is nicely appointed with a strong emphasis on learning. Toggling between Easy and Advanced mode is done with a single button that's always in view, and the Easy mode turns the video pane into a display for mouse-over tool tips.

Every provided instrument and effect plug-in exposes a limited but carefully chosen set of parameters. Anyone who's opened up an advanced software plug-in, taken one look at its rows of cryptically-labelled knobs and faders, and finally made a beeline for the presets will feel much more at ease

tweaking away at the included Revolta, Atmos, LiViD, Robota, and Vita modules. And for those who need to have a song ready in seconds, the Song Maker



tool duplicates GarageBand's Magic mode, allowing the user to automatically populate a project with samples from selectable genres and instrument sets.

While Music Maker presents itself as genre-agnostic, the included sample content belies the software's German background. The loops for modern electronic dance styles outnumber and outshine those for pop/rock and hip-hop. The wordless vocal samples are smooth and perfectly usable, but the ones with lyrics are in English with accents that range from tolerable to laughable. This may seem like a minor gripe, considering the vocals are the samples least likely to make it to anyone's final mix. For software such as this, however, the samples in the box are as important as the program that plays them. Magix would do well to ship Music Maker in North America with market-specific content.

These minor reservations aside, Music Maker is a viable alternative to GarageBand for PC users. Priced at a perplexingly low \$69.99 CDN, you really can't go wrong with this package. If you work in a Windows environment and want a completely painless introduction to the world of home music production, this is it.

Ian Ratzer is a sound designer at Electronic Arts and keyboardist in Montreal-based pop band First You Get the Sugar.



by a sizeable library of audio and MIDI loops, easily navigated through the built-in media browser. A nice handful of standard effect plug-ins, including

Steinberg CI2 Advanced Integration USB Studio

By TK Dallman

Any hobbyist recording engineer/musician can relate to the despair of trying to simultaneously manage both the technical and performance aspects of recording. From arming the DAW and pressing record to running to the microphone in time to play the part, something usually gets sacrificed in the commotion. More often than not, it's performance.

Steinberg has addressed this issue with its CI2 Advanced Integration USB Studio unit, a two-preamp interface seemingly aimed at musicians who wish to enter the recording world with no hassles. Complete with Steinberg's Cubase AI 5, a stripped-down version of the full Cubase DAW, the CI2 has been packaged appropriately, allowing for an array of plug-ins and digital toys without overwhelming new engineers.

When I first opened the box, what immediately struck me was the interface's primarily plastic casing. Though



CUBASE AI 5

structurally sound, the lack of project box-style metal was different to me, and suggests that the CI2 will likely not become an heirloom piece. But as an entry-level recording device comparable to the likes of Digidesign's Mbox 2, it would be silly to expect the utmost in industrial design.

While I was not particularly blown away by its technical appearance, several of the basic features of the CI2 impressed me right away, like the inclusion of a Hi-Z button on the Input 1 channel to allow for DI recording of bass and guitar (both inputs accept XLR and 1/4" TRS connections). The preamps themselves sounded quite clean, too, and they can be recorded as either two centre-panned mono signals, or a stereo L/R pair, by toggling the Mono

button in the centre of the CI2.

A conveniently-located phantom power button also lies to the right of the input gain knobs, and while it would have been nice to see separate switches for both inputs, it is an understandable decision Steinberg made to economize both space and electronics. Also lacking is MIDI functionality, which, though not necessary, would have been a welcome addition to the device.

Other standard controls include volume knobs for the master and headphone outputs, as well as a mix toggle to fade between the microphone input and the DAW output.

Still, the most unique and fascinating features of the CI2 are held within the AI section of the CI2 device: the AI Knob, Lock, and Action Pad, which all aim to streamline the flow of recording, editing, and mixing.

Firstly, the AI Knob works in tandem with the mouse, acting as a controller for whichever setting over which it's situated. This can be a fader, plug-in setting, or virtually any clickable control in Cubase AI 5. For more permanent control over one setting, however, one can press the Lock button, and that control will be held until Lock is pressed again. And though I'm not sure the AI knob is the best way to execute automation moves, it is veritable as a method for putting together levels and changing settings quickly.

Perhaps most attuned to the needs of the home recordist, however, is the Action Pad, which can execute between two and six customizable functions in sequence by simply pressing it again and again. In Cubase AI 5, pressing the pad for the first time will bring up the Interactive Recording panel, at which point the functions can be set. A common set-up is "Record - Stop - Return to Start Position." Press the action pad once and recording starts of the armed track. Press again and it stops. Press it a third time and you're back at the start to record the passage over again, if need be.

This makes for an effective recording flow, especially when paired with the Yamaha FC5 pedal (sold separately), an external footswitch that controls



the Action Pad through the CI2, allowing for greater freedom of movement.

The CI2 will work with any host that supports ASIO or Core Audio, but users of other DAW software will want to know that the AI Knob and Interactive Recording features work exclusively with Cubase and Nuendo.

I suppose the real question, however, is where the CI2 stacks up in terms of entry-level interfaces. I've now spent over a month toying around with it, and I've come to recognize the CI2 as simply one of the best value recording interfaces for its price point. With a solid set of preamps, self-recording functionality, and even a basic version of Cubase included, the CI2 bears many advantages over competitors.

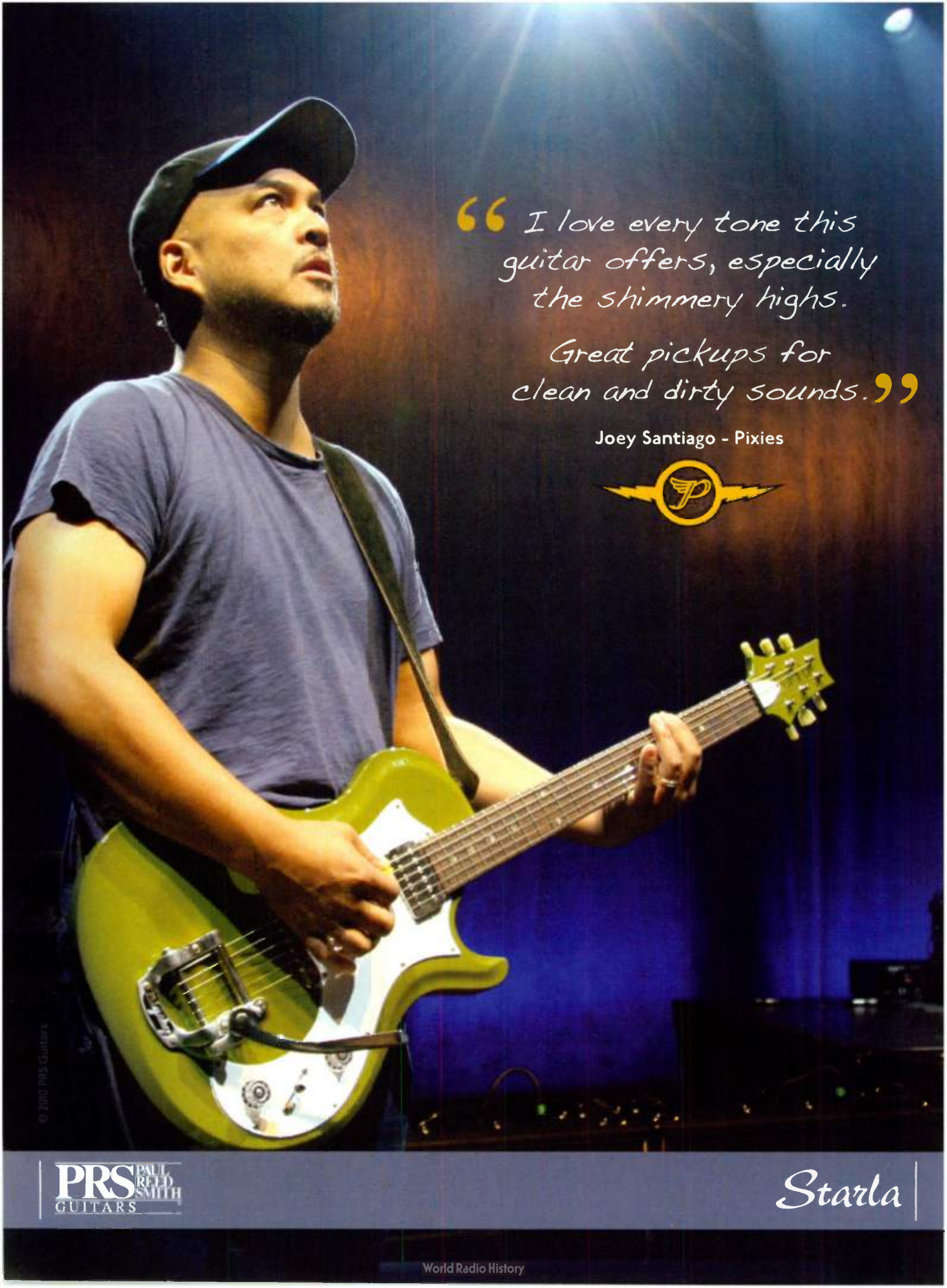
For home recording musicians or engineers-to-be just wanting to test the waters, the CI2 appears to be the perfect solution.

TK Dallman is a composer, freelance writer, and recording engineer currently working out of Rattlebox Studios in Toronto under producers Brian Moncarz and David Bottrill.

Distributor's Comment

With so many MIDI devices connecting over USB, the absence of MIDI connectors hasn't been a major obstacle in practice. Connector space is instead used for the optional footswitch, allowing musicians to record without taking their hands off their instruments or sitting in the engineer's chair, and CI2's compact design fits easily on a desk or in a laptop bag.

Dave Miner
Product Marketing Manager
Steinberg & Music Production Products
Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.



“ I love every tone this guitar offers, especially the shimmery highs.

Great pickups for clean and dirty sounds.”

Joey Santiago - Pixies



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Wendell Ferguson is a guitarist, songwriter, and performer with 5 CDs and a DVD to his credit. His latest all-instrumental CD, *Menage A Moi*, is currently available. Visit www.wendellferguson.com.

by Wendell Ferguson

are you capo-ble?

Back in the '60s when Billy Strange, Tommy Tedesco, a young Lee Ritenauer, and Larry Carlton were doing all of the guitar session work in LA, they would've laughed at anyone with a capo.

As professionals, they felt they could play just as well in any key without the use of crutches like the lowly capo. Then a young hick moved to town from Arkansas named Glen Campbell. He started getting lots of work with his acoustic playing and he used capos extensively. While the other guys were shaking their heads and muttering about this "session guitarist" using a capo, they had overlooked one important factor in the recording world: the public couldn't see you play on records; they could only "hear" you.

The top producers of the day knew that what mattered was what made it to tape. And bright, open, ringing chords sound better than choked barre chords any day. Try it. Learn to play a three-chord country song in B \flat (B \flat , E \flat , and F). Now capo the 3rd fret and play the same song in G. Which sounds better? Ta-da!

I do lots of session work and always keep a capo handy. It's great for getting instant harmonized finger-picking, 12-string and mandolin effects, and open modal notes in any key.

Choose The Right Capo

Capos come in many sizes and shapes. Make sure you buy the correct one for your guitar. An electric guitar's neck radius is more curved, so you'll need a capo made for that neck profile. If you play classical guitar, the neck is virtually flat, so you'll need one to match that. There are capos specific to mandolins, dobros, banjos, 12-strings, partial capos for special tunings, etc.

Then there's one more consideration. Some capos employ powerful springs to clamp down the strings. These capos facilitate easy, one-hand operation and are less likely to be misplaced as they can clamp to the headstock of your guitar when not in use. But due to the powerful, non-adjustable tension of that spring, they often apply too much pressure and pull the tuning sharp (see Fig. 1).

FIGURE 1



Jumbo frets only magnify the problem. I prefer capos featuring adjustable pressure, so you can vary the amount of torque. Enough squeeze to keep the notes clear, but not pull them out of tune.

Speaking Of Tuning...

In the studio, I place the capo wherever I need it to get the nicest-sounding inversions of the chords I'm playing. I tune the guitar with the capo on so it's in tune right where I'm playing. I can't tell you how many times I've seen novice guitar players take off their capos, tune the guitar in the open position, snap on the capos at the 7th fret, and expect it to be in tune. Ain't gonna happen.

Eventually, they'll get tired of the producer telling them to "tune it or die!" Or worse: "Can I speak to you outside for a moment... and bring your gear."

Studio Vs. Live

In the studio, there's time between takes to get your capoed instrument in tune and free of any buzzes. Onstage, you don't have that luxury.

There's an audience out there and they really don't want to wait five minutes between songs watching you adjust your capo and tuning. If you're playing solo, just slap that spring-loaded capo on and jump into the next song. If you're a little sharp, big deal – as long as it's uniformly sharp.

But playing with other musicians and capoing up high (say the 8th fret), your tuning is now going to be questionable. What to do? If it's really sharp, you'll have to quickly retune the whole guitar or the band will sound like Stravinsky on acid.

Here's what I do. Place the capo directly on top of the fret, not behind it as you would do in the studio. (See Fig. 2)

FIGURE 2



Sure it's more awkward to play and you may have to alter some fingerings, but the capo is only pulling the strings down to the fret, not the fretboard, so you should be as in-tune as if you were just fretting those notes. Try it both ways and check the results on an accurate tuner.

Until next time, stay tuned.



by David Braid

on a definition of jazz...

Throughout a century of jazz history, there has been continuous debate among artists, critics, educators, and aficionados about the definition of jazz. A central problem of the debate is a lack of agreement about the essential components of jazz, since its musicians, vocabulary, and inspirations continually change over time. The goal of this debate, I believe, is to reach an objective definition of jazz by identifying its essential musical traits.

Consider some responses to the question "What is jazz?" by some of the music's greatest pioneers: "If you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know," said Louis Armstrong. This statement, and a similar one attributed to Fats Waller, suggests that jazz is only intuitively known. Thelonious Monk also echoes this idea: "I don't have a definition of jazz... You're just supposed to know it when you hear it." From another perspective, Bill Evans tries to distinguish what jazz is not: "...it bugs me when people try to analyze jazz as an intellectual theorem... It's not. It's feeling." Despite the aesthetic differences among these highly influential artists, one consistently finds an absence of definitive musical traits in their statements. Instead, their responses address feeling and intuitive awareness, two inward events which do not pin jazz to a static definition, but reveal an active,

subjective experience.

Writing about what I think that subjective experience could be is almost as awkward as reading about it, and both are much less real than the actual occurrence; however, from my practical experience as a listener and performer, the closest approximation, if I can render it in words, is that jazz is transformative on two planes.

On an objective plane with its outward musical aspects, jazz musicians draw on the performance tradition of improvisation to develop the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic components of a basic song into a more complex composition. Structural transformation on this level is empirically obvious to anyone aware that jazz music relies heavily on improvisation.

On the subjective plane, transformation, according to our jazz pioneers, emphasizes an inward experience, a personal change of state. Precisely how it occurs is elusive within the mystery of creative art; but as a classic example of it, "swing" intensifies the energy of a song by exciting both the improvisers and the listeners, compelling them to move with the pulse of the music. The audience and musicians are together transformed by being lifted out of the every day – emotionally, sensuously, and intuitively – into a temporary heightening of their relatedness to each other in the presence of a non-verbal

language. The intuitive component may be partly the reason why jazz musicians previously mentioned were unwilling or unable to put the meaning of jazz, as a subjective phenomenon, into words.

Beyond swing, modern jazz involves elaboration on an ever-increasing array of complex vocabulary. I think a true artist is remarkably inventive with complex vocabulary (objective transformation) and easily communicates expressively on a basic emotional level, hence permitting subjective transformation. That is, regardless of vocabulary, the music still communicates the same intuitive "jazz feeling" that Armstrong, Monk, and Evans alluded to.

