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- Michael Piersante

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Contents

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013 VOL. XXXIII, NO. 5



FEATURES

34 July Black Passion, Power & Perseverance

by Andrew King

July Black doesn't like to dwell on the hypothetical; she's as real as they come, and with the release of her fourth full-length, *(8)ight*, you can be sure she'll continue sweating it out for her family, her fans, and herself.

38 Sponsor Me! The Pairing Of Artist & Brand

by Chris Gallant

It takes more than a swipe of your debit card to send that million-dollar hit to the masses. An oft-applied method of relieving some financial hardship is to acquire an endorsement deal. Find out what that entails and if you're ready to take one on.

44 Mic Check 1-2, 1-2 Live Sound 2011

by Mark Desloges

From the biggest festivals to the smallest club gigs, there are certain factors that will remain constant when it comes to getting a good mix for your live show. We've got some tips to help you stay on top of your sound so you can focus on making great music!

49 Producer/Engineer Two Sides Of A Valuable Coin Home Recording 2011

by Andrew King

To get a good sense of what the roles of producer and engineer entail, and how to work towards developing your skills as either, we've rounded up a range of well-respected producer/engineers and some well-known artists who've adopted the two titles themselves.

Departments

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

Columns

- 25 Guitar – John Stowell
- 26 Keyboards – Chris Donnelly
- 27 Bass – Mike Downes
- 28 Percussion – Matt McFarland
- 29 Woodwinds – Daniel Schnee
- 30 Brass – Paul Baron
- 31 Digital Music – Morgan Portruff
- 32 Vocals – Kyp Harness
- 58 Writing – Greg MacPherson
- 59 Recording – Warne Livesey
- 60 Live Sound – Trevor Coppen
- 62 Business – John Abrams

COVER July Black by Neal Burstyn, www.nitbcreative.com

CONTENTS Simple Plan, who discuss endorsement deals in "Sponsor Me!" by Chapman Boehler

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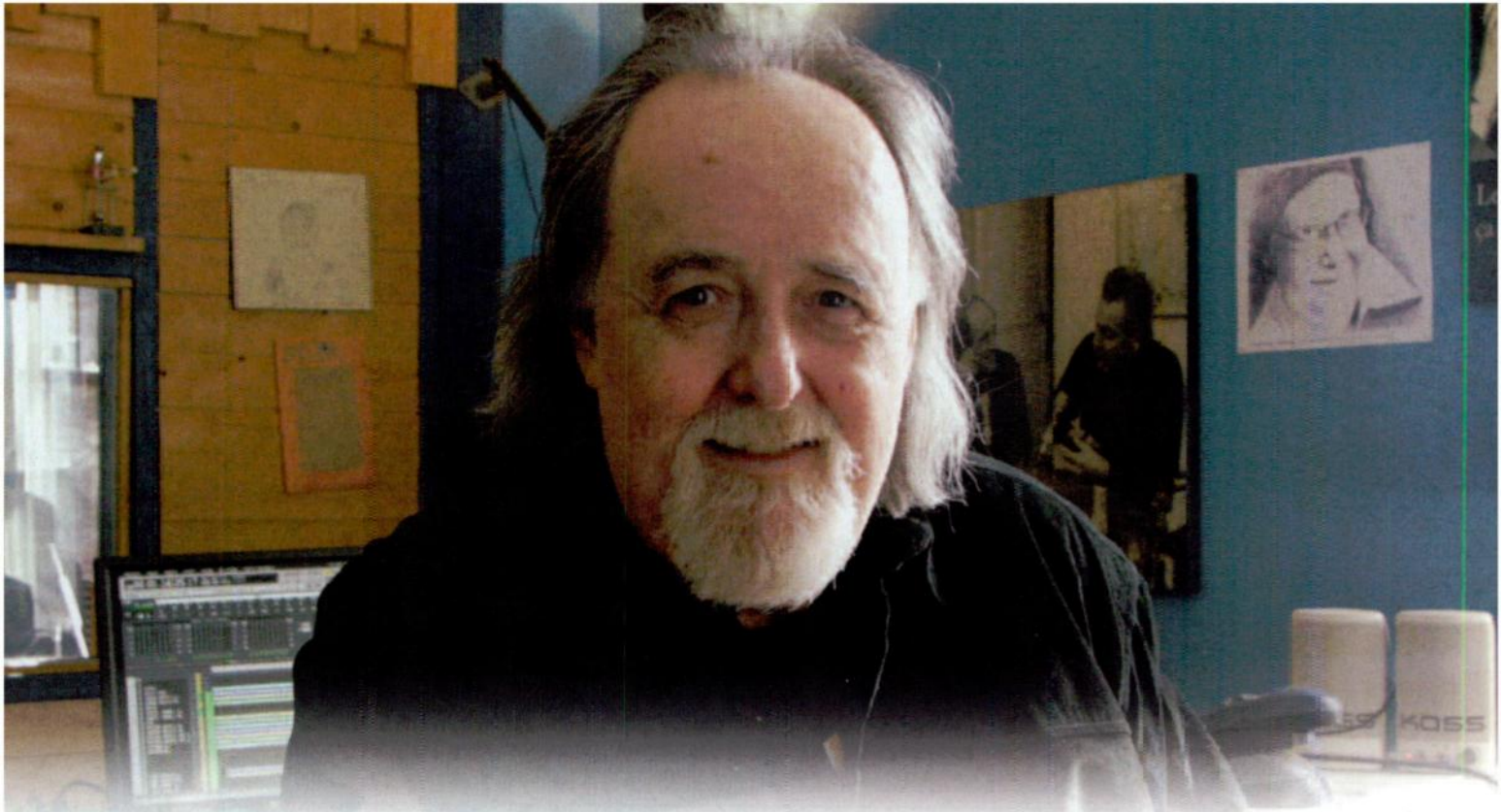
"The one thing I always liked about the 20/20s was if you can get it sounding good on those speakers it will sound good on a variety of speakers. It'll sound good on the TV, sound good in the car, sound good on headphones."

- FREDWRECK
(SNOOP DOGG, 50 CENT, EMINEM, BRITNEY SPEARS)



"A lot of times monitors will give you an artificial sound that will sound really good in the studio, but doesn't necessarily translate outside. The 20/20s really give you that true sound that will sound good everywhere."

- MAYER HAWTHORNE
ARTIST, PRODUCER, ENGINEER



How TAXI Got My Music into U.S. TV Shows

Jean Custeau — TAXI Member

I live in Québec and started playing the guitar when I was 13. 45 years and six albums later, I was no closer to a steady musical career than when I started. I had pretty much given up my dream of a Gold Record, but I still had my studio and have been able to eke out a living recording other people.

A Friend Told Me About TAXI...

I joined TAXI in 2006, and immediately began submitting my music. TAXI's A&R people quickly helped me to figure out which genres I was best at—light classical ballads, tangos, waltzes, and French music—so I concentrated on doing those even *better*. I built on my strengths.

My First Deal Opened More Doors!

I signed my first deal through TAXI for two songs with a top Film/TV Music Publisher in Studio City, California in 2007. I landed my first placement eight months later in the TV series *Monk*. Since then, I've

signed *dozens* of deals with several major Production Music Libraries and Publishers in the U.S. and overseas. I now have open doors with *all* of them because I joined TAXI.

The Placements Keep Rolling In

I've already had two placements in *Brothers and Sisters*, four in *10 Things I Hate About You*, and one in an Independent film, *The Sweet Smell of Success*, starring Billy Bob Thornton. I've also signed five more of my songs with a record label that markets all over Europe!



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World Radio History

My Biggest Check So Far...

I'd heard on TAXI's online Forum that it typically takes five to seven years to build momentum—I guess I'm living proof. In 2010, a *significant* part of my income was from licensing fees. In February of 2011, I received my biggest payment ever from SOCAN.

Don't Wait 45 Years to Become an Overnight Success

Frankly, I had given up hope of success with my music, but TAXI has changed all that. I've put off my retirement, my music gets heard by millions of people, my self-confidence is soaring, and I get to network with talented musicians from all over the world.

TAXI doesn't promise miracles, but I think it can work for everyone, from everywhere, at every age and most importantly, in every style. As long as you've got a real passion and are ready to work hard, TAXI can take you where you need to go. Call them!

FEEDBACK c/o *Canadian Musician*,
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www.canadianmusician.com to write electronically.

Rooting For Roots

I've been meaning to write in since reading your article on Old Man Luedecke in the July/August 2011 issue. It was a very pleasant surprise seeing his name on the cover, and the article was even more of a treat. I very much like Old Man Luedecke's music and think he's one of our country's real treasures. He deserved those JUNOs.

I've noticed over the last year or two that *CM* has been casting a wider net on the types of musicians being covered. I appreciate that even though you're still focused on the mainstream, you've been spotlighting musicians from less-mainstream genres. I've read about some cool "on-the-way-uppers" (like Mother Mother from the same issue) as well. Between them and Doc Walker, plus some of the people in the piano article (*Keyboards 2011*), it was a fine issue.

I hope you keep on this path and we start to see more blues, jazz, and folk artists in future issues. For now, keep up the great work.

Raymond S.
Red Deer, AB

Ed. Great hearing from you, Raymond. We'll take that last line as a challenge. Expect more diverse content in upcoming issues, including a piece on Francophone artists and the Quebec music scene.



Uploading from DOWN Under

PEI folk/rock artist Tim Chaisson (second from right) of Tim Chaisson and Morning Fold is heading down under for his first Australian tour in October and will be checking in with regular video blogs for *CM*. Tim's just signed with Bumstead Productions after a busy summer of touring the festival circuit.

Keep an eye on www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia for the blogs, and visit now for content including a wrap-up of the 2011 Honeyjam Showcase, a tour of the Yorkville Sound factory, and clips from the S.C.E.N.E. Music Festival earlier in the summer.