A final thought: as such influential jazz pioneers emphasize the subjective experience of jazz, perhaps the question "What is jazz?" is more appropriately rephrased as "What does jazz do?" This is a significant shift from a static meaning of the word jazz, to a meaning that refers to something current, active, and alive – in essence, a shift from noun to verb, perhaps reconnecting the word jazz to its original connotation as an action, and not a thing.

*"Don't want it fast, don't want it slow;
Take your time, Professor, play it sweet
and low!*

*I got those doggone, low-down jazz-me,
jazz-me blues."*

"The Jazz Me Blues" (1921)



by Ross Machon

Aside from having a great beard, Ross Machon plays bass in Toronto rock and roll outfit Clothes Make the Man. Having toured and played festivals such as Edgefest and Virgin Festival, he's learned a few tricks about being a touring bassist. Clothes Make the Man will release their sophomore outing, *Distance*, this fall, produced by Julius "Juice" Butty (Alexisonfire, Protest the Hero). www.myspace.com/clothesmaketheman.

eight random rules for the road

One could slap like Flea, run like Matt Freeman, or just be all around amazing like Sir Paul, but it isn't going to do you any good if you're not well-equipped to take your show on the road.

The following is a guideline I have compiled that should help you on your bass-ventures across this fine country.

① Make sure your gear is solid. Technical difficulties are inevitable, but you can limit them and learn from them. Bring strap locks to ensure your bass will never fall off, resulting in you playing on your knees. You are not Jimi. You are a bass player. Stand and be proud.

② Make sure your cables are always working properly. Your instrument should only be cutting in and out when you've mastered the art of knowing when to play and when not to play. I call this the white space of bass playing. Your silence can have just as much impact as your thundering down stroke. Listen to the Archers of Loaf song "Dead Red Eyes" and you'll know what I'm talking about. Learn to play that song and you will be unstoppable.

③ Make sure your bass amp is working, and as tired as you may think you are after a long night in Newfoundland, never accept paying some whacko a buck to load your gear into the van, as it will almost always result in the replacement of too many tubes, which you can't afford. Play out of your own gear when possible, and when in Hamilton borrowing bass cabs, make sure that your head will not blow the speakers because you really don't want to pay to repair some cabinet that was poorly constructed in the first place.

④ When getting an oil change in Saskatoon, or wherever you get out of the van after a long drive to Fort McMurray, exercise is a must, but under no circumstance play football. I was lucky enough to not only lose the game, but I managed to break my ring finger on my fretting hand on day 14 of a 40-day tour. Clothes Make the Man played a show that night and my finger swelled to be the size of pickle. We continued playing shows back to Toronto without the use of a pretty important bass finger. Once there, I managed to see a doctor and got a cute little finger brace that doubled as a pretty neat slide. Actually, breaking that finger

really made my pinky step up to the plate and become a full-time member of the squad. This brings me to number 5...

⑤ Make sure your pinky sees as much action as your other fingers.

⑥ Writing about fingers, I should mention that if your calluses are not as hard as rocks, you are not practicing enough. A simple test to know if your calluses are hard enough is to tap them on a table. If they make a sound like a hammer hitting the table, you're good. If you happen to be swimming in a salty pool in PEI for way too long and your hands get all pruned, have a look at your fingertips. They should look more like little bowling balls than raisins.

⑦ It goes without saying that your bass should be in great working order as well. Broken strings will happen when playing live and you don't want to be caught like a deer in the headlights of that rusty Econoline you call a temporary home. A good little exercise is to play your parts on different strings. Figure out a backup in case your E string breaks. I remember once being young and in the recording studio, with intimidating producer/Good Riddance singer Russ Rankin telling me that I must change all my parts so that they only use the first five frets of the E and A string. Although it seemed like an insane idea to me at the time, looking back now, it was a great exercise in getting to know my instrument.

⑧ Finally, the most important lesson of all: make sure you have fun out there, as that is the primary reason any of us ever decided to pick up the bass in the first place. Well, that and to fill a spot in a band with your friends or cool older brother's band who already had a guitarist and drummer!



Newfoundland trumpeter Patrick Boyle (www.patrickboyle.ca) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Victoria. He has performed with Duane Andrews, Uri Caine, Mike Downes, Mike Murley, and Zakir Hussain among others.

PHOTO: NATASHA KOMODA, KIMONO PHOTOGRAPHY



by Patrick Boyle
B.Mus, M.A.

school 's out {well, not really...} for summer

Part One: The Fit Factor

I know. It's the July/August issue. Summertime and the livin' is easy. The mere mention of anything school related right now is repulsive. But if you are considering a post-secondary program in some aspect of music down the road, it would be wise to get a clear idea of what is important to you as soon as possible.

Most applications are due in late fall/early winter, and scrambling two weeks before the deadline is just a waste of time for everyone. This is a big decision that warrants some healthy mulling. In this first installment of a two-part article, I will provide a framework to help musicians make the right decision about what kind of school they need, or if they need school at all. This information is relevant to any musician, regardless of instrument or genre, whether you are just out of high school or if you have been considering university or college for sometime. Next month, I will lay out some specifics for brass players to get in the right headspace before an audition.

Is School For You?

When you take the stage, an audience isn't listening for your academic background. They are listening for music that holds their attention. College and university music schools can be incredible places mainly because of the access they provide. It's an opportunity to make connections with like-minded individuals who ideally care about music as much as you. First-rate facilities (e.g. libraries, rehearsal spaces, practice rooms) are available to work out ideas. Above all, in school you have ac-

cess to alternate points of view and new concepts, musical and non-musical.

If you think you'd like to go to school, it's wise to consider the relationship between pending academic responsibilities, current performing career, and social life before applying to any program. Someone straight out of high school may not have this problem, but a working pro might face a delicate and precarious balance. Compromises are inevitable. You have to make clear decisions about what is most important to you.

Then Which School?

Rest assured, the admissions committee is scrutinizing your application to see you have the right "fit factor" for them. What then are the attributes of a school that create the personal "fit factor" for you? Is it a specific teacher? Is there a particular quality of recent graduates that is attractive to you? What is the overall reputation of the school? Facilities? Is there a recording studio? Will you have the opportunity to have your compositions performed and recorded? Will you get to perform outside of school or is everything "in house?" How broad is the school's stylistic spectrum? What kind of financial aid is available? Is it the location of the school that is most attractive?

Location, location, location. At first glance, the appeal of a program in a large city is obvious. Not only are there gigs to be had, but there are gigs to be heard; however, a program in a smaller centre might afford even more direct community involvement and individu-

alized instruction. What other types of non-musical creative activity are in the city? What are other creative professionals doing? What is the overall vibe of the place?

There have never been more choices for people interested in studying music at the post-secondary level. Currently, you can study performance, music education, theory/composition, history, sound recording, and music therapy, to name only a few disciplines. If a multi-year program involves too great a commitment, perhaps an extended-stay workshop that allows for concentrated, intense study is more appropriate.

In terms of performance, some schools advertise that Mr. or Mrs. High Profile performer teaches there, when in reality that artist is often away on tour. This is a tactic to generate interest in the program and I think it's dishonest. Do your research. Thanks to the web, it's never been easier to exercise due diligence and investigate programs all over the world. But that's no substitute for being there. Seek out recent graduates to get the real scoop on the program.

I'd like to conclude by unabashedly waving a huge maple leaf. Canadian music schools are filled with excellent teachers and are generally very affordable. Before shelling out \$30,000 a year (or more) for a degree from Big American University So-and-So, especially in this current economic climate, be certain it's the best investment of your money and time. We are fortunate to live in a country where tuition fees are reasonable. For the time being, the juice is still worth the squeeze north of the 49th.



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

by Kevin Young

funny how things turn out...

Take the Hammond Organ; created mid-20th century by Laurens Hammond, it was meant to be a compact, affordable substitution for the pipe organ. And it was. But it was also embraced by jazz players and rock musicians, acquiring a mystique and a set of cultural references all its own and quite beyond its creator's intentions.

Then there's the Rhodes; initially created by educator Harold Rhodes during WWII, the original was allegedly cobbled together using surplus parts from US bombers. It was used as part of a music therapy program for recovering soldiers, an instrument they could place on their laps and play in their hospital beds.

Can you imagine how the last 50-60 years of popular music would be different if artists and innovators of the time had dismissed the Hammond as "too churchy-sounding," or the Rhodes as a strictly therapeutic tool?

Over the past five years in virtually every interview I've done, regardless of what part of the music business my subjects work in, there is inevitably some discussion of how digital technology has impacted their workflow, for better or worse.

Most people who have strong opinions about the pros and cons of new recording and instrument technology fall into two camps – those who wish we never came this way, and those who just can't wait to get farther down the digital road. I want to start right where *CM*'s 2010 Keyboard feature left off and state – as one of our industry panelists did – that the most exciting possibilities in music creation coming down the pipe will at least in part be a result of "the adoption of technologies already widely adopted in non-music related markets." As an example, we need look no farther than our phones.

Still, regardless of how ubiquitous the technology we use to communicate is, and regardless of how it ultimately impacts the future of music creation, it's important to remember that both it, and

our relationship to it, is still very much in its infancy.

Hop online and check out Paul Morley's interview with Brian Eno in *The Observer* dated Jan 17th, 2010, entitled "On Gospel, ABBA and the Death of the Record; An Audience with Brian Eno." In it, Eno makes the following comment: "...instruments sound interesting not because of their sound, but because of the relationship a player has with them."

He goes on to say, specifically about synthesizers, that they are still relatively new instruments. And if synths are new, our digital workspace – instruments, recording platforms, and all – are but squealing babes in arms.

Eno also states: "One of the important things about the synthesizer was that it came without any baggage. A piano comes with a whole history of music. There are all sorts of cultural conventions built into traditional instruments that tell you where and when that instrument comes from. When you play an instrument that does not have any such historical background you are designing sound basically. You're designing a new instrument..."

That's a pretty compelling and exciting statement, and as true for the synth as it is for the digital recording, creation, and communication tools we employ today – whose potential, as limitless as we already imagine it to be, is ultimately far greater than we actually can predict.

That said, more recent technology – software instruments, sequencers, and so on – do seem to come with some baggage. It's the old glass half empty/glass half full situation. We've got people who believe that relying on new tech exclusively is a recipe for making bad records and those who say that old school recording was fine and all, but there's little they'd take from it to inform our process now.

Obviously neither point of view is entirely accurate or well informed. Still, I've heard both defended vehemently, if not terribly effectively, as if they were the gospel truth itself.



Some would say our modern tools are happily, joyfully unfinished, still evolving in exciting ways. Still others would comment that they are woefully incomplete; that digital recreations of analog instruments have lost the nuance and depth of the originals; that modern recording platforms encourage creators to focus so much on perfection that they've driven a stake through the heart of soul; that MP3s sound like shit; and so forth.

Still others seem to think that powerful tools are a custom-made substitute for hard won skills and experience – that *anyone*, recording strictly in the box, can achieve comparable results to what was possible in a full-size recording studio with new technology. As far as the latter goes, it really depends on who's doing the recording. For those of you who grew up in a situation where everybody got gold stars for just showing up, this may come as a shock, but just because you can do something doesn't guarantee you'll be great at it.

I don't think we have any idea of exactly what our tools and process will look like five years down the road, so we can't dismiss the technology that will get us there. Neither should we dismiss the collective knowledge, experience, and points of view of people who have worked in the industry since it was just becoming "an industry."

It's as natural to bitch about change as it is to be arrogant about how completely you embrace it. Personally, I think the most effective path forward splits the difference.

Regardless of your background, preference in gear, recording techniques, and what not, looking behind you informs how you'll move forward and ensures you won't do so blindly. Looking forward ensures you will evolve as an artist, in step with both current technologies and cultural trends.



by Dawn King

sing from your toes

Three Full-Body Support Techniques Used by Garth Brooks, Christina Aguilera, Martina McBride & Many Others...

Many singers want to improve their tone, range, pitch, and endurance. Here's how: I want you to consider these three full-body techniques, which you can learn and begin to use to your advantage in the next 10 minutes.

This session will deal with breath support, tush support, and legs and back support. Full-body support means effortlessly getting a great air supply into the body with the least amount of tension, and using the entire body to support sound production. If you ever want to see great examples of full-body support, watch Elvis Presley or Michael Jackson perform.

Support Your Voice With Effortless Breath

Elvis or MJ, with their strong legs and loose upper bodies, made it look and sound so easy and so appealing. Here's how you can do it too...

First, place your fist directly below your belly button. Squeeze the old air out, relax your jaw, open your throat, and pop in a fresh supply of air. Effortless! You don't have to try or force or tense up at all. In fact, some people call this passive breathing, as it requires so little energy. As soon as you gently squeeze out the old air, the new supply will just flow in automatically. Now, as you press in with your fist (this is just to get the feeling) and contract your lower abdominal muscles around the air, make this short, buzzy sound – ZZZ. Feel the buzzy sound start in your lower abdominal area instead of your throat, jaw, or mouth. Keep your jaw and lips totally relaxed. ZZZ. Stay completely relaxed above the waist.

Once you learn to stop sucking air in and begin to allow it to "pop and simply drop" into your throat and lungs, your upper body will begin to relax automatically. To stop the ZZZ at the end of your out-breath, relax your abdominal muscles, relax your jaw, and let the new air simply drop in. It's totally easy!

Want More Vocal Tone & Resonance? Get Your Tush Into It!

I am encouraging you to sing with all of your body, from your toes to the top of your head. The body is like any

vibrating instrument, and in order to get the maximum vocal production from it, the body must relax and also move freely.

I believe it's important to feel some "tension" in your lower body when singing. This muscular tension is used to create movement and support. In this case support means, "to bear by being under." Keep your awareness on "tucking" your tush under, and on keeping your upper half relaxed. Get under your sound.

Get A Leg Up On More Vocal Power

People have remarked that some singers are pleasing enough but don't seem to have much "power." They don't seem to be able to produce much volume without oversinging, which results in a strained sound. Again, here's where Elvis and MJ have lots in common with your typical southern US gospel group – they MOVE. Singing is NOT from the neck up!

Flex your ankles, bend your knees, lean back, and move something. You'll gain more power and add more range. Always drop back on your hips and keep your chest loose. Your legs and lower body will compensate by tightening under you. Powerful singers from Celine Dion to Daughtry to Adam Lambert all support from the centre of their bodies. Notice whenever they want to go for the "big money notes," they tuck under, bend the knees, and move something!

Want More Singing Endurance? Does Your Voice Get Tired Or Sick?

If you are singing with a tight neck, shoulders, chest, or jaw, you are going to wear yourself out. A tight and tense upper body means tight and tense sounds! When you use your full body to support your sound you have an entire team working on your behalf instead of just those poor lil' vocal chords straining to do all the work.

The upper body, from the waist up, should be RELAXED. Remember these three, easy, effective full-body techniques – passive breathing, tucking your tush, and using your legs – and you'll be singing from your toes!



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BY KEVIN YOUNG.
PHOTOS BY NAURIS NIKANS.

At a time when record sales are not what they once were, Scottish-born, Canadian-grown Johnny Reid has reached an exceptional level of success as a multi-platinum selling domestic recording artist. He's embraced by radio and fans with equal enthusiasm, routinely sells out some of the largest venues in the country, and his career is still on the upswing in Canada.

REID ROCKS THE
MILE ONE CENTRE
IN ST. JOHN'S.

Johnny Reid

"I want my legacy to be songs of admiration and of appreciation," he says in his ever-present Scottish burr, speaking to *CM* from his home in Nashville just prior to the 2010 JUNO Awards.

That comes across on record as clearly as it does when Reid talks about his family, his songs, and his career. Truthfully, he seems like the kind of guy who just wants to do right by everyone he comes into contact with.

Reid's hallmark is music that is earnest, forthright, and features recurring themes of personal responsibility and thankfulness. While those sentiments aren't terribly rock and roll, neither are they that common in modern country music. But while you hear a lot about Johnny Reid, "country singer," his music tends to blend equal parts soul, rock, and country rather than inhabit one genre exclusively. And Reid's subject matter and his ability to hover between genres is an important part of the equation behind his success.

"My dad, he was a diesel mechanic, and he listened to a lot of country music, but the country music I grew up on in Scotland was stuff like Don Williams and Charlie Rich. Charlie Rich definitely leaned toward Memphis soul. My mother, she listened to a lot of Motown, and I fell in love with the instrumentation and the performance of soul," Reid explains.

"I've always appreciated the performance value in soul music," he continues. "I mean, entertainment value is at the top of my list. I think it's because I appreciate the value of a dollar and how much it takes to make a dollar. I didn't grow up with too much." And, bottom line, he says simply, "these are hard times." Correspondingly, Reid's intention is to make sure that every show he does is worth every penny his audience pays for them.

Most importantly, he also fell in love with the morality of the music he was listening to, and the compelling stories it told about everyday people living everyday lives. While Reid's songs are relentlessly hooky and boast lyrics in which average people can easily find their own lives reflected, at the core of his success is the fact that he sees very little difference between himself and the people with whom his songs resonate so strongly – a fact he telegraphs effectively and honestly on record and onstage.



"I only write when I feel something," he says, and since he began writing his latest record, *A Place Called Love* – his first since signing a new deal this year with EMI – it's clear he's been feeling a few things very deeply.

While Reid was already working on new material prior to the release of his last record, 2009's *Dance With Me*, ultimately much of *A Place Called Love*'s subject matter closely reflects the events of his life, past and present. This past year, as he puts it, was a year of "sunshine and rain" – there were crushing lows, like the loss of his grandmother, with whom he has always been extremely close, and fantastic highs, such as coming home from saying goodbye to his Grandmother in Scotland to find his wife pregnant with their first daughter and fourth child.

Tracks from the new effort make it clear how substantially Reid's songwriting depends on his life experience. On tracks like "The Hands Of A Working Man," Reid's lyrics are drawn as much from his own experiences as a father as from memories of his childhood and his own father's efforts to support their family, but the song, he says, was initially inspired by a fan. "This was

Johnny Reid!

a woman I've known for a long time. Her husband's a hard working fella and got real sick. Her daughter came to me and said, 'You know, I'd love for you to write a song or poem for my dad.' I'd met him a few times and I know he's a hard working guy, and I realized I had to go to a personal place to make it work."

It's a surprisingly lush track for its relatively spare and traditional instrumentation – piano, acoustic guitar, and drums. It's also a perfect example of the ethic Reid and producer/co-writer Brent Maher employ in the studio – in this case, refusing to chase the demo and just being satisfied with the song for what it is.

"We wrote the song together, me, Mike Reid, and Brent. Mike, he's a piano player, and he said, 'Let's lay this thing down, just quick, so we don't forget it.' So he played it and I sang it live. There's no click and he's using this string sound that kicks in when he plays the piano." Obviously, a work tape, Reid stresses, is just a sketch. "But when we went into the studio and we were starting to actually cut the song, I just voiced up and said, 'You know, this is really good, but that original piano and vocal, that captured the magic.' So we just threw that work tape up and then Nir Z and Glenn Worf put drums and bass on it." Ultimately it's a song Reid thinks will resonate, not only for its lyrical content, but because of the spontaneous nature of the initial recording.

Recorded live off the floor in early 2010, *A Place Called Love* reunites Reid with producer/co-writer Maher. While some work was done in Maher's Nashville recording facility, Blue Room Studios, Reid also put time in at Mississauga's Metalworks Studios. But regardless of where they work, Reid and Maher tend to not mess around in the studio and, so far, all primary tracking has been done in essentially two days. "It's all about the performance," Reid adds, "about capturing the spirit of the song and the moment."

Inevitably, the quality of Reid's voice and his Scottish heritage invite comparisons to another well-known singer, Rod Stewart. But rather than shy away from comparisons out of some need to distance himself from other artists, Reid is characteristically gracious and thoughtful in his response. "To say that he didn't influence me would be telling you a lie. My mother was a huge Rod Stewart fan. But I've been compared to a lot of people – from Rod Stewart to Joe Cocker to Bryan Adams to Bob Seger – and my response is always the same. If you compare me to people who've sold millions of records around the world, then I'm humbled. And good on you."

Reid does have a bit of a gravelly edge to his voice, a slight rasp that's characteristic of all the singers he's mentioned. But comparisons aside, if familiarity is a component of his success, it's because the sentiments he expresses are deeply familiar to his fans. His songs are based so thoroughly on real life experiences that fans can find themselves in – not so much "feel good" songs as "feel right" songs, sporting lyrics that make people feel as if their everyday struggles and concerns are justified and important, no matter who they are or what they do.

That sentiment is a recurring theme on *A Place Called Love*. Given the recent economic collapse, lyrics like: "The more I see, the deeper I believe the best place for this world to be is in the hands of a working man," echo a fairly universal sentiment. More than just being topical, it's easy for a large chunk of the populace to wrap their arms around and embrace as their own. Reid sees his role of giving people songs in which they can hear their own voices and concerns as both an important responsibility as well



as a key part of his job description as a songwriter.

On *A Place Called Love*, Reid taps a similar vein of country soul to that he has in the past, refining what he does so well rather than making a definitive departure from his last two albums – 2007's *Kicking Stones* and 2009's *Dance With Me*. While his music is evolving, he says that evolution is an unconscious thing.

"Obviously there are going to be wee differences. I just finished putting a big Baptist choir out of east Nashville on 'Today I'm Going To Try To Change The World.'" And Reid definitely believes his records are getting better – a function of his becoming a more experienced songwriter, performer, entertainer, and human being more than any deliberate effort to change.

"I've always looked at this as being my livelihood, and I owe it to the people buying my records to be consistent." With his latest, Reid brings back many of the same players he's used in the past – an A-list band that includes Mark Selby and Richard Bennett on guitar, Gienn Worf on bass, and Nir Z on drums and percussion. This time he also brought in John Jarvis – a former member of Rod Stewart's Faces – on keys, whose work also appears on Reid's 2009 *Christmas* record. Reid sees the consistency of working with the same musicians as having a core benefit to his records, and his brand.

Still, Reid is fully aware that a big part of maintaining your career means knowing when to switch things up, to grow, to expand – the same with any business. Reid, for all his success in Canada, knows you can only keep going back to the well for so long in a given period. He knows, too, that the bigger you get, the fewer times you can go back to that well. "It's kind of like talking to your mother on the phone every day. If you talk every day then there's nothing to talk about, but if you don't talk for two weeks, it's a great conversation."

All that said, Reid has been able to tour Canada pretty relentlessly. "Last year we did 10 dates; the year before that nearly



160." This year, there are roughly 55 on the books so far. A career lives and dies by the ability you have to sell it consistently on the road and Reid's show is something to which he gives a great deal of thought. This time out he'll be ramping up his live show with a 12-piece band, augmented for the first time with a full horn section, a dedicated percussionist, and an additional guitar player.

It's no secret that Reid has reached a pretty sweet spot in his career. He virtually swept the 2009 CCMA's, and just took the 2010 JUNO for Country Recording of the Year. On their own, his record sales speak for themselves, as does his ability to sell out venues like St. John's Mile One Centre two nights running and play multiple dates in large rooms across the country.

But Reid is intent on seeing his career grow beyond Canada's borders – a fact that informed another album track, "Let's Go Higher." On the one hand it's a song that speaks to surmounting personal insecurity, but it's also a glimpse into Reid's approach to his career. "I've always believed that you're only as good as the people you surround yourself with and that song is about surrounding yourself with people who never let you say, 'Okay, I've made it,' or who tell you that you've reached a pinnacle. There's always something more. To tell you the truth, I wrote that song about myself, about my spirit. My whole motivation to write that was to look at myself," he says with a laugh, "and say let's go higher. The beautiful thing is that I feel like I'm just getting started."

For his upcoming record, Reid felt it was important to find a way to open himself up to a larger audience. Though he's thrilled with his success here in his



REID MEETS WITH MEMBERS OF HIS TARTAN ARMY FAN CLUB IN ST. JOHN'S.

home country, he has done relatively little outside of Canada and knows international growth is a key to cultivating a lengthy career. And while Reid emphasizes consistency onstage and on record, he's not shy about taking a new direction in terms of the business side of his career. "Timing is everything, and it so happened that I'd met my contractual obligations and I was a free agent."

After fulfilling his obligations with Open Road Recordings, Reid moved over to MapleMusic Recordings for the release of his platinum-selling *Christmas* record. After that, however, he'd been looking for a new home. Earlier this year, he found one on EMI Records.

While there was interest from a number of labels, Reid settled on EMI primarily because of his impression of Ian Ralfini, President of Blue Note and EMI/Manhattan Records in the US. They first met, Reid says, after a show in Halifax. While a number of suitors were present, Reid says he didn't know exactly what companies they each represented. "He never did introduce himself," Reid says of Ralfini. "We just started talking. His mother lives in Glasgow, so we talked about Glasgow and my gran and before I knew it, we were lost in conversation."

Personally impressed, Reid hooked up again with Ralfini, this time in New York City. While there, they talked in greater detail, but not specifically about business. In fact, Reid explains, it wasn't until their next meeting in Nashville that they really got down to it. "A few weeks later," says Reid, "he came to Nashville and sat down at my dinner table and said, 'What do you want?'"

"I told him the same thing I tell

anybody who wants to do business with me," Reid continues. Basically, that he wanted to be a priority, and that he wanted to try to duplicate the success he's found in Canada on a global level. In March 2010, Reid signed a global deal with EMI. Release dates in the States are not yet confirmed, but there are a variety of plans in the works for bringing him to an American and ultimately international stage. In Canada, *A Place Called Love* will be released on Reid's own imprint, distributed, promoted, and marketed by EMI. "It's a good deal," Reid says – one that allows him to build his career, but still retain a measure of control in a market that has given him so much.

That element of control is key, he says – a direct result of a lesson learned very early on in his career when his first deal with Dreamworks went suddenly, horribly south. It's another experience that informs "Hands of a Working Man's" lyrics as well, he says, recalling how, when the deal went bad, he had to tell his wife that everything he'd worked for was gone.

That experience has informed Reid's approach to difficult career decisions and new partnerships ever since. "When you walk into a room, you have to walk in feeling like you have something to offer. You cannot walk into a room only feeling that somebody has something to offer you. When I did my very first deal, I had stars in my eyes; I was dreaming of buses and billboards – and I was humbled very quickly. The deal went south and I realized that you have to have respect for what you do. As a songwriter, as a singer, we're important pieces of the music business. Without the song, without the music, without the content, there is no business. My advice to anybody is to listen to your heart – you really have to feel it. The only thing I've ever asked for is to be a priority; give me a stage, an audience, and my microphone."

Now, he's playing the long game, retaining ownership of both his publishing and his masters, thinking his decisions out well in advance, making certain the career he's built here in Canada is tended carefully while stretching out internationally.

"I think the best part of making mistakes is learning from them. I've had my teeth kicked in a few times. Persistence, perseverance, passion – these are the things that kept me going. I owe it to myself, I owe it to my family, and most importantly, I owe it to every single person who ever believed in me to keep moving forward." ■



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

Put The NEEDLE To The RECORD



NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD FORMAT

BY SETH HENNESSY

Years ago, when a producer declared: "Let's cut a record," he meant it.

That was the norm until vinyl records slowly lost their cool. Whereas some things lose their cool and never get it back - for example, melted ice cream (or Vanilla Ice, for that matter) - lately, the vinyl format has found a new life amongst music buyers. Wax not only offers an alternative format for an artist to deliver their art to the masses, but it provides another arm for the music companies to hold back the onslaught of illegal downloading while even opening an avenue for legal downloading through the integration of dropcards.

There really isn't just one reason as to why vinyl is currently riding the wave of resurgence, but there are many contributing factors to it, not to mention a lot of satisfied ears.

There's the nostalgia element, yet a lot of people releasing and buying vinyl today never grew up with it aside from possible parental influence. GTA punkers The Flatliners, for example, all being rather young gentlemen, probably started buying music on CDs, but now as their career is taking off with their third full-length (second on vinyl), *Cavalcade*, it seems to be a format they appreciate.

"We're young guys; we grew up in the CD day and age, but we've always been super interested in vinyl. The artwork is massive and I feel that vinyl sounds so awesome. Just the crackles here and there - it sounds the way music should sound," says Chris Cresswell, the band's vocalist and guitarist.

Paul Miller, President of SAMO Media, a broker for vinyl manufacturing, and Joel Carriere, President of Dine Alone Records, both took the waxy black vinyl route out of personal enjoyment of the format over purely fiscal appeal.

"Certainly when we started in 2002, I would say [our business] was about 70 per cent CD to 30 per cent vinyl, and that really carried through to 2007," says Miller of the five years he kept the vinyl option despite its relatively limited popularity. Its

resurgence of late, though, has elicited a noticeable shift in those figures.

Says Carriere on the subject: "We started (releasing vinyl) when there wasn't much of a market. The good part about owning your own company is you can make decisions that financially

don't make sense," says Carriere somewhat jokingly. Even without serious financial return, it would be difficult in the independent music scene not to offer vinyl since artists also enjoy the inimitable option.

"It's got that sound, that kind of gritty sound - that old sound that brings you back,"



SAMO MEDIA'S PAUL MILLER

PHOTO: JOSH GLOVER



HANNAH GEORGAS



SAM BRADLEY

PHOTO: VANESSA HEINS



On The Way Up

According to end-of-year US music sales figures by Nielsen SoundScan, vinyl sales were way up for 2009. Approximately 2.5 million LPs were sold in 2009 - 33 per cent more than the total from 2008. Though vinyl only accounts for roughly 1 per cent of total music sales, don't be fooled - that's still a significant piece of a shrinking-but-still-huge pie. Also interesting? Around 2/3 of vinyl albums sold were purchased at an independent music store.

On the other end of the spectrum, digital track sales were up 8.3 per cent from 2009 and digital album sales were up 16.1 per cent.

Sorry, CDs...

Put The NEEDLE To The RECORD

says Hannah Georgas, who recently released her full-length *This Is Good* on vinyl. Similarly, singer/songwriter Sam Bradley goes so far as to call the sound of vinyl "comforting." So if it sounds that good and everyone knows it, why isn't everything released on vinyl? Why has the mainstream not recognized its charms?

Coming Back Around

Music Manufacturing Services (MMS) offers independent artists many services ranging from CD, DVD, and download card manufacturing to posters and eco-packaging. Lindsay Gillespie, President of MMS, notes that vinyl "isn't that practical."

This is obviously true; a 12" by 12" record sleeve is not much help to the hundreds of people double fistfisting their way through public transportation on a daily basis with a texting cellphone in one hand and a scrolling iPod in the other.

"It's a different type of listening style today than it was in the old days," adds Gillespie. "I'm sure people sit down in their living room and listen to whole sides of a record like we used to, otherwise what's the point of buying vinyl? But I think it's a smaller percentage of the population infatuated with listening in that kind of environment. In the '70s and '80s, that's what people did - 'Come on over, listen to a record.' Now most people enjoy music on the go. It's a different lifestyle."

Justin Ellsworth is Dine Alone's Art Director, and his position leads to another generally accepted opinion as to why vinyl is popular. Even for those who don't appreciate the sound that snaps, crackles, and pops its way into your heart, the artwork, much larger than CD or JPEG, offers a real treat for the eye and an exciting collectible item.

"Buying music is dead; buying 12" by 12" art pieces is very much alive. I don't think that's the whole answer, but that kind of plays into it in terms of the collectible and in terms of the tangibility," says Miller, quoting a statement he once saw in an online forum.