Join The Fun On Facebook

There's lots to "Like" about the *CM* Facebook page, as we've just surpassed 8,000 fans and counting. Not only will you be connected with other musicians and readers from across the country (and the globe), but you'll also be kept in the loop about the latest industry news and opportunities for musicians including contests, showcases, and workshops. We also post plenty of fun, interactive content to get the discussion going between musicians.

Simply enter "Canadian Musician Magazine" into Facebook's Search field to access the page and become a fan.

You can also find us on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/cdnmusician and on MySpace (yep, MySpace) at www.myspace.com/canadianmusicianmag.

grants for musicians: Helping You Develop Your Career

By Craig Leach

Canada is a nation with a long-standing tradition of supporting its cultural assets. A part of this is providing funding to help support and develop cultural industries. There are several private and public organizations that offer grants and awards to musicians who want to bring their game to the next level. Whether it's a travel grant that will get you to that summer festival, a recording grant to cover studio time, or a development grant that allows you to attend specialty workshops to improve your playing or expand your knowledge, there is a veritable honey-pot of funds available to Canadian musicians. You just need to know how to access it.

THE MANDATE

In Canada, there exist plenty of national, provincial, regional, private, and public organizations with mandates of providing funding and support to cultural projects. A few of the majors are Canada Council Of The Arts (CCA), FACTOR, SOCAN Foundation, as well as a slew of provincial and regional organizations such as Music Nova Scotia (MNS).

Although grant distribution, eligibility, deadlines, and criteria differ between these organizations, they all share the same goal: to foster, support, and develop cultural creativity, artistic expression, and the Canadian music industry.



Scan this QR Code, or visit:
www.canadaart.info, for a list of additional granting organizations.

"All of our grants are focused on supporting the activities which are benefiting Canadian songwriters and composers in some way, either directly or indirectly," says Rick MacMillan, Manager of the SOCAN Foundation. The SOCAN Foundation, which operates on an annual budget a little over \$2.5 million and provides funds to over 400 activities a year, accomplishes this mandate through sponsorship of festivals, showcases, individual grants, and more.

"We offer cash flow for projects," states MNS Executive Director Scott Long, "which is really a major issue in the music industry." MNS doles out \$300,000 a year to individual artists and bands, organizations, as well as industry professionals such as managers and producers.

Lucas Shuller, Program Officer for the music division of the CCA, supports these notions, saying grants allow musicians to focus on their art. "For a lot of musicians, if they can get to the point where they are earning a living playing music, it usually means being a session player or teaching, which is great to pay the bills, but it doesn't necessarily give you the time to work on your own craft or creative projects."

TYPES OF GRANTS AVAILABLE

From funding to help cut your first demo to supporting international tours, there is a huge variety of grants available to help musicians from Canadian organizations. Those include:

Travel & Tour Support

For many emerging artists, travel and tour expenses can quickly add up and stall any aspirations of playing music outside their locality before they even pack the first case. As such, travel and touring grants are one of the more popular grants available, with nearly every organization offering funding in one form or another.

GRANTING ORGANIZATIONS

Here is a list of a few Canadian organizations that administer grants and funding to musicians. Visit the websites for additional information including eligibility criteria, deadlines, contact information, and available grants.

Alberta Music Industry Association
www.amia.ca

British Columbia Arts Council
www.bcartscouncil.ca

Conseil des arts de Montreal
www.artsmontreal.org

Manitoba Music
www.manitobamusic.com

Music New Brunswick
www.musicnb.org

Music Newfoundland & Labrador
www.musical.ca

Music Prince Edward Island
www.musicpei.com

MusicYukon
www.music Yukon.com

Ontario Arts Council
www.arts.on.ca

Radio Starmaker Fund
www.starmaker.ca

Toronto Arts Council
www.torontoartscouncil.org

Canada Council for the Arts
www.canadacouncil.ca

Canada Music Fund
www.pch.gc.ca/cmfmusic

Music BC
www.musicbc.org

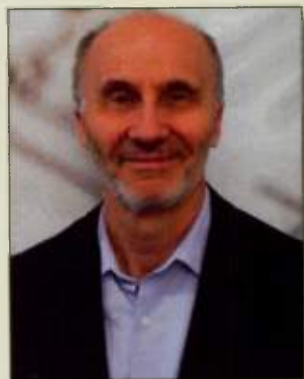
Music Nova Scotia
www.musicnovascotia.ca

Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent On Recordings
www.factor.ca

Grants

"Our definition of a tour is anything that has three dates outside of your own province," explains Schuller of the CCA's Music Touring Program, which also includes support for international tours. "You provide a full budget for the tour and the grant covers whatever the shortfall is on the budget."

Similarly, Music Nova Scotia, under its Export Development Program, "offers funding for travel and tour outside of Nova Scotia," notes Long. The SOCAN Foundation also makes funds available "to artists and bands any time they are invited to showcase at music industry conferences outside Canada," shares MacMillan.



RICK MACMILLAN

Development

As mentioned earlier, finding the time and money to work on playing your own music or realize a certain project can be difficult. To alleviate some of these pressures, granting organizations will often offer developmental grants, designed to provide funding to cover cost of living or admission to professional development seminars and workshops.

"Grants To Professional Musicians is our basic grant," says Schuller. "It's also our most competitive." This grant, offered in both long-term and short-term variations, as Schuller explains, essentially "covers cost of living while an individual musician pursues some kind of creative and artistic development." He notes that these projects can include advancing your studies, conducting research, or composing music for a personal creative project. For short-

term grants (six months), an artist may receive up to \$12,000, while the long-term grant extends over 12 months.

Production

Your music is your greatest commodity. Having a great-sounding recording of that music is paramount; unfortunately, booking studio time and an engineer can be a costly endeavor. Luckily, there are several grants available that will provide funding to help cover the cost of such projects.

FACTOR's Demo and Commercially-Released Single Program, commonly referred to as the "Demo Program," assists Canadian artists, professional songwriters, and music publishers in producing a high-quality recording which may be used for demo purposes and/or released commercially as a single or EP. This program can provide up to 75 per cent of the "total eligible budget" to a maximum contribution of \$1,500.

Additionally, the CCA has recently introduced the Production Grant In Music program that provides funding "that can support either a single self-produced concert or recording project, or a combination of both, such as a recording of a live performance," says Schuller

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

As you can imagine, these grants are highly competitive. Every organization receives more applications than can possibly be approved. "The grant process is so competitive that juries really do wind up looking for a reason not to support a project," shares Schuller, adding: "So you don't want to make any careless mistakes with your application."

Ensuring your application doesn't end up on the chopping block, granting organizations reiterate that due diligence in making sure you are eligible for a specific grant is paramount. "Never apply for any type of funding until you have had a consultation with the program officer who is administering the program," says Long. "Often times, we see a lot of people that don't consult and it turns out to not be an



LUCAS SCHULLER

eligible project, their expenses aren't eligible, or they are not eligible themselves and it ends up being a waste of time for everybody."

"We have guidelines and application forms," says Schuller, "and it's really important for the applicant to read all of it. They may look clunky and long, but there's important information and it's really worth your while."

MacMillan offers the following sage warning: "It's always important to submit all the material in the way it's requested. Because we get so many applications, there really is no time to get back to people whose applications are incomplete; it's their problem, unfortunately."

Not only do grants help an individual musician or band with much-needed funding for projects, the big-picture benefit of funding arts is the strengthening of the industry as a whole.

"I think the music scene in Canada is really strong right now and it's in no small part thanks to the grant systems that we have here," highlights Long, noting in comparison to a country such as the United States, Canada does much to support its artists.

It's important to realize that there is available funding out there; it just takes careful research, diligence when applying, and having the motivation to further develop yourself as an artist. And as Long emphasizes, remember: "All granting organizations have program officers whose job, in part, is to help people out. Our job is to try and find people money, not keep them away from it."

Craig Leach is Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician.



HAUNTED HEARTS (LEFT) & BOXER THE HORSE (RIGHT) PERFORM DURING THE 2011 ECMA'S.

Economic Impact Of East Coast Music Week Totals Nearly \$2.5 Million

■ Attendees of the 2011 East Coast Music Week in Charlottetown injected more than \$2.4 million into the PEI economy, according to an economic impact study commissioned by the East Coast Music Association (ECMA), with assistance from the Province of Prince Edward Island and the Department of Canadian Heritage under the Federal Provincial Territorial Tourism Initiative.

During the ECMA's East Coast Music Week 2011, the Dunne Group conducted data collection and generated an estimate of the economic impact of non-resident visitor expenditures over four days between April 13 and 17, 2011.

"What underscores the veracity of this study," says Su Hutchinson, Executive Director, ECMA, "is that it was executed under a stringent federal reporting model, the Economic Impact Model for Arts and Heritage, created to ensure balanced and comparable reporting for events across the country."

Although the study focused on tourism spending, East Coast Music Week resulted in millions of more dollars for the island's economy, thanks to exposure through national and international media, the worldwide webcast of the gala, the television documentary *Birthplace Of The Beat*, and the operational budget spent within the province.

For a copy of the complete study, contact ECMA: 800-513-4953, FAX 800-513-4953, ecma@ecma.com, www.ecma.com.



BÉNÉDICTE LAUZIÈRE

Montreal Violinist Wins Inaugural Michael Measures Prize

■ Bénédicte Lauzière, a 21-year-old violinist from Montreal, is the first-ever winner of the Canada Council Michael Measures Prize. Launched in September 2010, the prize awards Lauzière with \$15,000 to help build her career.

"We are delighted to partner with the National Youth Orchestra Canada in investing in young Canadian talent," says Robert Siman, Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts. "This prize is made possible thanks to a \$1 million bequest from the late Michael Measures and in awarding the prize to Bénédicte Lauzière it is clear that Mr. Measures' passion for music lives on."

For more information contact the Canada Council: 613-566-4414, FAX 613-566-4390, www.canadacouncil.ca.



SXSW 2012 Accepting Showcase Applications

■ The 2012 edition of the SXSW Music and Media Conference and Festival is now accepting showcase applications. Taking place March 13-18, 2012 in Austin, TX, the 26th edition of SXSW will feature a keynote address, panels, interviews, workshops, mentor sessions, peer meetings, a trade show spanning the music, interactive, and film industries, the Music Gear Expo, and official SXSW day parties.

SXSW Music is now accepting showcase applications for acts to perform at the 2012 music festival. Musicians can apply for an opportunity to perform for the well over 16,000 industry representatives including almost 3,000 media representatives and the thousands of fans in attendance.

To apply, go to www.sxsw.com/music/shows/apply. All applications must be submitted no later than November 4, 2011. For more information on every aspect of SXSW, visit: www.sxsw.com.

CRTC Approves CRFC Structural & Operational Plan

■ Nearly one year ago, the CRTC announced that the campus and community radio sector would begin receiving mandatory Canadian Content Development (CCD) contributions.

It was the first decision of its kind for the sector, as, until then, there had been no dedicated funding for stations from coast-to-coast-to-coast. In order for the Community Radio Fund of Canada (CRFC) to manage these contributions for the sector, it was asked to submit a detailed structural and operational plan that described governance, operations, and a plan for distribution.

For the last year, the CRFC has been receiving 0.5 per cent of tangible benefits when there is a transfer of ownership or control of commercial radio undertakings. Since the 2010 decision, Canada's private radio broadcasters have committed \$2.9 million over seven years in mandatory and voluntary CCD contributions.

Now that the CRTC has approved the CRFC's plan, CRFC will begin receiving 15 per cent of commercial radio licensees' basic

annual contributions to CCD. This will mean at least \$700,000 each year for the CRFC and the campus and community radio sector.

"It has been a long year, full of planning, research, and learning," says CRFC President John Harris Stevenson. "The CRFC has distributed \$480,000 to 47 recipients in the last three years. With this decision, we will be distributing twice that amount every year. Today's decision is an important step for us in reaching our vision of being a meaningful financial tool for the development and sustainability of campus and community radio in Canada."

For more information, contact CRFC: 613-321-3513, FAX 613-562-2182, admin@communityradiofund.org, www.communityradiofund.org.



JUNO Awards To Return To Canada's Capital In 2012

■ The Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS), along with broadcast partner CTV, have announced that Ottawa will host the 2012 JUNO Awards and JUNO Week events and festivities, happening March 26-April 1, 2012.

"We're very pleased to return to Ottawa for the first time since 2003's spectacular success of hosting Canada's music awards," says Melanie Berry, President and CEO, CARAS/The JUNO Awards. "We anticipate that for sponsors, fans, and the viewing public alike, Ottawa will once again capture the excitement and spirit of celebration that only Canada's capital can deliver."

For more information, contact CARAS: 416-485-3135, FAX 416-485-4978, info@carasonline.ca, www.junoawards.ca.



MELANIE BERRY



THE 222S PERFORM DURING THE 2010 EDITION OF POP MONTREAL.



THE SYMPOSIUM



HOLLERADO

POP Montreal Announces Programming For 10th Edition

■ POP Montreal, an international music festival taking place this year from September 21-25, is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Since 2001, POP Montreal has provided a place for music-oriented discussions in its programming, bringing together elements such as The Symposium, a free daytime event during the festival featuring panel discussions, how-tos, DIY projects, workshops, and open-concept conferences. It is meant to shed light on key themes and important issues faced by young artists, who in turn are invited to join in for more animated and interactive discussions.

"We always try to be most relevant to our main audience: POP Montreal artists and concert-goers and in such offer them free events that will engage their minds and concerns," explains Symposium Director Patricia Boushel. "Through our conversations, panels, and workshops, we're able to generate

more spontaneous and real-world learning situations."

The schedule for this year's Symposium will include vocalist Merrill Garbus of the tUnE-yArDs, who will discuss her recent forays into composition for vocal ensembles. Gary Lucas' Captain Beefheart Symposium will provide a crash course about Don Van Vliet, the Captain himself. The Symposium will also present a talk with The Raincoats at the Canadian art opening of *The Raincoats: Adventures*, where original bandmembers Gina Birch, Ana da Silva, and Shirley O'Loughlin will talk with local artist and academic Roxanne Arsenault (Donzelle) about their sound of then and now, the communities they sprang from and engendered, the art they are still producing, and the lives they've led. It will also feature a series of free talks and presentations.

For more information and a complete schedule listing, visit: www.popmontreal.com.

East Coast Artists Thrive With The 2011 ECMA International Program

■ The East Coast Music Association (ECMA) has announced surpassed levels of confirmed business for east coast artists resulting from the 2011 ECMA International Program.

Early reports from members and program delegates indicate the 2011 International Export Buyers Program delivered a substantial increase in the level of export business development from exporting music companies and new exporters who have exported their product outside the country for the first time into new markets where repeat business is anticipated. Immediate and direct secured business negotiations have exceeded the highest plateau in the program's decade-long history.

"ECMA's International Program continued to build its reputation of bringing top quality delegates from across Canada and around the world who deliver export business opportunities to our members," says Shelley Nordstrom, ECMA Export Manager. "It provides an international marketplace for business development for Atlantic Canadian artists and companies with many securing business contracts, international tours, festivals, booking agent signings, promoter representation, and film and television music placement licensing deals."

For more information, contact ECMA: 800-513-4953, FAX 800-513-4953, ecma@ecma.com, www.ecma.com.





L-R: MEMO ACEVEDO, MARCUS SANTOS, ALDO MAZZA, MICHAEL WIMBERLY & NEIL PEART.

KoSA Wraps 16th Annual International Percussion Workshop, Drum Camp & Festival

■ The 16th Annual KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Drum Camp, and Festival wrapped its annual week of intensive study and interaction with international drum and percussion masters, including a special surprise guest.

Participants and faculty alike were stunned when Rush drummer Neil Peart took centre stage at the camp's closing session and took a few questions from KoSA participants. For a postscript, KoSA Founder Aldo Mazza and KoSA artist faculty members Marcus Santos, Michael Wimberly, and Memo Acevedo joined Peart for a spontaneous percussion performance.

Registered participants came this year from as far as Mexico and the U.K., and all over the U.S and Canada to study with KoSA's faculty. "There are many great percussion festivals around the world where the students are the audience. At KoSA, the students are the music," says first-time faculty member Dominick Cuccia. "If a young drummer or percussionist can only have one mind-blowing, once-in-a-lifetime experience, KoSA is the perfect place to have it!"

Two KoSA Lifetime Achievement Awards were given out during the course of the week – the first to Jimmy Cobb, a jazz drummer who among others, played with Miles Davis, and the second to Peart, whose work with Rush has inspired thousands of young drummers.

"KoSA has a distinct family atmosphere of unparalleled sharing and giving, where personal egos are checked at the door," says KoSA Co-Founder Jolán Kovács-Mazza. "It is the nature of every KoSA event to be a distinctly personal journey and this runs in multiple ways, between teacher and student, student and teacher, and also teacher to teacher."

For more information, contact KoSA: 514-482-5554, info@kosamusic.com, www.kosamusic.com.

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Lucky Uke Sets New World Record

■ As part of Montreal's Just For Laughs Festival, the band Lucky Uke played for 45 minutes and successfully managed to beat the world record for most people playing a ukulele in unison.

1,288 people gathered on the festival square and played in unison with Lucky Uke to the tune of the band's latest single "We're Not Gonna Take It." As a result, the previous world record of 851 people was beaten.

Matt Laurent, the leader of the band, described the gathering as "Fantastic. An event of a lifetime!"



CRYSTAL ANTLERS FROM HPX 2010.

THE COAST HALIFAX

Halifax Pop Explosion Confirms Full 2011 Lineup

■ The Halifax Pop Explosion (HPX), an international music festival and conference that presents 150 bands in 20 venues to more than 17,000 fans and industry delegates, has confirmed its complete 2011 artist lineup.

Taking place October 18-22 in Halifax, this year's festival features performances from Thee Oh Sees, Stars, Fucked Up, JEFF the Brotherhood, The Juan Maclean, Dan Mangan, The Pains of Being Pure at Heart, Chad VanGalen, The Thermals, and others.

In addition to the five days of musical performances, HPX's #POPular Conference takes place from October 20-22, featuring panels, discussions, and debates on music, culture, and technology. Speakers at the conference include Martin Atkins (Band Smart), Wendy Day (The Rap Coalition), Kevin Erikson (All Ages Movement Project), Jacoub Bondre (Culture Shock) along with other booking agents, festival programmers, record labels, and media representatives.

For more information on the festival, visit: www.halifaxpopexplosion.com.

Meet You At Triumph Lane

■ The city of Mississauga, ON honoured a few of its best-known sons with the naming of a new street after the iconic Canadian rockers Triumph. Drummer Gil Moore, guitarist Rik Emmett, and bassist Mike Levine were joined by family, friends, and fans in the unveiling of the new sign. The street, named Triumph Lane, is located in a newly-built subdivision in the city's north end.



RIK EMMETT, GIL MOORE & MIKE LEVINE



TIANA

Sweet 16 HoneyJam Showcase A Success

■ The HoneyJam Showcase, the annual all-female, multi-genre, multi-cultural artist showcase, celebrated its 16th anniversary on August 11, 2011 at Toronto's MOD Club. Over the past 16 years, HoneyJam has been the jump-off for such performers as Nelly Furtado, Jully Black, and Reema Major.

MuchMusic's Sarah Taylor returned to host the evening event, which saw 19 artists grace the stage. As part of HoneyJam's mandate, prior to the showcase, each artist was given the opportunity to participate in a free artist workshop at Harris Institute and also received one hour of one-on-one vocal and performance coaching time with Elaine Overholt. They also received one hour of consultation time with Universal A&R head Ivan Evidente.