Even amongst an artist's fans, there can be divisions between those who want to buy everything possible from one artist and the fan that gets in a joyful melodic tizzy from the format. Going with the former, you'll undoubtedly have



PAUL RAMIREZ, JON DARBEBY, SCOTT BRIGHAM & CHRIS CRESSWELL OF THE FLATLINERS.



What Does Vinyl Cost?

We snagged some prices from SAMO's site to give you an idea of the cost of a vinyl run. Note that these prices are susceptible to fluctuation due to USD exchange rates for US supplies and goods. We'll use 500 units as standard, but bear in mind that the more you order (from 300 upwards), the lower your price per unit.

500 12" Raw Black Records: \$1260

- Coloured vinyl: +\$200
- For 500 full-colour jackets & insertion: +\$645
- For 500 full-colour jackets, 3 mil open top bags & insertion: +\$750

500 7" Raw Black Records: \$855

- Coloured vinyl: +\$155
- For 500 full-colour jackets & insertion: +\$650
- For 500 full-colour jackets, 3 mil open top bags & insertion: +\$725



some buyers that don't even have turntables; they see it as an art piece.

Miller repeats what a technician once asked him about the current surge of coloured vinyl being pressed for both the aesthetic and to allure collectors: "Why would anyone want a coloured record? Are they buying music, or are they buying pretty colours?"

Bradley finds the idea of vinyl artwork exciting because so much is possible, and with the right tune, it becomes more than listening to music. "You put the record on and then look at the artwork and it becomes a sort of total experience, instead of skimming over Facebook and listening on your crappy little computer speakers," he says. He retells how a friend of his put different Polaroids on vinyl releases and really went to town on the liner notes. "He made the cases extremely elaborate and it was like a book then - extremely beautiful."

Whether it's a CD, vinyl, or a computer graphic, Carriere has always realized how critical appearance is when it comes to artists' releases. "It's a first impression and that art usually represents the artist and what they want their music

to visually portray. For an artist, imagery is a very important thing and for us as a label, equally so," he explains.

Ellsworth adds: "I don't think that necessarily by creating this super package you're going to convert a digital music purchaser, but it's definitely a good kudos to the person who wants to buy a physical product. I hope they continue to do that because I don't want to see a future where all of my designs are presented at 72 pixels."

Taking The Plunge

To decide if a vinyl release is for you - or, more importantly, your fans - you need to research what it takes to get your songs pressed and on which vinyl formats. First, consider your genre and primary audience. Vinyl is exploding in underground circles like those of punk, indie rock, or metal. Adult contemporary? Not so much.

Yes, vinyl does cost more and takes more time to produce than simply recording acoustic jams and burning them to CD-R. Weeks and hundreds of dollars are needed just to get the "mother" from which other pressings are copied.

Explains Carriere: "You do a test pressing and if there's a little hiccup at the end, you

A Piece Of Art

Part of vinyl's undeniable appeal is its packaging - the album artwork is enhanced in size and, in many cases, the record itself becomes part of that package. When enlisting the help of a vinyl broker, be sure that you and your graphic artist pay close attention to guidelines. They'll be able to provide you with templates, but some general tips from SAMO Media include:

- Ensuring all images are at least 300 dots per inch (dpi)
- Ensuring all images are embedded in the submitted file



- Using outlined fonts
- Ensuring the art and template are on separate layers
- Barcode is placed if necessary (your broker will be able to help you)

Finally, pay close attention to proofs before they're approved. After all, your artwork is indeed bigger, but so too are any unwanted blemishes or errors.

have to send the test pressing back, and wait another few weeks." He adds that it took four to six months longer than it should have to press a recent album because of "little hiccups" along the way. Yet the man still loves vinyl.

Years ago, vinyl production in Canada was quite readily available, but as the popularity died, so did many of the manufacturers. In a time when even CDs weren't selling well, to keep a vinyl manufacturing business running with only the end in sight wasn't too alluring to many.

"The cost of raw materials was ridiculous at the time and there was not enough demand in Canada to support a plant," says Gillespie. But there has been an odd breeze in the vinyl wind that has altered the situation, with SAMO Media seeing rather staggering shifts of late.

"In 2008 and 2009, everything changed, and I would say now the ratio is reversed; it's pretty much 70 per cent vinyl, maybe even 80 to 20 or 30 per cent CDs," says Miller of Samo's current business ratios. Did everyone's ear suddenly throw up and ask for a better sound? Did the majority of Canadian music purchasers suddenly inherit a working turntable? Unlikely.

Since the subject of a superior sound is simply an opinion to some and a die-hard life choice for others, the emotional side of vinyl is a more tentative subject. For Bradley, vinyl means more than a regular (poor CD...) release. "It just seems very real and official," he says. He was planning on releasing his recent self-titled EP on vinyl but changed his mind. "At the time, it kind of seemed too expensive and I wasn't particularly happy enough with the music, so I wanted to make better music to put on vinyl."

Does he think vinyl only deserves good music? "I think my vinyl deserves better music," he quips.

New & Old Unite!

The conversion of digital music consumers is on the minds (and pocketbooks) of many. Artists are now releasing peripheral or expanded musical packages, from DVDs, special editions, or eco-packaged CDs to make music more appealing, but the invention of download dropcards is one that offers compromise between yesterday's ideals and today's technology.

Whether sold by themselves or in conjunction with vinyl purchases, download cards seem to please many. "I think it's definitely a good call because then you have the physical copy, but it's not like you can play your record in the car. So you still have that option to carry the portable version," says Cresswell, noting The Flatliners have added download cards to their vinyl releases.

Smaller than a 7" and cheaper to make than a CD, a download card offers artists the chance to distribute music at little cost.

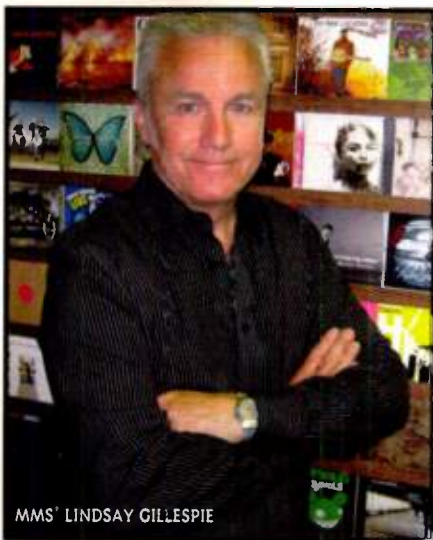
"If you're playing a gig and somebody wants to buy your music, it used to be you'd either sell them a CD at the merch table or they went home and you hoped they went to iTunes or another (legal) download site. With a download card, you can actually sell the music to them when they want it. They can download it when they get home but you've already made the sale," says Gillespie.

What About Dropcards?

Whether you're packaging them with your records or exploring them as a low-cost means of sharing your product with your fans, Dropcards are growing in popularity. MMS' site does a good job of explaining how they work and the advantages that come with them. Basically, you can:

- Choose your style of dropcard
- Cards start at around \$0.35 per unit
- Upload as many as 25 songs at a given time
- Customize the look of your cards
- Use them as promo or sell them at the price you choose
- Track who's downloading your songs

Consult your merch service rep for all of the details.



Bradley feels differently about download cards; although he thinks they are unique, he is still waiting for more people to embrace the format. Bradley actually released his first EP via dropcard, or more specifically, drop keychain with custom artwork on one side and a download code on the other. "It was a great idea, but people were less likely to buy a keychain in hopes that they get music when they get home than to buy a CD. A lot of people hadn't heard of the idea and so were kind of skeptical."

Gillespie realizes the idea is still ripening, especially in the mind of the general consumer, but is confident they will continue to gain popularity. He adds that it seems the dropcard's popularity is increasing every day.

Not Better—Just Different

It may be difficult, but having so many distribution options available for so many tastes, it is definitely becoming easier to compete with free.

Don't undervalue your music, warns Gillespie. "If you give everything away, then it has no value. You put a lot of time and effort into your recording and a lot of money into manufacturing and download cards and websites. There's value there. Music has a value."

And therein lies a reason vinyl is a viable option for selling music, even though some find it hokey and unmarketable. Accordingly, that is also an aspect of why vinyl is still cool. "People here are fans of vinyl; it's exciting to see something that you worked on in such a big format," says Ellsworth. Though it's often a toss-up as to whether it's worth the effort or cost, the fact that it can be – and how cool it is – is worthy of serious consideration.

Ultimately, it's just another choice for musicians and music fans, and while some genres may be more favourable to one format over another, it all starts with the music. "Good music is good music. It's going to sound good in your shitty headphones, or your great headphones, or your record player," says Georgas.

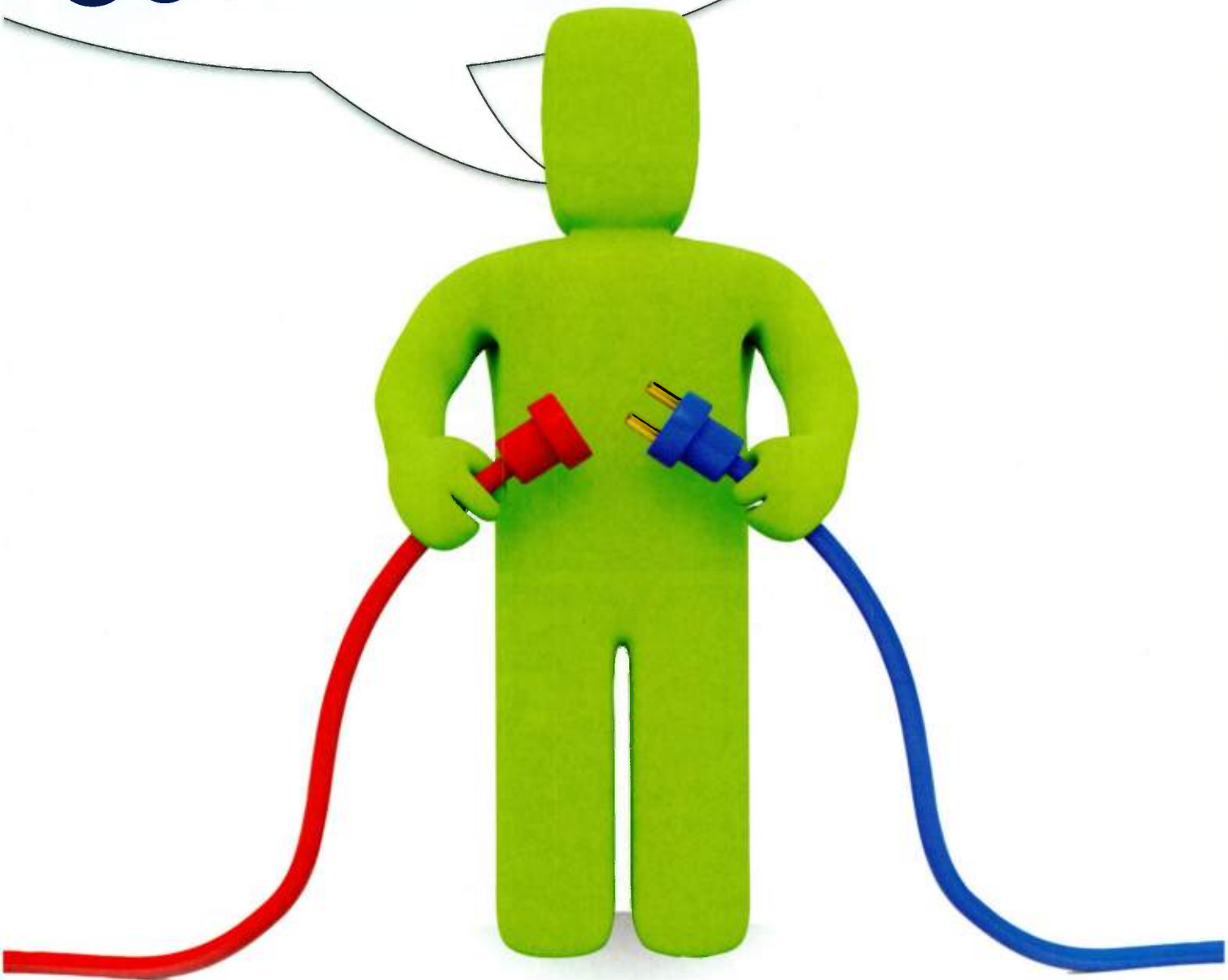
For the person downloading the week's hottest tracks from LimeWire right now, it is unlikely they care what format an artist will take on next; however, for a music listener who emits the same level of emotion listening to an album as an artist would need to create it, having that music on vinyl could be the icing on an already sweetened cupcake. Would your fans appreciate it?

"Maybe I'm getting a little too much into this, but people have a lot of memories attached to music and something physical that reminds them of that can really stimulate that strongly," says Miller. "I think anyone that really cares about music would agree. In terms of its sentimental value, having a physical piece that presents itself in a really special way could certainly be something that would drive people to buy it."

It certainly seems that music lovers over the years have been collecting more than just records. And it is seemingly certain that over time, vinyl's grooves have been collecting more than just dust. ■

Seth Hennessy is a freelance writer based in the Niagara region.

Where Do We Go From Here?



BY ERIC PRICE

A year has now passed since my last shocking expose on the computer industry. (Well, perhaps not so much shocking as outrageously informative.) Windows 7 and Apple's Snow Leopard have both been available since last fall, which means 64-bit operating systems abound. Oh the glamour! The excitement! And oh the headache of the morning after!

The party is over and for now, major computer hardware revelations and operating system overhauls are distant visions beyond the horizon. This means it's now time to roll up your sleeves and get to work. There are still plenty of tweaks and upgrades you can do to make sure you're running at maximum capability.

With a large selection of SSD (solid state) hard drives, cheaper RAM, faster CPUs featuring dual, triple, quad cores, and more, computers continue to grow more powerful while becoming more affordable. Out of the box, with only simple tweaking, your machine can often reach professional-grade performance. It is not uncommon with even the most basic of today's computers to be able to run 24 tracks of audio and a myriad of plug-ins with the machine barely breaking a sweat.

Let's kick off with a few hardware options that can work in both the Mac and PC environments as we explore some of the simplest, most useful, and least expensive options that you can take advantage of.

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Hardware Hard Talk

Firstly, whenever possible, run a dual hard drive setup – one for your system files and one for your data files. This one is a real no-brainer and listed below are a few important reasons for running dual drives.

You can install or re-install an operating system without affecting your data. What if a major upgrade comes along or you want to change or undo a change to the operating system? In most cases, with something that crucial, you should be doing a clean install of the OS. No worries, because your data is safely stored out of harm's way on a separate drive.

If you use your recording computer online (not recommended, though I realize more realistic) you could become infected with a virus. The chance of the virus infecting your separate data drive is slim though if it did, it would be easier to isolate it for disinfecting. Also, refer to the above point about having to re-install your OS!

You can easily move the data drive to another computer. When it is upgrade time for your computer hardware, just build your new machine and then migrate your data drive – no chasing down audio files that may be all over the system drive. Just a few minutes of work, a couple screws, then re-attach the cables, and you're good to go. This makes it easier for you to defragment the data drive exclusively and more

frequently. Lastly, data can be backed up much easier if you know what you have and exactly where it is.

I realize for laptop users that it's pretty hard to fit a second drive inside your computer, so you should seriously consider an external drive. Though some USB or FireWire drives and connections may not have enough bandwidth for you to record directly to the drive, you could use it to copy your data files onto once you are finished a session.

Dual monitors can be a major time saver as well. These days, almost all video cards feature dual outputs. With used LCD panels being readily available for under \$100 and new monitors being very affordable, this is an enticing upgrade option. Several studios I have set up recently are making use of the HDMI output found on many video cards and are wall-mounting inexpensive TVs as a second monitor for even more screen real estate, which translates into better workflow.

The next consideration applies to both platforms as well, and that is to add more RAM memory. With regards to RAM, if the budget is tight, more RAM is a better option than faster RAM. Let me explain why.

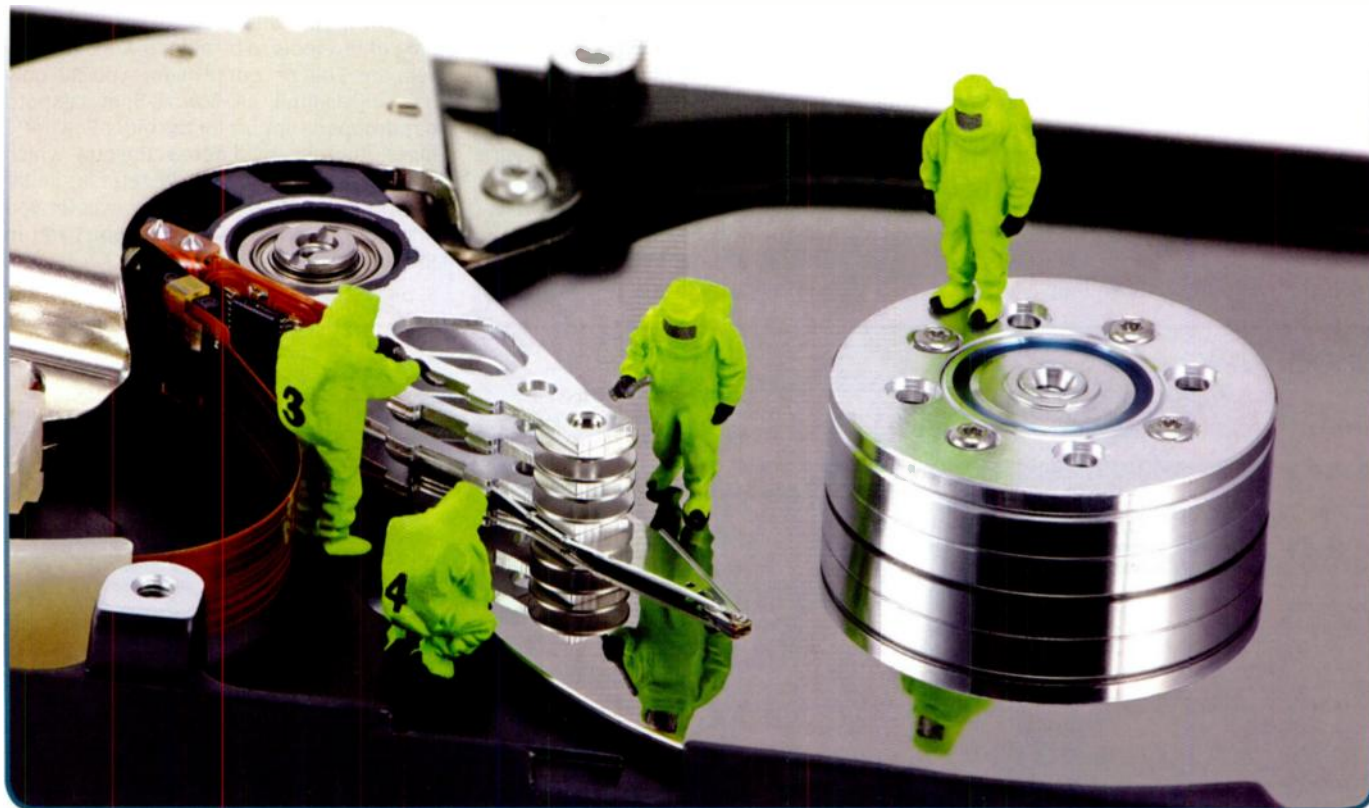
Basically, faster memory only provides you with incremental performance gains (if the budget is there then buy fast RAM in matched pairs) whereas more RAM can

prevent the operating system from making use of the hard drive for memory overflow. Both operating systems, Snow Leopard and Windows, make use of what's called a swap or a page file when RAM falls short. The OS makes up the difference between what is needed and what is available by carving out some temporary space on your hard drive. The problem is that a hard drive does not make for a speedy memory container!

When this occurs, your computer (and therefore, your recording) can take a serious performance hit. Be aware that not all software can currently take advantage of the extra RAM, but rest assured that programmers are hard at work finding ways to cure that.

This next RAM tip applies more to PC and Windows users of 32-bit operating systems who face a serious limit on the amount of RAM they can access. Macs, since OS X, do not suffer from this problem as Snow Leopard is only available as a 64-bit OS, but Windows 7 comes in 32- or 64-bit architectures. The issue with a 32-bit OS, without going into great detail, is that programs running in that environment have 3.5 GB of RAM available to use at most. So, if you want to have access to more RAM memory, a 64-bit OS is the only way to go.

Currently, there are some physical limits as to the amount of RAM you can install. You are most likely to hit a wall with limitations



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from your computer's main board (you may run out of RAM slots, for example). Given the chance, go wild! Four, six, eight – even 12 GB of RAM or more is quite possible and very affordable these days.

Final RAM tip: even if you are running a 64-bit OS with 32-bit applications, those applications will benefit from being in the 64-bit environment by allowing those programs to access a full 4 GB. Not a big gain, I know, but every bit helps.

A Software Affair

Let's move on to software while we are on the topic of Windows 7. Aside from the 32- or 64-bit concern, I want to quickly touch upon the various versions available based on their features. Windows 7 mainly comes in three versions: Home Premium, Professional, and Ultimate.

The version I recommend you use for recording is Professional. Home Premium will work fine but you do lose a few important features, one being in the back-up department as Home version's included back-up software is not as full-featured as Professional's. On the other end of the dollar and feature spectrum is the Ultimate version of Windows 7, which I feel is an unnecessary expense as it adds no extra features that will benefit your recordings.

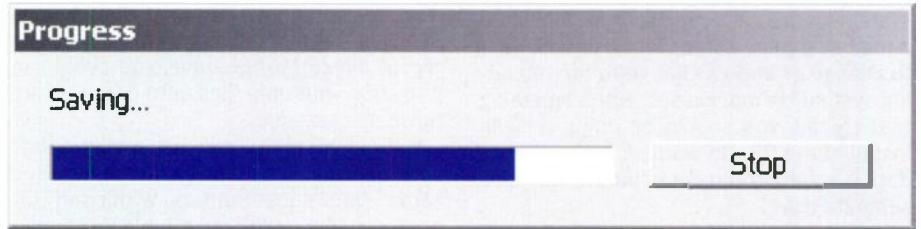
One cool thing: both Windows 7 Professional and Ultimate allow you to run Windows XP in a virtual mode. This means you can run XP inside Windows 7 allowing you to run older programs that may only have XP compatibility. You never know when you may need to run an older program, from recreating an old mix with older DAW versions to using a favourite softsynth.

- **QUICK TIP:** some software can run without the need for XP by using compatibility mode. Just right-click on the program icon, go down to properties, and open up the compatibility tab and adjust the appropriate settings.

From a performance standpoint, Windows 7 blows Vista out of the water; if you have Vista, ditch it! The cost of W7 will easily justify itself with the improved performance alone. My home machine is a 5-year-old AMD 3500+ CPU with 2 GB of RAM and after installing W7, my machine flew; there was just no comparison.

What's more, W7 is much slicker, adding some cool features as well as some extremely useful tools for improving everyday workflow. This applies to XP users as well;

Example two was a hardware issue involving two M-Audio 1010LTs. I tried to interface two Delta 1010LT cards in W7 64-bit, only to discover that the SPDIF synchronization feature that allows me to lock multiple cards together was not supported in W7 64-bit. Once again, I expect that will change down the road but in the meantime, it meant re-installing XP and reloading all the software. I hang my head in shame, embarrassed to point out that I failed to heed my own advice, and subsequently,



it's time to move on. Once again, Windows 7 will improve performance dramatically and if you use your computer on the Internet, it greatly improves on security as well.

Proceed With Caution

Though my overall advice for PC users is to go out and get a new computer with Windows 7 64-bit Professional, there is of course a warning that goes with that statement.

Let me share a couple of experiences I've had installing and running W7 over the last several months. To be clear here, I am not picking on anyone company – just pointing out some issues I have come across.

Example one was a software issue. Pro Tools M-powered would not play nice in Windows 7 64-bit. At press time for this piece, Avid had recently put a beta version of Pro Tools 8.03 on its website, but being a beta meant it came with no guarantees of it actually working bug-free. That is a scary road to take for a professional studio. This will change soon enough, but in the meantime, make sure you check out your software and hardware compatibility beforehand or you may find yourself going backwards, doing twice the work. In carpentry the rule is: measure twice, cut once. Well in the computer world it's research twice, install once!

paid the price (no pun intended).

I realize it is impossible to anticipate every possible hardware and software combination, but do your best to be prepared! Good places to visit on the Internet for information are the user forums of the companies that make the software. Not only are you likely to find someone with a similar problem, but you are just as likely to come across an expert on there as well, not to mention it is often a direct communication pipeline to the folks that create the programs and hardware.

Let's talk about Snow Leopard for a moment as it is not without its concerns either!


One example is Snow Leopard and Pro Tools 8, which are going through some growing pains just like Windows 7. Currently, you will need to install version 8.03 of Pro Tools to be able to work in Snow Leopard. That of course means you can only be using an Intel-CPU Mac as Snow Leopard has dropped support for the older Power-PC Macs. Another small note is Rosetta, which is now an optional install. Rosetta, a similar idea to XP mode in Windows 7, will let you run older Mac programs that won't run in the new 64-bit environment.

These aren't deal breakers by any

HELPFUL LINKS:



www.gearslutz.com



www.harmonycentral.com



www.musicbooksplus.com

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means, but you need to be aware of them so you can plan ahead and hopefully save yourself some headaches.

Back The Stuff Up

Now down to our last order of business. You didn't honestly think I was going to let an article pass by without me going down the old back-up trail did you?

Though there may have been no major advancements in the back-up situation with the new operating systems, that doesn't mean we shouldn't have a quick refresher course.

Windows 7 has a utility called Windows Backup while OS X has Time

Machine. Though very similar, they do have their differences. Both can schedule a time for doing your back-ups as well as allowing you to select exactly what you want to back-up. The Windows 7 version allows for a recovery disc to be made in case of serious failure. This disc lets you load up recovery tools on boot-up to help diagnose and solve computer problems when the computer can't boot up.

Also, the Windows 7 Professional and Ultimate versions allow you to image (replicate) a hard drive which is very helpful if you want to take your computer, say, back to the point when you first loaded it with all your recording software installed and running properly. The image disc can quickly and easily allow you to start anew without the tedium of re-installing every application. This can be pretty handy if an update goes sour or your system becomes infected with a virus.

End Script

Let us finish off by looking into some things missing in action, which includes USB 3.0. This has yet to make its full appearance on the scene, becoming a standard feature and fulfilling the promise of an even faster pipeline to move data to and from your computer. Though I am starting to see the odd piece of hardware sneak into the marketplace, it seems we are still a ways away from ubiquity. USB 3.0 is promising some astonishing transfer rates and will make running an external hard drive as a dedicated data drive a practical reality. I wait with bated breath...

Also, SSDs have yet to live up to their high expectations. Price and performance are coming down and up, respectively, but for now, good old-fashioned mechanical drives are still king. Unless you're recording in the field under harsh conditions or have money to burn, it is still worth it to wait this

revolution out. One interesting thing about SSD hard drives is in the area of data recovery. Unlike mechanical drives where, in the event of drive failure, data recovery might be possible (though expensive), the way in which Windows 7 maintains an SSD drive (TRIM command) leaves virtually no chance of recovering any data. So put that in your back-up pipe and smoke it!

Though we are now firmly on the 64-bit path, software is still playing catch-up to the hardware. Many applications and plug-ins still only work in 32-bit and require bridge software or special compatibility settings so they can function, never mind hardware drivers and the DAWs you are using.

Coding software to take full advantage of the new operating systems and multi-core CPUs with features such as hyper-threading are no mean feat and it will be years before the dust settles from the current migration to the brave new 64-bit world.

Along the way, there will be plenty of growing pains with both irate and impatient users who expect things to just work. To them,

I say: be thankful any of this works at all!

Mac or PC, the infinite combinations of hardware and software, not to mention the users themselves, will ensure that programmers will never be out of the job! ■



Eric Price is outstanding in his field, behind his house. If you have questions or lawn care tips please email him at eric@gpeconsulting.ca.

FINE TUNING TIPS

For the most part, Windows 7 and OS X are pretty much ready to roll out of the box without having to do too much tweaking. Some services you might want to disable or modify would be the indexing services and the defragmenting utilities.

- Search Indexing in Windows or Spotlight on the Mac is a service where the operating system is constantly taking stock of the files on your computer so that when you search for a file or program it will show up immediately. This might be handy for home use but it's not so good for the recording world as it uses up CPU horsepower because it is often running in the background.
- Another useful feature implemented for both operating systems is a type of file shadow copy, called Shadow Copy in Windows 7 and Journaling in Snow Leopard. This is where the OS makes back-up copies of files in case you need an emergency copy of a file or folder or in the event the computer shuts down, say from a power outage, in which case the shadow file copy utility has you covered. They work slightly differently between the two operating systems so make sure you explore their functions fully. I recommend disabling this feature on the data drives as it can slow down performance considerably.
- Lastly, check the defragmenting settings on Windows 7 as it now employs automatic settings that may run at inconvenient times. Snow Leopard usually doesn't require too much defragmenting, but you do want to keep the data files defragged so you may want to consider a program like iDefrag.
- Quick tip: SSD drives do not need to be defragmented.

I apologize for the brevity in the descriptions and simplistic comparisons of these features. Needless to say, I could write several articles on those subjects alone. Your best bet is to Google sites that feature optimization tips when using your computers for recording, as there are plenty of them out there.



As for Time Machine on the Mac, it works pretty much the same. First off, you can make an initial back-up of your machine and then you can do incremental copies of files as well. Time Machine allows you to go back in time to see how the machine looked on a certain day and then recover files from that date. Before recovering a file, you can use the Quick Look feature to check the contents of the file before restoring it.

All in all, you have no excuse for not doing back-ups. External drives are cheap enough these days that you can afford to have an extra drive tucked out of harm's way and hopefully offsite in case the worst happens and you lose your computer entirely through some catastrophic event!

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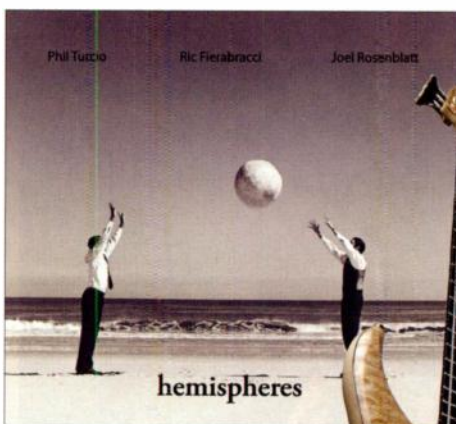
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catalogue while strictly adhering to the recorded parts. She adds: "Playing with a calibre of musician like Billy (Corgan, Pumpkins frontman) taught me serious discipline that I bring to the studio."

Auf der Maur feels she's been trained as a real professional, and can apply these experiences to push herself when recording on her own or with others. "I feel like I have a Corgan or Beinhorn in my head, pushing me. Now, there's nobody pushing me harder than I'm pushing myself." Her inspiration for recording *OOOM*, she says, was drawn not only from music, but equally from visual arts, history, mythology, and film.