"I think that this crop of musicians and artists will be presented with more opportunities than out of any other HoneyJam event," remarks Ebonnie Rowe, President and CEO of PhemPhat Productions and Founder of HoneyJam. "They're just at that level; they are ready for prime-time."

For more information, contact HoneyJam: honeyjaminfo@gmail.com, www.honeyjam.com.



ERIC BAPTISTE

SOCAN Members Receive Highest-Ever Royalties In August 2011

Eric Baptiste, CEO of SOCAN, has announced that the recent quarterly payment of royalties to SOCAN members, which occurred in August 2011, reached a record high at \$75 million, including \$47 million based on established tariffs plus a special distribution of \$28 million in arrears for radio performances between 2003 and 2010. The special distribution is due to additional revenues resulting from the resolution of litigation related to Tariff 1A (Commercial Radio).

"The boost in royalties that SOCAN members received in August represents an increase to the income which Canadian music creators and publishers depend on to make a living," says Baptiste. "SOCAN continues to work diligently towards ensuring that our members are paid adequately through the licensing of music use in Canada."

The November 2011 royalty payment will include a special distribution of \$24 million, as a result of the recent decision by the Copyright Board of Canada to allow payment of royalties based on revenues received by SOCAN under Tariff 25 (Satellite Radio).

For more information, including a copy of the full report, visit: www.socan.ca.

"Gonna Buy Five Copies For My Mother" ...The Sheepdogs Featured On Rolling Stone Cover

Saskatoon, SK's The Sheepdogs have been named the winners of the first-ever "Do You Wanna Be A Rock & Roll Star?" competition, which has the band featured on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine. The rock band was selected by consumer votes to be the first-ever band or artist not signed to a major label to appear on the cover of the publication.

"It's been a fantastic experience watching all these gifted artists vie for the iconic honour of being on the cover of *Rolling Stone*," says Craig Kallman, Atlantic Records Chairman and CEO. "Now the people have spoken, and we congratulate The Sheepdogs on coming out on top in this unprecedented competition."

For more information, visit: www.thesheepdogs.com.



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Hopscotch Brings The Beat Back

■ Hopscotch Halifax, a hip-hop festival that celebrates urban and hip-hop culture, recently returned for its second year of showcasing international and local artists representing various art forms.

"With a focus on urban art and hip-hop culture, Hopscotch is an exciting chance for today's youth to come celebrate and share their passion for all forms of urban culture," says Drew Moore, Chair of Hopscotch. "This event is about engaging youth and our vibrant urban community."

On September 8, Hopscotch hosted a Live Art Jam outside the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. This event featured a 28-ft. boat painted live by contemporary artists from Paris, Toronto, and Halifax. The main event had New York based hip-hop artists The Beatnuts as the headliner of an all-ages free concert, which took place on September 10th. Also on the 10th was the Roast The Coast National Bboy Competition.

Additionally, the 14th year of the DJ Olympics had emcees, beatboxers, and DJs face-off to earn prizes. The big finale was held at Palookas Boxing Club in the heart of downtown Halifax.

For more information visit: www.hopscotchhalifax.com.



CCMIA & MROC Announce Strategic Partnership

■ The Canadian Council of Music Industry Associations (CCMIA) and Musicians' Rights Organization Canada (MROC) have announced the formation of a strategic partnership.

MROC is a federally-incorporated, not-for-profit collective society whose objectives include the collection and distribution of performer remuneration collected by Re:Sound, a music licensing company formerly known as the Neighbouring Rights Collective of Canada.

This function was previously carried out by Musicians' Neighbouring Rights

Royalties, an adjunct to the Canadian office of the American Federation of Musicians. The AFM recently assigned that function to MROC, which was formed to be a stand-alone copyright collective. This is an important stride for Canadian musicians who now have working for them an independent organization governed exclusively by Canadian musician performers.

MROC's sole function is to collect and distribute to musicians the performer's share of neighbouring rights royalties stipulated under various tar-

iffs approved by the Copyright Board of Canada.

"Who better to govern and manage the complexities of these newly-established performer entitlements than the very music industry professionals (musicians) who helped fight for and promote the inclusion of neighbouring rights under the Copyright Act, throughout the early development of the concept and beyond?" says Len Lytwyn, MROC's Executive Director.

For more information, visit: www.musiciansrights.ca.

JACKMAN CHIU



BLACK LUNGS ROCKING NXNE 2011.

18th Annual NXNE Now Open For Submissions

■ Submissions for the 18th annual edition of the NXNE Music and Film Festival, taking place June 11-17, 2012 in Toronto, are now open. Submissions will be accepted online only at www.nxne.com until January 31, 2012.

Artists can visit www.nxne.com and follow the links to submit music to NXNE. Submissions received

by December 31 cost \$28; after December 31, the fee rises to \$38.

NXNE reports that 2011 was the festival's best year ever, with over 300,000 people experiencing NXNE Music, Film, and Interactive over seven days. NXNE artists are offered the opportunity to reach thousands of new fans, meet industry people, and be noticed by national and international media.

For regular updates or to submit, visit www.nxne.com.



JACKMAN CHIU

Events

■ CCMA Country Music Week 2011

Hamilton, ON
September 9-12, 2011
416-947-1331, FAX 416-947-5924
country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

■ The Totally Huge New Music Conference

Perth, Australia
September 16-19, 2011
+61 08-9228-3711,
FAX +61 08-9228-1808
info@tura.com.au, www.tura.com.au

■ Pro AV Golf Tournament

Caledon, ON
September 21, 2011
905-641-3471
jnorris@nor.com, www.proavgolf.com

■ POP Montreal 2011

Montreal, QC
September 21-25, 2011
514-842-1919, FAX 514-664-1063
www.popmontreal.com

■ Billboard Future Sound

San Francisco, CA
October 5, 2011
212-493-4263
conferences@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ Celtic Colours International Festival 2011

Cape Breton, NS
October 7-15, 2011
902-562-6700, FAX 902-539-9388
info@celtic-colours.com,
www.celtic-colours.com

■ Music China

Shanghai, China
October 11-14, 2011
+852-2238-9901, FAX +852-2598-8771
music@hongkong.messefrankfurt.com,
www.musikmesse.com

■ 25th Ontario Council of Folk Festivals (OCFF)

Niagara Falls, ON
October 13-16, 2011
613-560-5997, FAX 613-560-2001
info@ocff.ca, www.ocff.ca

■ Halifax Pop Explosion 2011

Halifax, NS
October 18-22, 2011
902-482-8176, FAX 902-482-0716
info@halifaxpopexplosion.com,
www.halifaxpopexplosion.com

■ 54th College Music Society National Conference

Richmond, VI
October 20-23, 2011
406-721-9616, FAX 406-721-9419
cms@music.org, www.music.org

■ Breakout West 2011

Whitehorse, YK
October 20-23, 2011
204-943-8485, FAX 204-453-1594
www.breakoutwest.ca

■ Montreal Drum Fest

Montreal, QC
October 22-23, 2011
888-928-1726
www.montrealdrumfest.com

■ WOMEX 2011 (World Music Expo)

Copenhagen Denmark
October 26-30, 2011
+49 30-318-614-30,
FAX +49 30-318-614-10
www.womex.com

■ Music Conference Alberta

Red Deer, AB
November 3-5, 2011
780-488-7464, FAX 780-488-6403
info@albertachoralfederation.ca,
www.albertachoralfederation.ca

■ AOSA Professional Development Conference

Pittsburgh, PA
November 9-12, 2011
440-543-5366
info@aosa.org, www.aosa.org

■ Billboard Touring Conference & Awards

New York, NY
November 9-10, 2011
212-493-4263
conferences@billboard.com,
www.billboardevents.com

■ PASIC 2011

Indianapolis, IN
November 9-12, 2011
317-974-4488, FAX 317-974-4499
percarts@pas.org, www.pas.org

■ Midwest Clinic 2011

Chicago, IL
December 14-17, 2011
847-424-4163, FAX 847-424-5185
info@midwestclinic.com,
www.midwestclinic.com

■ MIDEM 2012

Cannes, France
January 28-31, 2012
www.midem.com

■ KoSA Cuba 2012

Havana, Cuba
March 4-11, 2012
800-541-8401
info@kosamusic.com,
www.kosamusic.com

■ Mobile Beat 2012 DJ Show & Conference

Las Vegas, NV
March 6-9, 2012
515-986-3300
www.mobilebeat.com

■ SXSW 2012

Austin, TX
March 11-20, 2012
512-467-7979, FAX 512-451-0754
sxsw@sxsw.com, www.sxsw.com

■ Canadian Music Week 2012

Toronto, ON
March 21-25, 2012
905-858-4747, FAX 905-858-4848
info@cmw.net, www.cmw.net

■ MTNA National Conference

New York, NY
March 24-28, 2012
513-421-1420, FAX 513-421-2503
www.mtna.org

■ 2012 East Coast Music Week

Moncton, NB
April 11-15, 2012
800-513-4953
ecma@ecma.com, www.ecma.com

■ NXNE 2012

Toronto, ON
June 11-17, 2012
416-863-6963, FAX 416-863-0828
info@nxne.com, www.nxne.com

■ 2012 COCA National Conference

Montreal, QC
June 22-26, 2012
519-690-0207, FAX 519-681-4328
www.coca.org

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Arturia Spark Drum Machine

by Sara Simms

Arturia's Spark is a creative beat production centre that combines analog synthesis, great sounding samples, physical modeling, a hardware drum machine control surface, and intuitive software.

As soon as I took Spark out the box, I fell in love with the simplicity of its design, and was delighted to find out that it was quite simple to get started making beats. Spark's hardware controller features eight velocity-sensitive pads, 16 buttons for step sequencing, an FX pad, and knobs for tweaking individual drum parameters. It also features a large jog wheel, which is used for scrolling through your instruments or kits. The hardware controller integrates with the Spark software program, where sound synthesis takes place.