Fierabracci consistently tells himself that the track at hand may be the last he'll ever grace. "After all," he says, "no one really knows when the bell will toll..." He shares some tips with new-to-the-studio bassist:

- 1. Bring your own direct box and quality cables.** "When an engineer sees that you care about your sound, they'll generally want to do the same."
- 2. Don't be late.** "Ever."
- 3. Try to interpret what the composer or producer wants.** "I see a lot of people carrying an attitude because they're asked to play something differently. You should be able to come up with 200 ideas that work. Don't take it personally."
- 4. Genuinely try to make everyone you play with sound great.** "...no matter where they are in their abilities."

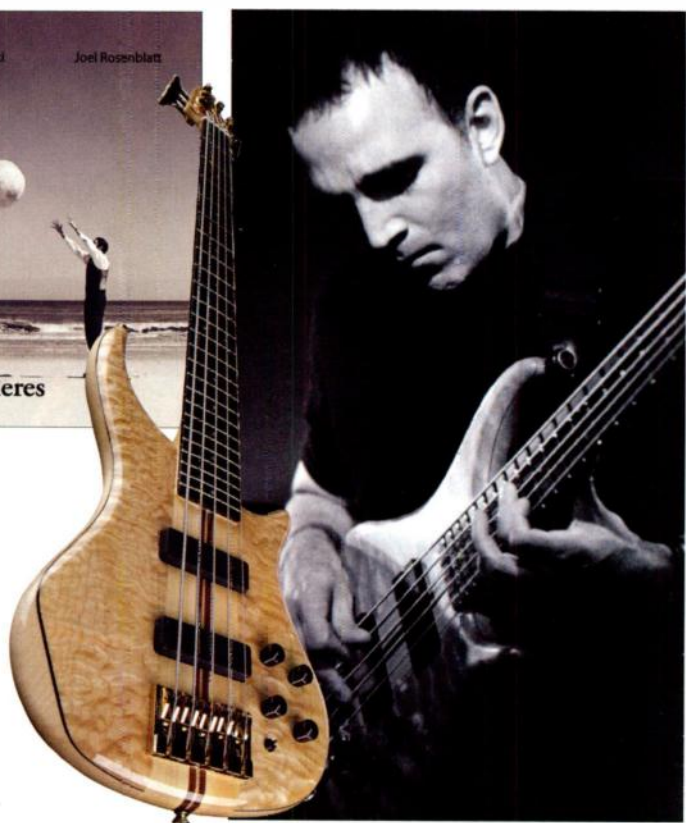
As for where he finds new ideas when it comes to the recording process, Fierabracci often turns to his engineers. "Most engineers love to share info and thoughts," he offers. "It's funny how little things can stay with you. I can remember at least one concept from everyone that I've played or worked with – one small piece of wisdom, so to speak." The musicians and professionals with whom you surround yourself are invaluable resources; use them as such for the benefit of all involved in your current project or another.

TYING IT TOGETHER

Your experiences in studio should not only inform your playing from then on, be it live or on a future album, but can also help develop your songwriting and enhance the way you exchange ideas with other musicians and professionals.

With *OOOM*, Auf der Maur went out of her way to change the way she wrote her songs, letting more of her bass playing emerge rather than writing on guitar and building around that. "In many ways, the bass is an accompanying instrument, and it's hard to lead from there sometimes," she admits. "It was really important for me to put myself in an environment where I could write on a bass – and that meant getting into a room with a drummer."

Fierabracci admits: "It's really hard for me to listen to anything I've recorded without starting to sweat a bit." Still, it's important to distance yourself from a recording, and then look back to see what worked and what could be adapted or changed for the future. He adds that once given the chance to reflect, there are always things that can evolve; that's part of playing music. "The goal for me is to play and write to the best of my abilities at any given time," he says. "I think most bass players are always trying to get the sound that's in their heads. You never really get it – maybe because it's always evolving."



Ric Fierabracci

Bass:

- M.V. Pedulla Thunderbass

Recording:

- RME Fireface 800
- Grace Design M103
- Logic Pro 9
- "...and some third-party plug-ins."
- Universal Audio 6176 preamp
- Calrec PQ 1061

Direct Boxes:

"I like to go into my preamps with some sort of DI instead of the Hi-Z input. I have quite a collection of DI boxes."

- Radial Engineering JDI
- Tube Works RT-4001
- Avalon U5
- Radial Engineering J48
- Countryman Type 85
- Demeter Tube Direct



Live:

"My live set-up is always changing, depending on a lot of factors. I have always preferred to play out of a preamp/power amp-type set-up. I prefer the sonic difference [they] can deliver."

- Crown K2 power amps
- EBS Classic
- Fender TBP-1
- dbx 106A
- "...to protect my speakers and the front row dental work."
- TC Electronic Rebel
- "When I travel and amperage is in question, I bring a Rebel head. They're light and fit in my luggage quite easily."
- Bag End cabs
- Grace M103



GEAR AT A GLANCE

Brian J. Robinson

Currently playing bass in melodic hardcore outfit A Wilhelm Scream, Brian Robinson first gained notoriety playing with Mississauga's The Fullblast. His chops are pretty sharp, perhaps only bested by his onstage energy in terms of what makes him such a great performer. Here's a look at this Canadian's humble rig:

Touring Rig

"It's pretty simple, but there's not much to break, right?"

- Ernie Ball Music Man StingRay (x2)
 - "My rig really isn't that complex at all – no pedals and I break wireless units due to the fact that I fall down a lot."
- Ampeg SVT-4 Pro (North America)
- Ampeg SVT Classic
 - "In Europe, we keep an early-'80s (pre-Chinese manufacturing) SVT Classic, using the standard 8 x 10."



Secret Weapon?

"I guess it's the Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver. Most bands I've toured with use it. It's great to boost the intensity of your live sound if you want to go cleaner or dirtier, and it's easy for sound engineers to work with at front of house."



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The majority of Jets Overhead songs stem from spontaneous jams, beginning with a bass and drum groove or guitar riff and then growing from there. Says

Greenwood: "It's a process I really enjoy and I feel lucky to have band mates that make this work. You have to be open to anything, take the good with the bad, and really listen."

With *No Nations*, the band recorded everything they played for about three months and never listened back. At the end of those three months, they revisited the material, weeding out what didn't work and keeping what did – not a bad approach to writing alone or as a collective. She adds that, while she likes to toy with countermelodies to the vocal and veer into less-predictable rhythms, it's important as a bassist to

GEAR AT A GLANCE: Roberto Occhipinti

Roberto Occhipinti is a Toronto-born bass player who owns hardware from the Junos, National Jazz Awards, and SOCAN Awards. He's collaborated with acts like Gorillaz, True North Brass, Soul Stew, Marty Morell, and many others. He's also a well-respected producer, having worked with several acclaimed artists. Here's a breakdown of his bass rig:

Acoustic Set-Up

- Mario LaMarre Italian bass (with detachable neck)
 - "That one is my road instrument that I use for most of my jazz gigs."
- Rubner 1925 bass
- Eminence bass
- David Gage Carbon Fibre bow
- AMT microphone
- David Gage Realist pickup
- Headway preamp

Electric Set-Up

- Fender 1962 Jazz Bass
- Fender 1961 Precision with flat wounds
- Fender 1973 Telecaster bass
 - "...for old-school sounds."
- Ampeg Baby Bass
- Markbass F1 with 12" cabinet
 - "I'm a Markbass endorser, so I use a variety of their heads and cabinets."



Secret Weapon?

"My secret weapon is going all 'digital' – that is I try to get the sound out with just my fingers; I don't use any effects and try to run everything as flat as possible. There's a huge range of sound available on both the electric and acoustic bass."



DAILY GROOVES

FOR BASS

By
Patrick
Pieltfer



BETTER YOUR BASS PLAYING

Here are some hot titles from www.musicbooksplus.com to help you in your development as a bassist. Also available from the site are educational posters and other accessories to assist in your improvement.

- *Daily Grooves For Bass*
- *Pentatonic Scales For Bass*
- *Beginning Jazz Bass*
- *Essential Blues Bass Grooves*
- *Foundation Exercises For Bass*
- *Progressive Rock Bass*
- *The Total Funk Bassist*
- *Play. Electric Bass Basics (DVD)*



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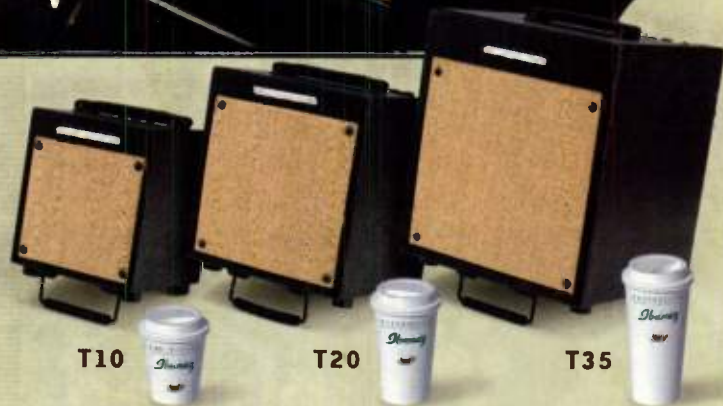
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BASS 2010

WRITING

Andi Zack is a staff writer for ZMG Music Nashville. She's had success in recent years having her songs recorded by major country artists and is currently working on her own artist project with boyfriend and collaborator Ken Johnson. Visit www.myspace.com/andizack for music and updates.



PHOTO: ANGELA LAUER

by Andi Zack



workin' hard all week puts the songs on the table

On any given night, venues are hoppin' across Music City. One night in particular, my boyfriend and frequent co-writer Ken Johnson and I arrive at 12th & Porter, a popular nightclub in town, to see our friend Randy Houser perform a showcase for a major country music record label.

As we pull up, the valet guy, Colby Branson, is running around in an effort to park a long line of cars. "You're a hard workin' man," Ken says to Colby with a tip. Colby holds up the cash and smiles. "Hey man, it puts beer on the table!"

Boom! There it is. "The light bulb," as they say – the often-missed opportunity that is laid out there only for those songwriters who are prepared for the moment. "Did you hear that?" I ask, nudging Ken's arm as we entered the club. "I heard him," Ken says with a wide smile. They say it all starts with a song. I say it all starts with an idea for a song!

Ken and I had an appointment to write that week with a good buddy, one of our favorite co-writers, Josh Thompson. I thought he would like the idea and suggested that we ask if he might want to write it with us. Ken agreed. The three of us sat down one rainy afternoon a few days later in the upstairs writing room of a little publishing house on historic Music Row. We told Josh about the magical little phrase that Colby had uttered a couple of days before. Josh grinned big

and laughed, like the title was practically a hit by itself!

We wrote "Beer On The Table" in a couple of hours. Two years later, Josh landed a record deal with Sony/Columbia Records. He recorded and released our two-year-old song as his brand new single. As I write this article, we are at #18 on the country charts. It is a first time hit single for all three of us. A rewarding experience to say the least.

I moved to Nashville, TN from the little town of Oliver, BC in 2001. I was kinda green. (OK, bright, neon green!) At first, I mostly hung out at clubs such as The Bluebird Cafe, Douglas Corner, and a little hotel bar for newcomers called The Commodore hoping to get to play. I soon found a position interning for hit producer and guitarist Billy Joe Walker Jr. While there, I listened and observed carefully to lyrics and melodies. I studied them intensely. I wanted to learn. I wanted to survive.

In Nashville, I saw songwriters come and I saw them go – some practically running out of town. Some call it a heart-break town; for some it is. For some it's a wonderful ride. If you are a singer or a songwriter, it really is, as they say, "all about the song." That's why a great idea is everything.

Why write the same songs that have been done over and over again? I find the best ideas come unexpectedly. So, I always try to keep my "hook" hooks out for fresh ideas – the thought provoked

from a paragraph in a book, a saying on a billboard that can be twisted out of context, a verbal gem from an everyday conversation... I think if I can write that fresh idea with a memorable lyric and melody people can't get out of their heads, they may recall it because of how they felt when they heard it.

When a radio programmer tells me people are calling in to hear "that beer song," it's a great feeling of accomplishment. That means that they heard it and felt something enough to call the station so they can hear it and "feel" it again. I saw this first-hand at the video shoot for "Beer On The Table." The director called for many takes. They played the song over and over. The crowd at the live show-style production had the same amount of fun and energy in the first take as they did in the 15th take. I noticed that when the song was over, everyone cheered to hear it again so they could keep singing along and clinking their beer cans together. They didn't want the moment to end just yet. Free beer was on hand, but I'm sure that had nothing to do with the enthusiasm, right?

Songwriting takes commitment, patience, discipline, a little luck, and a lot of preparation. Sitting down and coming up with a strong song is tough to be sure, but for me, it's a labour of love. Sometimes at the end of the day, my creativity is spent, but inspiration always seems to be waiting the next day. I'm very thankful for that.



Alex DeGrace is a Mastering Engineer at Suite Sound Labs in Vancouver, BC. Visit www.suitesoundlabs.com for more information.

by Alex DeGrace

keep mastering in mind

Mastering is the crucial step that bridges the gap between the mix in the studio and your favourite songs on your iPod or CDs in your car. Keeping that process in mind early on can make a big difference in your recordings.

Often compared to black magic, mastering is essentially a final polishing before music is released, and while it is possible for a mastering engineer to work a little magic, a great mix goes a long way. To that end, here are some tips and techniques to help optimize your mixes for mastering, and put you on the path to a great-sounding record.

Gain Staging

Headroom at the mastering stage is vital, as a clipped mix can both unintentionally decrease the dynamic range of the music, and cause distortion. If you are just starting the mixing process and want to make sure you'll have room for everything, start with the kick and set the level so that it's peaking at around -12dB. Then, mix the rest of the song around that. If the mix is almost finished but the master bus is clipping, the best fix is turning down each individual instrument the same amount until there are no clips.

Overall Compression/Limiting

It's always best to leave mix bus limiting to the mastering engineer, and while it can work well to use overall compression during mixing, it's possible to create problems if you're not comfortable with that kind of processing, or are doing so in an acoustic environment that isn't ideal. Outside of professional studios and working with experienced engineers, it's generally best avoided.

Drum Levels

If the drums are intended to be powerful in the final master, it's a good idea

to mix the kick and snare up just a little louder than intended. Compression and limiting used at the mastering stage can tuck in transients (kicks and snares are usually the biggest) and so making sure they have good presence in the mix gives the mastering engineer more room to work with when applying compression. It's always easier to tuck loud drums in than get more out of drums that are a little too soft, and the former generally results in a punchier master.



Tonality

There are several sonic culprits that can create problems for a mastering engineer and force compromises in order to tame unruly mix elements. Keep a sharp ear out for vocal sibilance, and use a de-esser if necessary. Big esses can become more apparent when clarity is improved, and are always easier to correct in the mix. Other common culprits are overheads and hi-hats; if they're too overbearing, it may not be possible to add detail in the top end that would benefit the rest of the mix.

Bass, both guitar and synthesizer, is another common problem area. Be on the lookout for resonant frequencies, and EQ as necessary to create room for other elements in the mix and improve definition. Overall, a darker, thicker mix generally works best.

Consistency

Another aspect to consider when working on an album project is consistency throughout the record. Once the mixes are close to completion, import each stereo mix into a new session in your DAW. That way, you can skip from song to song, and make sure that the relative volumes of the instruments are the same where they are intended to be. Pay close attention in particular to vocals, drums, and bass. Another useful technique is picking a favorite mix, and then checking how the others stack up looking at tonality, both overall and in individual instruments.

Session Preparation

Make sure you've spent some time going over the song order before mastering. If you have something specific in mind with regards to the final overall sound, bring a reference song or two to help convey that to the mastering engineer. This isn't to say it would be desirable, or even possible in many cases, to match it absolutely, but providing an example – as well as any notes you may have about the mixes and direction – can go a long way towards conveying the end result you'd like.

Ultimately, your mix should represent your music the way it's intended, but keeping these few things in mind not only smoothes the way for mastering magic; it can make the difference between a good recording and a great one.



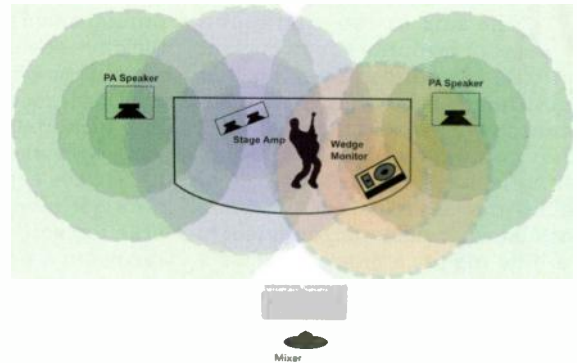
by Peter Janis

controlling feedback onstage using phase to your advantage

Part 2

The Interaction Between Speakers

When an acoustic guitar is used onstage, it is usually connected via a direct box that splits the signal to the onstage amplifier and the PA system. The PA will then split the signal again to drive wedge monitors and the main house sound system. When all of these loudspeakers are blasting at the same time, they interact. In fact, they mostly interact in the bass region where the longer, low frequency sound waves meet to either reinforce each other or cancel each other out. This effect is known as modal distortion. Recording studios commonly employ bass traps to reduce "hot spots" known as room modes. These are exaggerated depending on the room geometry or the room's natural resonant frequency. And guess what: room modes, like



will be everywhere. By eliminating excessive low end, you make the task of controlling feedback easier.

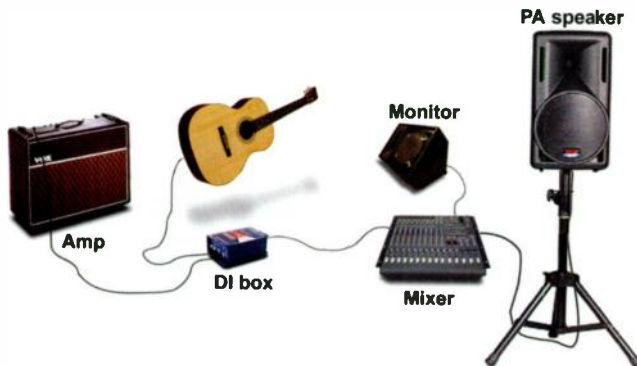
There is also another benefit: Ever notice that it is way easier to get feedback from an electric guitar when the sound is distorted? Guess what: Like gravity and modal distortion, the same laws of physics apply everywhere. So if your acoustic guitar is distorted, you will get more feedback. To eliminate distortion, make sure you use a high-quality direct box that is able to handle transients without choking. Since most of the sound energy is contained in the bass, when you roll off the low end, you are actually making it easier for the buffer or amplifier inside the DI box to work. Less distortion = less feedback.

OK, now that you have rolled off the bass, you are ready to turn up your PA system and monitors. Start playing chords and let the guitar ring. Turn your system up until it begins to resonate. Now, take a step away from in front of your wedge monitor to see what happens. Now move sideways. As you move around, the feedback character will change. This is because you are in the middle of a multitude of room modes.

If the feedback is most active near the monitor, try moving the monitor "electronically" by reversing the electrical phase. Most professional DI boxes have a 180-degree polarity reverse switch to do this. This basically changes the modal distortion, and can move a phase-adding mode from where you are standing and reduce feedback.

Another possible fix is to simply move the wedge monitor so that the physical relationship changes. If you have an instrument amp on stage, moving it back a few inches can also help. This will cause different frequencies to either amplify each other or cancel each other out depending on where you stand.

Point being, we have yet to EQ the sound, but are dramatically shifting the way the natural sound will interact so that we minimize feedback naturally. Once you have maximized the output, you can then fine-tune your system using EQ.

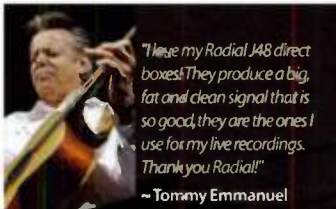


gravity, exist everywhere, including on a live sound stage. Here's what happens: You play a chord on the guitar and, depending on where you are standing, the sound waves from the wedge monitor and the PA system will either amplify each other if they are in phase or cancel each other out if they are out of phase. When they are in phase, the resulting amplitude at that particular frequency will increase or even double depending on where you are standing. If you find that a certain frequency is feeding back when you stand in front of your monitor, in all likelihood, you are experiencing two or more waves that are combining, causing a resonant feedback problem.

There is absolutely no point trying to figure it all out by calculating the phenomena as this will occur based on a host of variables such as the PA system, the monitors, the size of the room, the room acoustics, and so on. But you can try reducing feedback by following a simple procedure...

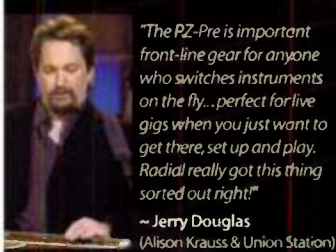
First, eliminate unneeded bass frequencies by rolling off the low end below 100 Hz. This is the one fix that you should absolutely consider before doing anything else, as low frequencies are the primary problem with resonant feedback. Bass below 300 Hz is considered to be omni-directional, meaning that it

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~ Tommy Emmanuel
(Certified Guitar Player)



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~ Jerry Douglas
(Alison Krauss & Union Station)



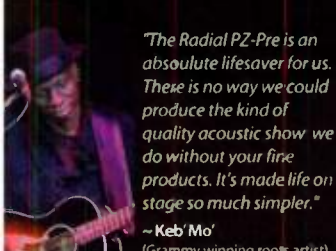
"The Radial PZ-Pre's sound is only rivaled by it's user-friendly features... a must have for the acoustic musician that is serious about tone on stage."

~ John Jorgensen
(gypsy jazz virtuoso)



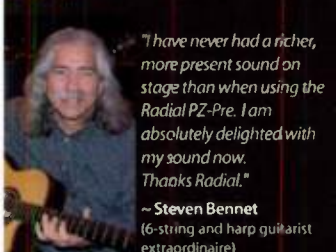
"The Radial PZ-Pre is just amazing! It sounds killer and is very convenient and helpful. The EQs are very efficient and musical. This is the very best preamp I found!"

~ Antoine Dufour
(amazing fingerstyle guitarist)



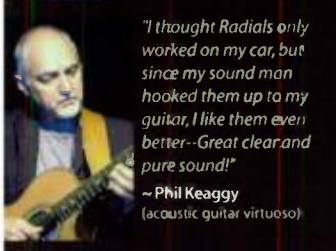
"The Radial PZ-Pre is an absolute lifesaver for us. There is no way we could produce the kind of quality acoustic show we do without your fine products. It's made life on stage so much simpler."

~ Keb' Mo'
(Grammy winning roots artist)



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~ Steven Bennet
(6-string and harp guitarist extraordinaire)



"I thought Radials only worked on my car, but since my sound man hooked them up to my guitar, I like them even better--Great clear and pure sound!"

~ Phil Keaggy
(acoustic guitar virtuoso)



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~ John Rzeznik
(Goo Goo Dolls)

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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.



by Kevin Sinclair



radio friendly

A Guide To Radio Tracking Part 2

Tracking

The radio promoter follows up with MDs to convince them to listen to the song. The promoter will tell them about the artist – interesting back-stories, achievements, and touring history. Results of these efforts are reported to the artist weekly for a period of eight to 12 weeks, or longer depending on results attained and future progress that can be anticipated.

CanCon

In the effort to get on radio, Canadian artists have a very valuable asset – being Canadian. CanCon, meaning “Canadian content,” is named for the CRTC’s rule that requires radio stations in Canada to devote 35 per cent of their broadcasts to content created (written, produced, or presented) entirely or in part by people from Canada.

Canadian content is defined (appropriately) using the acronym MAPL. The letters stand for Music, Artist, Production, and Lyric. One point is assigned to the artistic product for each of these components that are made in Canada. A score of two out of four qualifies the song for CanCon credit. The effectiveness and even appropriateness of CanCon requirements is the subject of an enormous amount of discussion and debate, and is beyond the scope of this article. It is, nevertheless, a very valuable tool in the tracker’s arsenal, and a major advantage to Canadian artists seeking radio play in Canada.

Levels Of Radio

In planning a radio campaign, trackers also consider the level of radio market to target, informed, as always, by the artist’s goals, as well as the potential of the song at radio.

Commercial stations are the big stations in large markets, often owned by national broadcasting chains (Astral, Corus, Sirius, et al). These stations usually have very little room on their playlists to break new music. They are very chart-driven, and generally play it safe by sticking to releases from major labels. These stations report their playlists to the companies that compose charts – Mediabase and Neilson BDS.

Community stations are volunteer-based, community-oriented broadcasters. These are the local stations found in communities throughout Canada that concern themselves with local news and events, and swap shops, often with a diverse playlist. These stations are generally very supportive of independent artists, particularly local talent.

College radio stations are likewise very supportive of independent artists, new artists, cutting edge sounds, and niche genres that commercial radio overlooks, such as jazz, folk, and urban. There are more than 50 college/campus radio stations throughout Canada, and these are often where new

acts are first broken to radio.

Why Radio?

Radio remains among the best ways for an artist to be heard by large numbers of people. A song played on radio is heard by potentially thousands of listeners. Radio provides a way for artists to define themselves and find new fans; moreover, songs sent to radio are heard by influential industry decision makers who now know the band’s story, profile, sound, and discography.

Radio airplay is also a valuable tool generally to raise an artist’s profile. Radio play and on-air interview opportunities can be used to publicize an artist’s performances and to support a touring artist. A three-and-a-half minute song on radio is heard by potentially thousands of people, many of whom, once introduced to the band on radio, will find their way to the artist’s online distribution network and will be motivated to attend performances. Having paid for a cover charge and a beer, people in the audience will find themselves having fun and enjoying the music. They will become much more likely to buy CDs and merch, and to tell their friends about the artist. This is often how careers are created.

SOCAN Royalties

Radio play also puts money directly into an artist’s pocket. Songs played on radio earn money each time the song spins. Spin reports are compiled and royalties distributed to artists in Canada under rules and procedures administered by the Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN)

Is This For You?

Practically any artist can benefit professionally and financially from radio exposure, whether or not the goal is national charting. If charts are the goal, this can happen if the song is radio-friendly, well-produced, and has the sound that stations are looking for. If enough reporting stations are persuaded to play the song, spins accumulate and chart action follows.

For the artist in a niche market, such as jazz or urban, or with a very unique or cutting edge sound, radio play is an effective way to raise the artist’s profile, find fans, and drive traffic to websites. Radio play lets more music fans hear the music and motivates them to attend concerts and buy music and merch.

Radios are everywhere, and potential fans are everywhere a radio can be found – something to be considered by any serious artist.

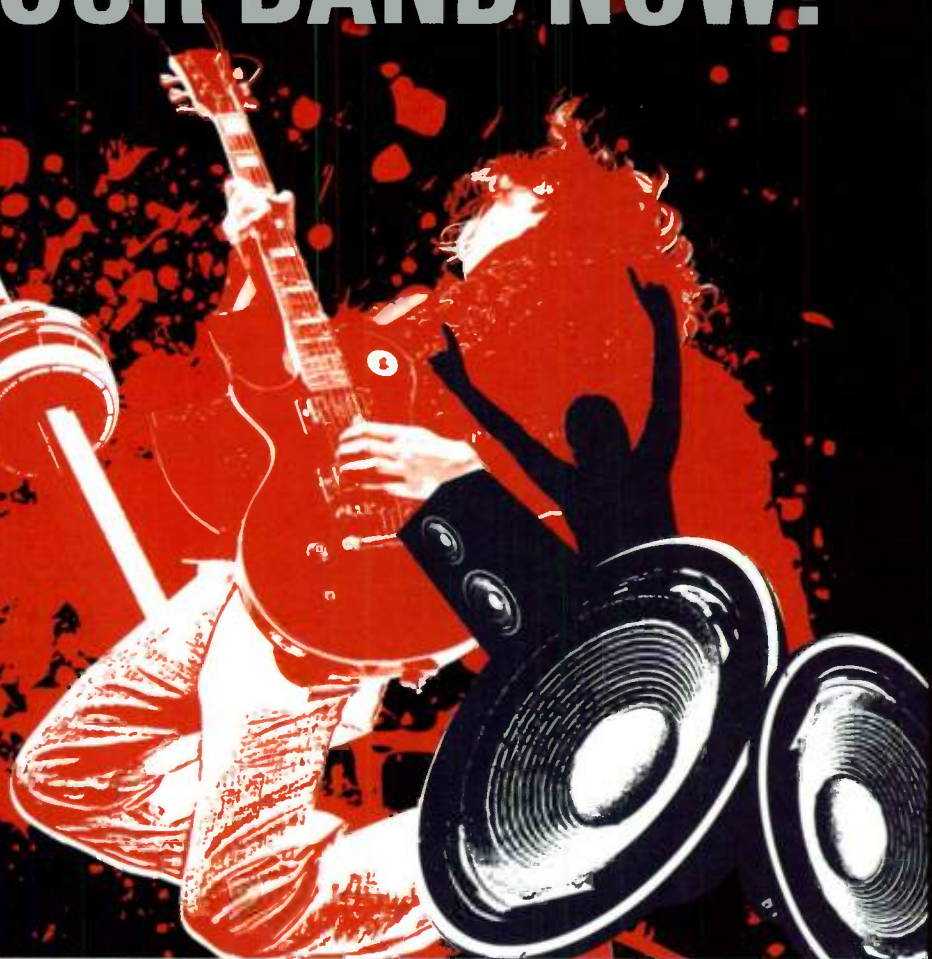
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HotGear



IK Multimedia AmpliTube 3 Modeling Software

■ IK Multimedia has announced that AmpliTube 3, an upgrade of the company's guitar and bass tone gear-modeling software, is now shipping. AmpliTube 3 offers users more variety, realism, and creative power than its predecessor, with over 160 modeled pieces of vintage and modern gear.

Gear models include 51 stompbox effects, 31 amps, 46 cabs, 15 studio mics, and 17 rack effects – 30 being brand new models and 70 being re-worked versions from other IK packages. The new collection of bass gear models also makes it a complete package for recording or performing bassists. It can be expanded with other AmpliTube packages.

The new preset management and keyword system allows users to organize and quickly recall the library of included and custom preset tones. The new cabinet module provides double miking per cabinet, with freely-movable mics courtesy of IK's VRM (Volumetric Response Modeling) technology. Impulse-based reverbs are now used in the entire chain for realism, while the new rotary speaker module offers accurate emulations of these kinds of cabinets.

For more information, contact IK Multimedia: 954-846-9101, FAX 954-846-9077, www.ikmultimedia.com.

Image Line Drumaxx Percussion Modeling Instrument

■ Image Line Software, a developer of audio production software, has released its newest VSTi/AU plug-in for percussion modeling, called Drumaxx.

Drumaxx is a virtual instrument that gives total control of 16 physically modeled drums. Each drum can be routed to independent output for external effects processing. Drumaxx includes 130 drumkits, 900 drum patches, and 200 drum patterns. Individual effects processing is available on each pad.

Drumaxx is not based on samples or synthesis techniques, where oscillators are mixed. It uses truly modeled drums with a large repertoire of sounds. Drumaxx can model bass drums and snares, and realistic and electronic sounds. In addition, it also models hi-hats, cymbals, and world percussion instruments. It uses a velocity modulation matrix for detailed expressiveness, and boasts an integrated step sequencer with trigger-key playback. The software is available for Windows and Mac, and can be used as a standalone program or as an FL Studio plug-in.