Platform Specifications:

Windows: XP/Vista/Seven

Mac OS X: Mac OS X 10.5 or higher

Minimum System Requirements:

PC/Windows: 1 GB RAM; 2 GHz CPU

Mac (Intel only) : 1 GB RAM; 2 GHz CPU

Spark's approach to building drums is easy to understand. You start by creating rhythmic patterns; each pattern can have up to 16 tracks, and each track can have up to 64 steps. These drum patterns are numbered from 1-16 and are then placed in a circle. You can use these patterns to build songs, with up to 64 patterns per song. While you're creating your beats, you can tweak each drum sound individually by using the knobs above the drum pads and record your automations in real-time.

Spark has an impressive sample library of 480 instruments and 30 drum kits. It includes vintage drum sounds that emulate the tones of the popular Roland TR-808 and TR-909, Simmons SDS-V, Eprom-based LinnDrum, Drumtraks, DMX, as well as electronic and acoustic drum kits. Spark gives you sonic power as its sound bank embeds analog synthesis, sampling, and physical modeling. The automation available on each drum's parameters allows you



to easily customize and create your own unique drum sounds, making Spark a highly-desirable creative tool. The only real limit to the sounds you can produce is your imagination!

The GUI design of the software is both attractive and straightforward, making navigation a breeze. The software centre panel matches the look of the hardware and also features an expandable top and bottom section. The top section features a Pattern, Song, and Preferences panel. The bottom panel features the studio, a 16-channel mixer, and the library.

The studio gives you complete creative control over your drum sounds, and you can apply filters, effects, assign instruments to tracks, or drag-and-drop your own samples to easily build your own kits. The onboard effects include

a compressor, reverb, bit crusher, multiband EQ, chorus, delay, distortion, phaser, and plate reverb. The 16-channel mixer allows you to mix, balance, and add effects to your drum sounds. The library allows you to build and save beat projects, display patterns and drum banks, and export your patterns into MIDI or WAV files.

Spark's build quality is excellent, and both the hardware and the software are easy to use. Its approach to building rhythms is simple, and at the same time offers complete sonic freedom. Spark's large sound bank gives you the capability to produce a vast array of customizable sounds. This creative tool allows you to quickly produce high-quality beats. The hardware's sturdy and durable build makes Spark a great choice for producers, DJs, and live performers. To top it off, Spark is available at a great price point.

No matter what your level of musicianship, Spark will help to improve your productions and sets. I highly recommend making an investment in one of these unique instruments.

The Good News

- A versatile and well-designed instrument.
- Easy to use, even for beginners.
- 30 high-quality drum sample kits, including great-sounding analog emulations.
- Allows you to push sonic boundaries by tweaking and modifying individual drum sounds.
- Sturdy aluminum enclosure.
- Seamlessly integrates into your studio set-up or live/DJ performances.
- Beautiful minimalist design.
- Great deal for the price point.

Sara Simms is an innovative electronic music producer, turntablist/DJ, and advocate of new music technology. Her music productions and DJ sets combine elements of dubstep, minimal tech, glitch, and experimental sounds to create original electronic dance music. Future Prophecies is her new musical enterprise, a united collective of Toronto's music producers and DJs. She recently released her first self-produced music video and single, "Straight from the Sewer," featuring Jon Astonish. www.sarasimms.com, www.facebook.com/djsarasimms, www.twitter.com/sarasimms, www.youtube.com/sarasimmsproductions.

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Fretlight FG-421 Electric Guitar

By Hal Rodriguez

The Fretlight Guitar by Optek Systems Inc. looks and sounds like a normal electric guitar, but hiding in its neck is a modern, high-tech approach to learning to play music.

By connecting the Fretlight to a computer's USB port and running the company's software-based lessons and tablature, embedded red LEDs in the fretboard selectively light up to indicate the relevant notes for playing chords, scales, and guitar parts. The company claims that this makes learning music easier by allowing the player to spend more time looking at the fretboard than reading charts, tabs, or chord diagrams.

The Guitar

The model I received for review was the company's Chinese-made Traditional Electric FG-421 (US\$429.99 MSRP). The guitar's familiar Strat styling, attractive sunburst finish, and pearloid pickguard exuded class on first look, and the LEDs were inconspicuous on its smooth polymer fretboard. Although I missed the presence of fretmarkers on top of the neck, the guitar was a pleasure to play with its light weight, comfortable neck profile, and rounded bridge saddles.

I was impressed with the quality of the pickups at this price point and was easily able to dial inspiring blues and hard rock tones with the SSH pickup configuration. The guitar also came with N-Tune's onboard tuner, which is an especially convenient feature to have. Overall, the Fretlight guitar proved to be a well-made instrument and worthwhile purchase just on the basis of its build quality and tone.

The Software

As a Mac user, I was supplied with the Fretlight Lesson Player, M-Player, and Improviser. The programs were quick and easy to install, as was connecting the guitar to my computer and an amp simultaneously with the company's proprietary cable. The Lesson Player is an electronic instructional book that takes beginners through playing their first melodies and chords. It was well written and boasted a valuable library of chords and scales.

Seeing the LEDs light up for the first time while working through the



lessons, it became apparent that the Fretlight would be useful in giving beginners the confidence to play the right notes immediately, despite their initial unfamiliarity with reading music and navigating the guitar neck; however, although the LEDs were sufficiently bright when looking directly at the surface of the fretboard, I found that the lit frets on the high E and B strings appear dimmer from the player's line of sight when holding the guitar in the correct playing position.

For learning songs and soloing, users can open the supplied MIDI files of popular tunes in the M-Player or backing tracks in several genres in the Improviser. It was impressive to see chords, scales, riffs, and solos automatically light up in real time and order on the fretboard. Although I found the sound quality of the MIDI tracks to be lacking, the applications' user-friendly interfaces allowed me to easily loop a selected section of a track, slow down the tempo, and even change keys in the Improviser without going through any sub-menus. While playing along with these programs, another advantage of the Fretlight learning method became clear: beginners can quickly spot and fix their mistakes on their own, as it was obvious whenever I played on an incorrect, unlit fret.

Another valuable feature of the Fretlight is its connectivity with Guitar Pro's "Fretlight Ready" tablature editor. After installing the included free trial and opening up the tablature for a song, I could easily select between lighting up the tab or just the chords and scales of the tune on the fretboard. With the LEDs consistently directing my fingers to the right notes, I spent significantly less time checking the tab on screen and more on memorizing the music on the neck.

Summary

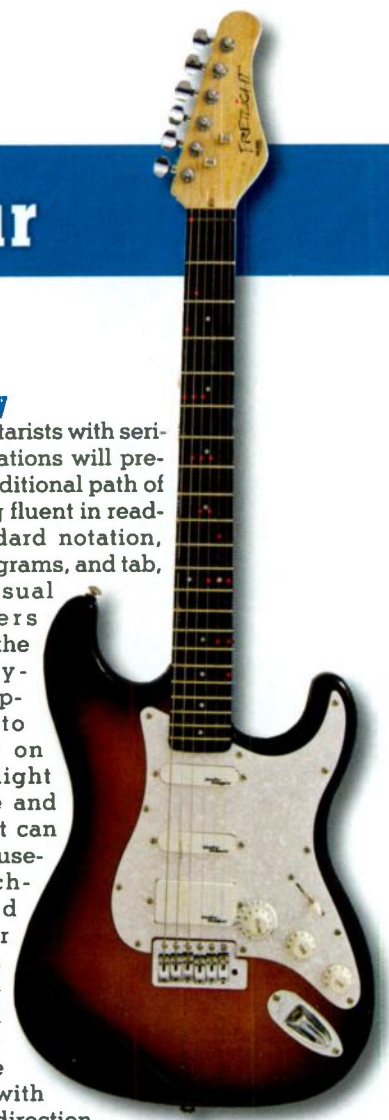
While guitarists with serious aspirations will prefer the traditional path of becoming fluent in reading standard notation, chord diagrams, and tab, more casual beginners will find the visually-driven approach to learning on the Fretlight attractive and helpful. It can also be a useful teaching aid for guitar teachers as illuminated frets provide the student with effective direction and make self-correction easy. The instrument's M-Player, Improviser, and connection with Guitar Pro certainly increase its value as a practicing and learning tool, but even without its lights and software, the Fretlight excels where it counts the most: it is an affordable, well-made, and good sounding guitar.

Hal Rodriguez is a Toronto-based guitarist, bassist, songwriter, and music teacher who has studied with Greg Howe and Michael Occhipinti. He can be contacted at halromusic@gmail.com.

Manufacturer's Comment

Fretlight is an obvious fit for beginners, but thousands of intermediate to professional players see great value in the guitar's advanced features – for example, the ability to light the Phrygian scale in any location, in any key, with blinking root notes. We acknowledge a technical issue with side fret markers and are actively working on a solution. www.fretlight.com.

Carol Arnold
Spokesperson
Optek Music Systems



Stanton Scratch DJ Academy MIX!

By Sara Simms

MIX! is a new piece of DJ software, created by the Scratch DJ Academy and Stanton. Targeted towards the beginner DJ, Scratch DJ allows you to add and analyze your track collection, mix tracks, add in scratch FX, and record your mixes.

Minimum System Requirements

Mac: Mac OS X 10.5.7 or 10.6, 1 GB of RAM required (2 GB of RAM recommended)

Windows: Microsoft Windows XP SP3/Vista/7, 1 GB of RAM required (2 GB of RAM recommended)

I instantly liked the GUI layout of the software. The quick start guide allowed me to get up and running very easily. As soon as you launch the software, you are also greeted with three sets of lessons – Mixing 101, Scratching 101, and Music Theory 101. These lessons give you some good background information and insight into the world of DJing and will be helpful to beginners.

MIX! is very basic DJ software, and it's good at what it does. It allows you add tracks to your song library and analyzes them, giving you their BPM and key. The key signature analysis function is a useful feature, as I think more DJs should use harmonic mixing to improve their mixes. This useful technique uses music theory to help DJs select songs that will blend together in a pleasing manner, giving you a guide to navigate the musical waters.

In MIX!, you can sort your tracks into playlists, and when you click on a track (in the playlist), MIX! will highlight other songs in the collection that are in compatible keys. DJs who would like to practice harmonic mixing but don't know music theory may be disappointed that the software does not analyze songs using the Camelot System (a keycode number assigned to each key that simplifies harmonic mixing for DJs who do not know music theory).

I like the fact that MIX! allows you to add scratching to your mixes. It even provides you with the ability to customize your scratch technique by selecting different combos and changing the length of the scratches. Scratching is a fun way to spice up your mixes and add some flavour. This software gives you an idea of what different scratches sound like – and if you like these sounds, I would recommend you learn to really scratch, as software can't replace the sound or feel of the real scratching experience.

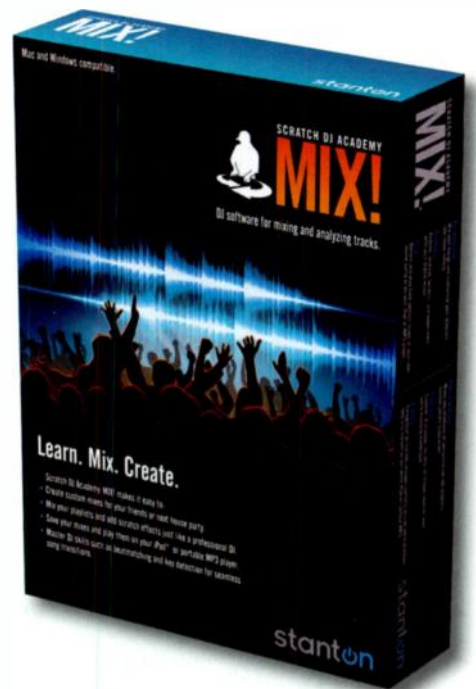
MIX! seems to offer only basic mixing capabilities; you can choose your mix point, mix length, and adjust the 'cue' - which is the point at which the mix begins and ends. Unfortunately, there's no EQ available, or separate volume control for the individual tracks. That being said, there's also no looping capabilities, or FX - meaning that there is room for improvement in this software program.

The Good News

- Allows beginning DJs and music fans to easily mix tracks together.
- Offers DJs the ability to incorporate scratches to their mixes.
- Simple, uncluttered software interface.
- Makes mix recommendations based on music theory.
- Includes DJ lessons to help you get started and learn the art of DJing.
- Fun and easy to use!

In the audio editing area of the software, you can lay out all your tracks for the mix. You can also edit track information for each song by double clicking on it. Once you're done preparing your mixes, you can record them, and begin to build your collection of mixes in the mix vault.

Scratch DJ Academy gives you a quick and easy way to analyze your tracks, as well as perform basic mixes. It's a simple digital DJing program that's easy to use, and would be a great way for aspiring DJs to start to learn about

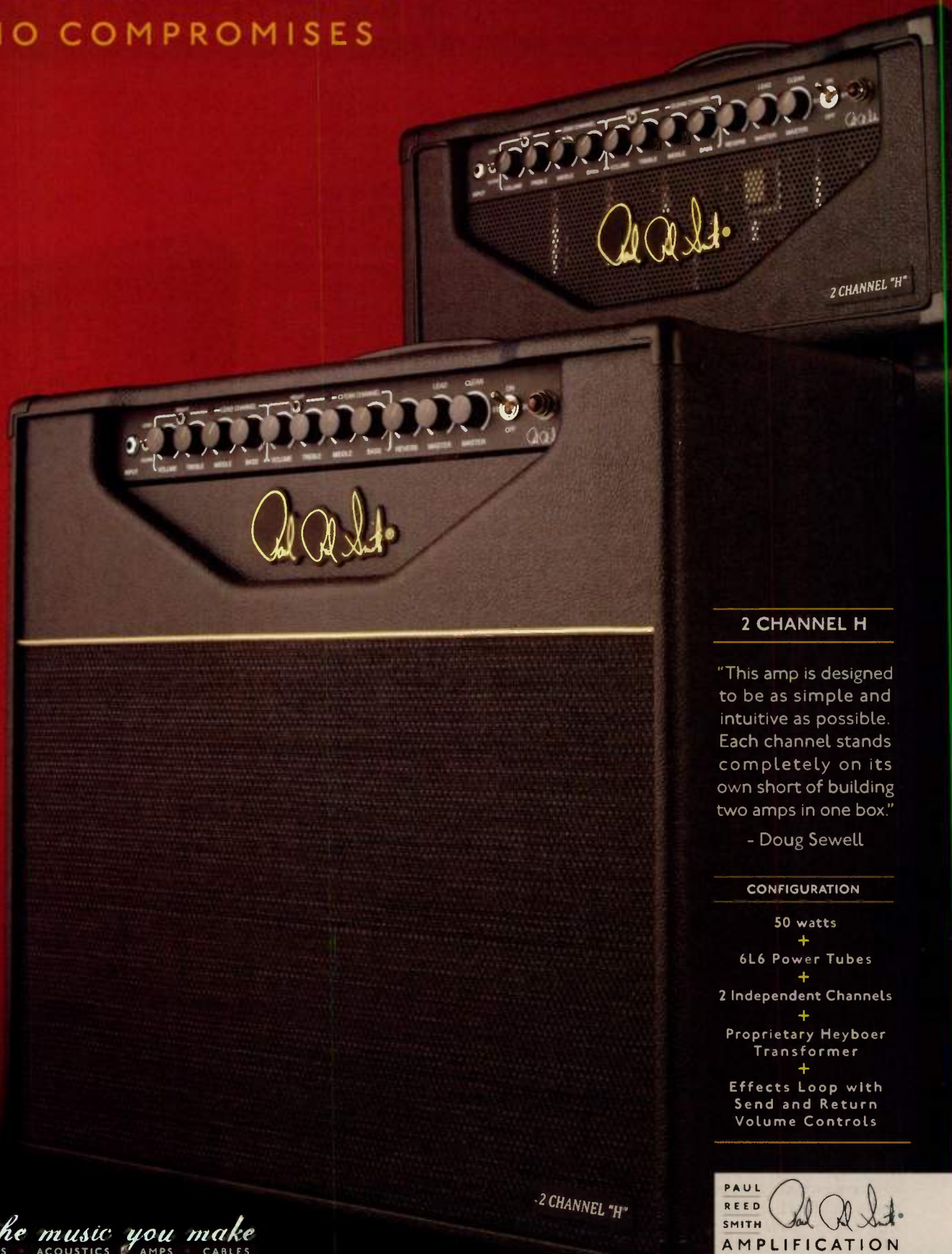


digital mixing. I also like the fact that this MIX! helps teach new DJs about the art of DJing and music theory basics. As far as professional use for song analysis, I think professional DJs may prefer to use a dedicated analysis program. If creating basic mixes is your goal, MIX! gives you the tools you need to get started. As with any music software, it's what you're able to create by using the application that truly matters.

Sara Simms is an innovative electronic music producer, turntablist/DJ, and advocate of new music technology. Her music productions and DJ sets combine elements of dubstep, minimal tech, glitch, and experimental sounds to create original electronic dance music. Future Prophecies is her new musical enterprise, a united collective of Toronto's music producers and DJs. She recently released her first self-produced music video and single, "Straight from the Sewer," featuring Jon Astonish. www.sarasimms.com, www.facebook.com/djsarasimms, www.twitter.com/sarasimms, www.youtube.com/sarasimmsproductions.

Two Channels

NO COMPROMISES



2 CHANNEL H

"This amp is designed to be as simple and intuitive as possible. Each channel stands completely on its own short of building two amps in one box."

- Doug Sewell

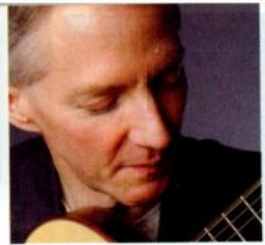
CONFIGURATION

- 50 watts
- +
- 6L6 Power Tubes
- +
- 2 Independent Channels
- +
- Proprietary Heyboer Transformer
- +
- Effects Loop with Send and Return Volume Controls

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AMPLIFICATION

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Guitarist John Stowell is based in Portland, OR. He has played and taught internationally for over 30 years. He has educational and performance material available from Truefire (www.truefire.com), Mel Bay (www.melbay.com), and Mike Gellar (www.mikesmasterclasses.com). He can be reached at: www.johnstowell.com.

By John Stowell

open string voicings for the guitar

Part 1

Open string voicings have a pianistic, chime-like quality to them; they can be very effective when used in a solo guitar arrangement or to accompany.

In my experience, these chords work best in pieces with slower tempos, the exception being a context in which one chord is played for a number of bars and the sustain of an open string or two is not an issue. For all of the voices in a chord to sound balanced when mixing open strings with fretted notes, either thumb and fingers or pick and fingers (the latter being my approach) will help to achieve the requisite balance. Unless I'm playing a note in the bass, I'm usually employing the G, B, or high E string in combination with the fretted notes in a chord.

There are many great chord books available from such masters at Ted Greene and Mick Goodrick; Jimmy Wyble, Barry Galbraith, and George Van Eps from the previous generation of guitarists have made important contributions as well. You will certainly find many open string voicings contained in the books of these great plectrists. In my experience, the best way to retain and internalize new chord shapes and sounds is to place them in a context, i.e. in a cadence or chord melody arrangement. Once a particular sequence or chord melody has been sufficiently repeated, the inversions contained therein have become a part of your vocabulary and can be used elsewhere.

For this article, the voicings listed are taken from an original composition of mine entitled "I Wish," and almost all of the chords contain an open string. The melody of the tune is essentially an arpeggiation of these chords and will be explored and explained in detail in Part 2.