For more information, contact Image Line Software: +32 9 281 1533, www.image-line.com.



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Deering Banjo Kavanjo Acoustic/Electric Pickup

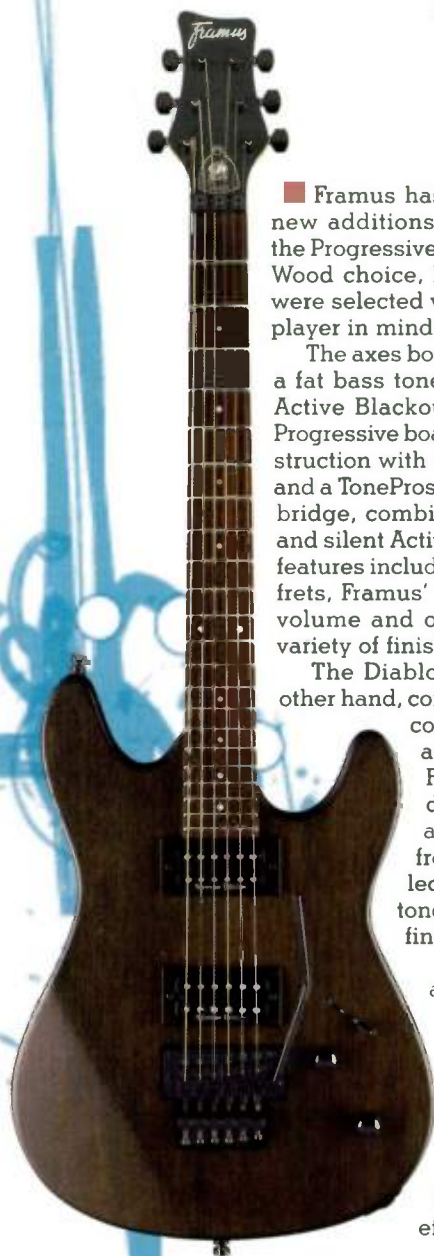
■ Deering now has an easy-to-install pickup, called the Kavanjo. Installing the pick-up turn a 4-, 5-, or 6-string banjo into an acoustic/electric model.

The new Deering Kavanjo pickup is a method of achieving a balanced sound when amplifying a banjo. In January 2010, Deering introduced its Acoustic/Electric 5-string banjo models with the pickup already installed. Now the new 4-string and 6-string versions of the same pickup make it available for installation on banjos for all styles of music.

Deering's Kavanjo banjo pickup is a humbucker mounted through the banjo head and provides high volume, is highly feedback resistant, does not require any batteries or a preamp, and boasts a true acoustic sound. The pickup can either be purchased as a custom addition to any Deering banjo, or can be purchased for customers to install themselves.

For more information, contact Deering: 800-332-2656, info@deeringbanjos.com, www.deeringbanjos.com.

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Framus Diablo Progressive & Progressive X Guitars

■ Framus has introduced two brand new additions to its Diablo line with the Progressive and Progressive X axes. Wood choice, hardware, and pickups were selected with the hard and heavy player in mind.

The axes boast mahogany bodies for a fat bass tone and Seymour Duncan Active Blackout pickups. The Diablo Progressive boasts pure mahogany construction with an arched top, set neck, and a TonePros Wrap-Around one-piece bridge, combined with the high-gain and silent Active Blackouts. Additional features include a 25.5" scale, 22 jumbo frets, Framus' three-way selector, one volume and one tone control, and a variety of finishes.

The Diablo Progressive X, on the other hand, comes with Framus' bolt-in construction, maple neck, and an Original Floyd Rose tremolo bridge. Additional features include a 25.5" scale, 22 jumbo frets, Framus' five-way selector, one volume and one tone control, and a variety of finishes.

Both models are available in right- or left-handed versions and come with Premium Line Plus RockBags.

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

DIABLO PROGRESSIVE X

SilverFox Nitestalk & Thrasher Models

■ Grover Pro Percussion Inc. has announced the release of two new models to the SilverFox line of sticks and mallets: the Nitestalk and Thrasher models.

The Nitestalk is a new 16" long multi-rod with 25 nylon bristles secured to a 5/8" diameter high impact plastic handle. Nitestalks have a balanced, natural feel on both drums and cymbals. Each rod features a firmness adjustment band that controls the feel and flex of the nylon bristles.

The Thrasher is a beefy double-ended stick (16.25" length x .605 dia.) for high impact situations. The stick was designed in collaboration with Mark Castillo, drummer for Bury Your Dead. Like all of SilverFox's drumsticks, the Thrasher is manufactured from select grade 1 straight-grained hickory. The stick is coated with SilverFox's exclusive Duracrylix finish that enhances durability and provides a smooth, easy-to-grip surface.

For more information, contact BM Distribution: 888-516-3242, FAX 780-487-6528, info@brandenburgmusic.com, www.brandenburgmusic.com.



NITESTALK

THRASHER



Planet Waves Tru-Strobe Pedal Tuner

■ Planet Waves has launched a new stage tuner, the new Tru-Strobe Pedal Tuner. The Tru-Strobe Pedal Tuner is the portable answer to the Tru-Strobe Table tuner and offers true strobe accuracy (not a simulation) that will ensure precision tuning up to +/- .1 of a cent.

With a heavy-duty, die-cast design and pedal housing, this tuner is suitable for studio use or the road. The readout is clear with its large backlit LCD display. The tuner also features a simple, user-friendly circular display.

The tuner is equipped with the Buzz Feiten Tuning System Offset and also employs six de-tuning modes for players using drop tunings. Users can also adjust the tuner's calibration range from A400-A499. The Planet Waves Tru-Strobe Pedal Tuner incorporates ultra-quiet, true bypass wiring to keep the instrument's original tone in tact.

For more information, contact D'Addario Canada: 905-889-0116, FAX 905-889-9889, info@daddariocanada.com, www.daddariocanada.com.



Zoom R24 Music Production Tool

Zoom has announced the release of the R24. The unit combines four production tools into one device. In addition to 24-track playback and 8-track simultaneous recording using SD memory cards, the R24 is a digital multi-track recorder, an audio interface, a control surface, and a pad sampler.

The R24's sampler function consists of 24 built-in voices that can be triggered using eight pads and three bank keys to assign sounds to each track and create loops. Also, you can use the unit's drum machine and its 400 rhythm patterns to create original backing beats, or simply output a metronome for tempo control.

For recording, the R24 supports up to 32 GB SD cards, allowing over 100 track hours of recording. It can be used in the studio to record additional tracks using the USB audio interface. The R24 can also mix the recordings by using the control surface capabilities to manage each function of a DAW.

For more information, contact Omnimedia Inc.: 514-636-9971, FAX 514-636-5374, info@omnimedia.ca, www.omnimedia.com.



Hercules DJ Console Mk4

Built for mobile DJing, the DJ Console Mk4 features a modern design with a thinner but wider body than the previous model, the DJ Console Mk2. The metallic-coloured surface top with a see-through plate and new body provides a comfortable mixing solution.

It also includes more precise jog wheels, four browser buttons instead of a joystick, more space between the cross fader and jog wheels, and backlit buttons for ease of use. It's compact and light with large, non-slip feet for stability while mixing.

The Mk4 also includes an updated audio interface, including: two stereo outputs (2 x 2 RCA) that let DJs play their mix for the audience while also previewing the next track for themselves; two stereo inputs (2 x 2 RCA) that let DJs connect external audio sources and include them in the digital mix: vinyl turntables, CD, or MP3 players etc.; four input levels; one microphone jack (1/4"/6.35 mm) with talk-over function; and one headphone jack (1/4"/6.35 mm).

For more information, contact Kaysound Imports. Inc.: 514-633-8877, FAX 514-633-8872, mark@kaysound.com, www.kaysound.com.

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Levy's Famous Destination Guitar Straps

Levy's Leathers Ltd. has expanded its popular Urban Prints guitar strap line for 2010 with six famous destination-based original printing designs, including models inspired by Las Vegas, Tokyo, London, New York, and more. This model uses a canvas of heavy cotton for its metallic print. Pictured is model MT8MP.

For more information, contact Levy's Leathers Ltd.: 800-565-0203, FAX 888-329-5389, levys@levysleathers.com, www.levysleathers.com.



HERITAGE SVT-810E

Ampeg Heritage Series Bass Amps

Ampeg has announced a new line of heads and cabs that are designed and assembled in the US. The all-new Ampeg Heritage SVT-CL, Heritage SVT-810E, and Heritage SVT-410HLF offer some upgrades, including high-end tubes and custom US-made drivers.

Ampeg's Heritage Series heads deliver all-tube power using JJ tubes for the preamp stage and Winged C power tubes. Just like the originals, the Heritage SVT-CL pushes 300 watts of power, which is ideal for the companion cabinets. The Heritage SVT-810E and SVT-410HLF both feature custom US-made Eminence drivers that meet the exact specifications of the original SVT speakers. The enclosures are built using rugged 15 mm birch plywood and are assembled within a stone's throw of Ampeg's headquarters in Woodinville, WA.

For more information, contact AudioOne Corporation: 888-276-9372, FAX 888-298-1133, www.audioone.ca.

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Protection Racket Drum Mat Markers

To help drummers recreate their preferred set-ups night after night, Protection Racket has introduced its new line of Drum Mat Markers. The Markers meet this need with the added benefits of requiring no tools, adding no weight to drum carpets, and allowing for quick, minor adjustments.

The Drum Mat Markers have a Velcro backing and are numbered for easy memory marking, ensuring consistency with set-up. Each pack includes 30 stand feet markers numbered 1-10, with three sets of each, as well as 10 corresponding stand markers numbered 1-10, plus one each of the bass drum and hi-hat markers.

To use the product, drummers first set up their kits as usual on their mat. Then, lift the stand legs up and place three circle markers on the mat, followed by the corresponding stand marker onto the stand itself. Finally, the bass drum and hi-hat markers can be placed on the bass drum and hi-hat pedal.

For more information, contact Protection Racket Ltd.: +44 0 1208 815055, FAX +44 1208 816011, info@protectionracket.co.uk, www.protectionracket.co.uk.

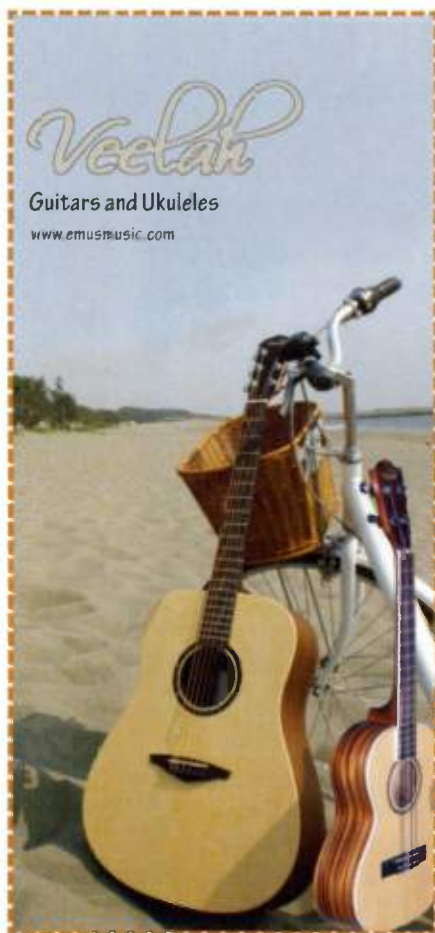


Modtone StutterKill Effect Pedal

The new StutterKill from Modtone effects pedals offers a two-in-one operation to performing or recording guitarists.

On one hand, the pedal acts as a complete kill switch, ideal when changing guitars or in any other scenario that requires complete silence. The second button on the unit is a momentary kill switch that allows players to do on/off toggle switch effects with their feet, making an array of tones available, including the "musical panic button." As with all Modtone pedals, the StutterKill has an all-metal casing and is true bypass with a bright blue LED.

For more information, contact Peate Musical: 802-879-4977, FAX 866-234-8052, repeate@comcast.net, www.peate.com.



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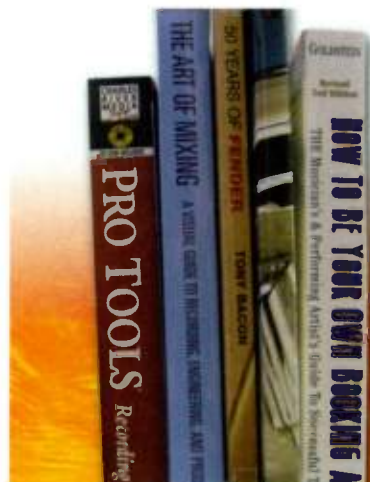
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by Ben Conoley



The Craft Economy

Where: Toronto, ON
What: Rock/Pop
Visit: www.thecrafteconomy.com

The Craft Economy may call Toronto home, but the band's members come from all over the country—Guelph, Montreal, Vancouver, and PEI, to be precise. Much like the band's geographic roots, its sound is rooted in diversity. Alright, "diversity" might be a bit of a stretch, but The Craft Economy's '70s punk/'80s new wave/'00s danceable rock is a combo that's tough to pull off, and rarely done well.

The Craft Economy sound young, snotty, and all too likable. They don't only want to make you dance; they make you want to crawl inside your stereo and hug vocalist Linda McKenney, while high-living bandmates Scott Burke (guitar/synth), Jake Janzen (bass), and John Britton (drums). Their songs are filled with the kind of optimism and outlook birthed by the city on a Friday night in the summer.

To date, the band has released *All On C*, an EP available for free download, which resulted in 5,000 people snagging a copy. They followed it up with *Is On Your Side*, which was released in 2008 and received justifiable acclaim from several Canadian media outlets.

Where: Toronto
What: Hip-Hop/Rap
Visit: www.hiphopdropouts.com

Jamie P might not have a clever name, but don't let that fool you. The hip-hop MC has been honing his craft since high school, when he was freestyling in the hallways. His goal seems to be making simple, gimmick-free hip hop in the vein of the genre's '90s sound.

Jamie's focus on wordplay and nasal gazing might remind us of the '90s, but there's a real sense of contemporary production in his new songs. "Show 'Em Up" has an industrial beat and grimy sound. You can almost feel the spit coming off the rapper's lips as he shouts criticism of modern hip-hop. His lyrics, though, are sharp and full of references to current pop culture and the hip-hop scene in general. It's too clever not to commend.

He's not there yet, though. His bio sheet focuses a bit too much on who he's worked with, which local DJs have spun his music, and what name he records under. If we could offer some advice to Jamie, it would be to focus on his music and let it speak for itself. If we could offer some advice to you, it would be to listen to his music, because it's good. If he can turn his new songs into an album's worth of music, then we'd really have something to get excited about.



Jamie P



Domestic Crisis Group

Where: Montreal
What: Pop/acoustic
Visit: www.domesticcrisisgroup.com

Woah, where did this come from? Domestic Crisis Group describe themselves as having a "great songwriting front" with "lyrics relevant to domestic drama that all can relate to." I had already said to my computer, "Thanks, but I don't really want to listen to music that reminds me of domestic issues." But then I listened DCG, centered by Gen Blouin and Dane Ratliff, and there was no turning back.


The duo crafts absolutely beautiful music. Blouin's vocals are clean, elegant, and inviting. Meanwhile, Ratliff's guitar work is as much a product of his Texas background as it is lazy '90s acoustic college rock. They'll convince you to lean back and relax just a moment before shaking you awake with how greatly they pull everything together.

Hey, if The Good Life can write an album about breaking up, and Hard Drugs can focus on two lovers on a path of self-destruction, there's no reason we can't fall in love with songs about domestic issues.

Sure, sometimes artists get a little caught up in being artists. They can forget that there are people who want to enjoy the art they make. Domestic Crisis Group comes close to crossing this line, but actually straddles it in the most beautiful of ways.

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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