I arrived at many of the chords in "I Wish" through some intelligent guesswork using familiar shapes and adding an open string that I knew would work theoretically. For example, the opening chord of the tune, Bm7#5, employs the open G string (the #5). Take any familiar Bm shape and add the open G. Over time, you will certainly find some new chords that you like and will use. Apply the same logic to some of my other inversions listed here for similar results. The open G creates some nice Bb maj. 6th chords, the open B, some nice Eb minor #5 chords, etc.

When you're able to extrapolate some new chords of your own, put them in a context to retain them, as I mentioned earlier. This process of discovering and acquiring new chords gets easier with practice and some patience. It becomes fun as you develop the skills and mindset to move beyond the standard guitar voicings into new territory and some beautiful and original sounds.



By Chris Donnelly

Achieving Hand Independence

Part 1

Achieving hand independence is one of a pianist's top priorities and a common pursuit among students. It's also one of the easiest to attain; hand independence requires only two things: structured exercises and practice.

Students have difficulty improving hand independence because they 1) don't know how to craft the proper exercises, 2) aren't disciplined enough to stick with them, and/or 3) don't put in the necessary practice time.

In this column, I'll be addressing these general issues. Though hand independence is the primary focus, these lessons can be applied to practice in general. The next two columns will cover more practical advice and exercises for achieving hand independence.

1. Crafting Structured Exercises

Hand independence is an issue when jazz pianists try to improvise freely, with minimal rhythmic constraint. Students never ask me how to achieve hand independence while playing a Bach fugue (rhythmically speaking). That's because it's all written out!

So, if I wrote out, note-for-note, an "improvisation" with a challenging, "independent" accompaniment and instructed students to practice and play it, they would have fewer issues with hand independence. This is because notation provides a more solid foundation for students to explore and improve the relationship between hands. This is an important principle to understand when crafting exercises.

Side Note: Achieving rhythmic independence is the more common issue, and that's my focus here. Of course, hand independence isn't limited to rhythm – tone and balance between hands are issues too; furthermore, the issues and exercises discussed here also apply to finger independence.

I find that students who are trying to improve hand independence get frustrated because they're crafting exercises that are too difficult. Mistakes are commonly made, improvement is sluggish, and a foundation for achieving hand independence isn't being established.

2) Applying Discipline

Even if students do have good, structured exercises, they may not appreciate the level of discipline required to take full advantage.

Exercises meant to improve hand independence and muscle memory involve lots of repetition, a feature of discipline. But jazz students underestimate the importance of repetition – it contradicts their ideas of creativity and spontaneity.

Too often, they turn repetitive, disciplined exercises into creative "exercises," with too much spontaneity and no focus.

My instructions for practicing hand independence always include sticking to patterns, or structures, and never wavering (until it has been mastered). This is how you rid bad habits, fix mistakes, and improve skills; every note, every rhythm, should be repeated exactly as it was played previously. Otherwise, the

point of the exercise is defeated and time is being wasted.

3) Putting In The Time

In the short-term, with discipline and the right exercise, students will improve. But how do they figure out what to do next?

The challenge is to always keep within an optimal level of difficulty. Exercises need to adapt to skill level. If it's too easy, students won't learn anything. If it's too hard, a foundation is being established. As they improve, they need to recognize when and how to modify the exercise.

Luckily, with hand independence, improvement is very evident in the short term. It's also very easy to increase the difficulty by small increments.

In the long-term, however, improvement is more difficult to gauge. Assuming the student is committed to building an extensive vocabulary and puts in many hours of deliberate practice, he/she will gradually break free of the rigid structures imposed during practice. This comes with a feeling of more freedom and versatility during performance. It takes many months and many years to achieve this level of freedom.

Over time, it also becomes easier to assimilate new patterns and exercises. This is because skills compound with time and practice; however, no matter how independent your hands are, there will always be gaps in your ability. Full independence is impossible.

There will always be a pattern or exercise that will elude you, at least until you practice it!



Mike Downes is a professional bassist and composer based in Toronto. He has performed worldwide and on numerous recordings. He is the head of the bass department at Humber College, author of *The Jazz Bass Line Book*, and co-author of *Contemporary Music Theory*. For more information, visit www.mikedownes.com or email mike@mikedownes.com.

BASS

By Mike Downes

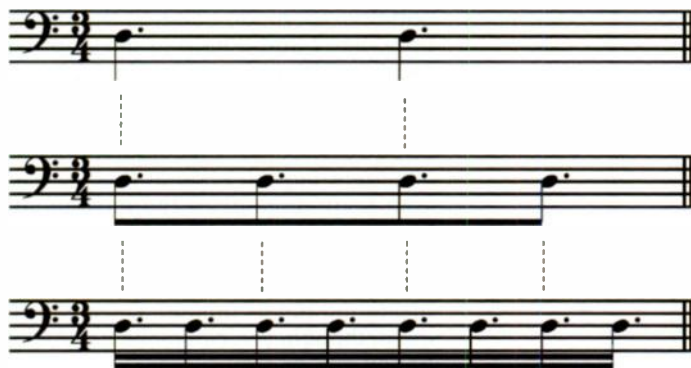
improvising in 3/4 time using 2, 4 & 8 Against 3

When learning to improvise, most bassists focus on harmony. We practice soloing like our functional bass-selves by working on which notes define which chords. While there is nothing wrong with a harmonic approach, the rhythmic element of improvisation is too often ignored.

The use of 2, 4, and 8-note groupings against 3 in 3/4 time will greatly increase the rhythmic interest of your lines. Each of these rhythmically-symmetrical groupings implies something other than 3, thus the term "against" 3. The opposing rhythmic forces are what create tension and interest. The following exercises will get you started. Once you feel comfortable with these rhythmic groupings, you can then apply them in a harmonic/melodic context.

Ex. 1 shows how each of these groupings looks within a single 3/4 measure. In addition, the dashed lines illustrate how 2, 4, and 8 against 3 are interrelated. Notice, for example, that the second beat of the 2-note grouping, the third beat of the 4-note grouping, and the fifth beat of the 8-note grouping all occur on the "and" of two.

Ex.1



It's easiest to get started with 2 against 3. I suggest using a metronome as a reference. Put the metronome click on three beats per measure (quarter notes) at approx. 110 bpm. As you get comfortable, try slower and quicker tempos. Play Ex. 2, making sure that the second note of each measure falls accurately on the "and" of two.

Ex.2



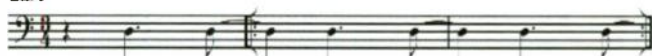
For kicks and giggles you can shift this rhythm by eighth note increments, starting on the "and" of 1 and then on beat 2. Once you shift it to the "and" of two you are repeating Ex. 2. The 2 against 3 grouping in Ex. 3 begins on the "and" of one. The first measures in figures 3 and 4 are shown just to get the rhythmic patterns started.

Ex.3



Now practice it beginning on beat 2 as shown in Ex. 4.

Ex.4



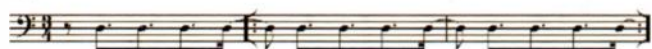
Once you have a command of 2 against 3, play the 4-note groupings in Ex. 5. Keep the metronome click on 3 beats per measure. It may help to refer to Ex. 1 – as you play, make sure that the third note of each group of 4 lands on the "and" of 2. Also try switching between Ex. 5 and Ex. 2.

Ex.5



As with 2 against 3, you can start this pattern an eighth-note later to create a different effect. This is more difficult than figure 5, so it helps to consciously place the third note of each grouping on beat 3. Once you get this, try to begin the pattern on beat two.

Ex.6



The next step is to practice 8 against 3. This sounds very close to 9 against 3, or eighth-note triplets, so be careful not to play triplets. It's easiest to feel 2 groups of 4, with each group occurring within the value of a dotted quarter note (see 2 against 3). This can be a bit tricky at first, so it may help to switch between Ex. 2, 5, and 7 until you get the hang of it. Another helpful trick is to place an accent on the first note of each 4-note grouping while being conscious of beat one and the "and" of two.

Ex.7



I like to imagine the "three" side and the "two, four, or eight" side as distinct aural images reflecting in a mirror, but that's a concept for another column. In the meantime, have fun with these rhythms!



By Matt McFarland

the slide bass drum technique

So you wanna go fast, eh? Whether it's fast hands, feet, twirls, grooves, or fills, all drummers want to be able to play quickly.

After hearing Led Zeppelin's "Good Times, Bad Times," I asked my drum teacher how John Bonham executed the superhuman 16th note triplets with one bass pedal. As usual, my instructor spent time showing me the technique, writing down exercises to develop it, and recommending instructional material to help speed it up.

I spent hours trying to figure out how to channel Bonham. My research into the subject made me realize that there are a myriad of ways that our percussive peers are playing fast bass strokes with one pedal.

I read about the toe/heel method, the heel/toe method, and the heel down technique. After spending some time with all of these movements, I realized that my foot naturally wanted to use a slide motion to execute the strokes. I figured, "Why fight it?" and dove in.

The downstroke (v) is the first stroke in the Slide Bass Drum Technique. To execute it, place your entire foot on the bass pedal so that the footboard is covered. Now slide your foot down 1/3 of the length of the pedal so you have some space between your toes and the chain. This is the "sweet spot" as eventually you'll need some room to slide your foot up the pedal. Keep your toe down and your heel up off the pedal 2.5-5 cm.

Using your full leg, step down on the pedal and allow your heel to drop (but not touch the ground). Ensure that the bass drum beater is allowed to rebound off the skin slightly. Congrats! There's the first stroke.

The slide stroke (>) occurs right after the downstroke. Slide your foot up the pedal, putting slight pressure on your toes, and allow the bass drum beater to hit and release. Presto! Two hits from one stroke. Practice "down, slide, down, slide" over and over.

Ex. 5 and 6 use the "down, slide" pattern in a way that will help build the technique and stamina to play a Samba pattern. During my foot development, the Samba became the holy grail of all patterns, as you are sliding the whole time. Ex. 7 and 8 help to develop the two-bar patterns prominent in punk and metal drumming.

To avoid frustration, take the exercises very slowly. I recommend over-exaggerating the slide at first so that your body memorizes the movement. Sliding up the pedal 8-10 cm is a great way to start internalizing the slide. Learning the grooves is secondary to mastering the technique. Once you've got it, though, you can make like Ricky Bobby and go fast!

The Next Step

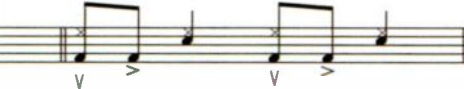
Once you have the foundations mastered, it's time to learn how to control the volume. The longer the slide, the louder the hit. Also, with some practice, you'll notice that you don't have to exaggerate the slide to achieve the two hits. In fact, some students comment that their foot barely moves at faster speeds, yet they are able to execute the technique.

My students find this a challenging yet rewarding technique. The look on their faces when they are able to shift their bass drum into fifth gear is awesome!

Ex.1



Ex.2



Ex.3



Ex.4



Ex.5



Ex.6



Ex.7



Ex.8





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

By Daniel Schnee

the Art of ACCOMPANYING MODERN DANCE

Part 1

One of the many ways the improvising woodwind player can improve their playing, both technically and conceptually, is through accompanying dancers in modern dance classes. Though pianists usually end up doing types of dance work that require rather faithful renditions of standard styles, we “breathing brethren” with our varieties of woodwind instruments get more free rein in the modern classes.

Working with dancers is especially beneficial for improvising musicians. Since the study and memorization of choreography is done in segments, one is usually required to improvise many short pieces over the length of a class, often using only the tempo and time signature required by the teacher as a cue. The type of movement required of the dancers will also dictate what kind of rhythmic energy is necessary from your music. Having these limits and demands placed on your performing requires disciplined, intuitive musicianship, which also benefits from instant feedback if the dancers either respond to the music physically or seem to be hindered by it. Sensitivity to others in music is always a good thing!

The networking possibilities are also excellent. True, most dancers and choreographers use recorded music due to its availability and their lack of funding to hire professional live musicians for both performances and the rehearsals leading up to them. Plus, why take a chance on live musicians when you can dance all day to Steven Reich’s “Six Pianos” and get the same timing and dynamics consistently?

On the other hand, most choreographer/dancers enjoy working with a live musician for its own inherent benefits whenever they can. Since most modern classes have a percussionist playing djembe, congas, and such, networking with them is a good way to enter

the world of dance accompaniment, meet the instructors they work with, and discover where you can fit in. Most universities and colleges have a dance department (usually next door to the music department), and quite often the drum students are hired to accompany the dance classes. Go to the head office of the dance department and inquire about accompanying the dance classes; they will usually direct you to the appropriate instructors. Meeting them and their accompanists will invariably lead you to some kind of opportunity to play.

Another benefit of this arrangement is that the opportunities to play are of a higher quality and potential than playing in various bars and restaurants for no pay. Every young musician goes through the “playing-for-free” stage in one form or another, but most never graduate from it, killing off a lot of opportunities for those who want to get paid. (Good) dance departments have a budget for accompanists for their ballet classes and some modern dance classes, so doing a couple of sit-ins with the paid accompanists provides you with a real chance at making an actual playing wage.

Now let’s say you’re asked to accompany a modern dance class, with or without a percussionist beside you. What does one do? The most important thing to begin with is the time signature. The class instructor has a clear idea of what he/she wants to teach and the time signature that such choreography requires. They will count off a series of numbers and your job is to play something that captures the necessary style and feel of the count off. If the dancers are clustering together and not moving dynamically, don’t play a march. If the dancers are doing a lot of things on the ground, don’t play “floating” music. Also, musical mimicry is usually not a good idea either. If a dancer wants to contrast the music with a different feel,

they won’t be able to escape your “shadowing” their moves. By paying attention to what the teacher says between dances, you will be able to discover what the dancers need in order to help them execute their movements properly.

In order to keep making pieces appropriate to the action, it is necessary to have a number of instrumental techniques at hand. Dancers in class have to create with rhythmic energy, so being comfortable with a number of different time signatures is an asset. One instructor had her students create spontaneous dances to a rhythmic cycle of 22 beats broken down into groups of 5, 3, and 2. In this case, merely creating rhythms would not have established the sense of flow needed for the dancers to move and transition comfortably from each segment, so the challenge was to play a legato melodic figure that emphasized smooth forward motion.

Another primary ingredient is the knowledge and judicious use of scales to create harmonic colour shifts when the dance requires an alteration of mood. Being able to comfortably shift from major to minor tonality is important, as well as from one kind of minor tonality to another. This is where studying the music of another culture can come in handy, especially traditional Arab or Persian music – both of which contain highly advanced, beautiful methods of modal modulation. This is where you can not only do your job, but also be an inspiration to the dancers.

Creating music with choreographers and dance artists is a particularly valuable activity, and I encourage you to look into such work for yourself. Canada is a treasure trove of dance and music. Why not work with both?



By Paul Baron

MUTE USE & INTONATION TENDENCIES

Part 1

The use of mutes in brass instruments gives us a large variety of tonal variation. The Big Band and Swing-era bands used a lot of different mutes and mute combinations for wonderful tonal effects that are still commonly used today. The five most common types are: straight, cup, Harmon, plunger, and solo tone or clear tone. Each has a distinct sound and timbre and often comes with its own set of intonation tendencies or problems.

I'll talk about the most common mutes, their uses, and tendencies first (straight and cup mutes in Part 1 of the article) and then talk about some of the more unique and obscure mutes in Part 2. The mutes mentioned above should be part of every trumpet player's arsenal since they are the most commonly called upon and written for. Depending on what job I'm playing, especially if it's a new group or a recording session where I have to be prepared for whatever the producer, arranger, or orchestrator wants, I might bring two different straight mutes, two cups, two Harmons, and one each of the solo tone and plunger mutes. Since there are different manufacturers and differing sounds within the same mute type, I want to be prepared to be able to blend with the other players in the section.

Straight Mute

The straight mute is often used for a military or march-type sound and in a lot of swing-era music. It can also be used to sound like a trumpet off in the distance. Its sound is characteristically brighter and has a sharper attack than the cup mute, and carries fairly well. Depending on the manufacturer, it will tend to play a little sharp, sometimes as much as 15-20 cents sharp. Knowing that, if you have the time to pull the tuning slide out and get it back in for the next un-muted section, it'll make it easier to focus and play in tune and you won't have to "lip down" to get it down to pitch.

There are different materials used for straight mutes. The "stone-lined" mutes are sort of hard condensed cardboard. It's good to have one of these to sound like an old time swing-era player. Most players use metal straight mutes in classical, jazz, and commercial settings. The three materials usually used for the mute bottoms are aluminum, brass, and copper. They are brightest-sounding when made with all aluminum and darkest with copper bottoms, with the brass being in the middle.

Cup Mute

The cup mute is a much mellower and quieter-sounding mute and is used more often in jazz settings, although its use in classical solo literature is more common in contemporary pieces. The traditional "stone-lined" cup is the most common and one that everyone should carry with them. There are adjustable cup mutes that many people use as well, so I also bring one of them to gigs in case it's needed. The adjustable mute has the ability to change the sound more depending on how close in or far out the cup is adjusted from the bell. The closer the cup is to touching the bell, the mellower and softer the sound gets. It also tends to go flatter as well. The further out the cup, the louder and brighter, and closer to a straight mute sound it gets.

In general, the cup mute tends to play progressively flatter ascending and as much as 25 cents above the staff. With the traditional "stone-lined" mute you want to evenly file down each of the corks so that there is about 1/8" of space between the points of the cup and the trumpet bell. This way there is enough cork to grip when it's gently twisted in the bell so that the points are nearly touching the bell. This gets the most traditional cup mute sound.

We'll go over the other types and their characteristics in Part 2.



Morgan Pottruff is a composer/sound designer at Ganz Studios, an instructor at Metalworks Institute, and has authored several top selling tutorial DVD's for ASK Video. www.askvideo.com.

By Morgan Pottruff

in the box, Looking out

Mixing completely "in the box" is a bit akin to alchemy: we've all heard of one hit track or another that they swear was mixed that way, yet the vast majority of people struggle to get past that digital "in the box" sound and wonder what pricey piece of analog gear might be the solution.

I'm not going to offer any "silver bullets" here (in truth there aren't any), but there've been a few innovations lately that can give your ITB mixes more of a "console-like" sound.



Acustica Nebula 3

Rather than a specific plug, it's a powerful plug-in "environment" dedicated to physically modeling a whole range of analog devices such as preamps, EQs, and consoles. There's a whole community of users online and third party providers providing emulations for Nebula. Put simply, it takes the concept of static impulses that's been in use with reverbs for some time, and blasts it into warp drive by allowing for a whole slew of complex variables (such as harmonics, distortion, phase, etc.) to affect the impulses dynamically. This is where the magic happens.

I have to admit I was skeptical, but I was instantly amazed the very first time I used it and threw its Neve 5088 console emulation on one of my mixes. It gave the whole mix a nice upper frequency "lift," tightened up the bottom end, and noticeably glued the mix together.

Now for the bad news... Even though they are on version 3, Nebula is still on the outer fringes of geekdom compared to other plug-ins out there. It doesn't have a user friendly GUI. It doesn't look like a piece of analog gear. There are numbers and parameters you won't recognize. You won't be able to use it correctly without reading the manual. Oh yeah, it's a CPU hog, too.

You just might want to use it everywhere on every bus and track, but unless your computer is insanely powerful, you probably won't be able to. That's the price of progress...

Mixing With Lower Levels

One of the hot topics I've seen in audio forums lately is the idea that people mix at levels that are far too hot, which usu-

ally results in a plug-in clipping somewhere. The consensus seems to be that analog gear likes to be driven; plug-ins do not. The 24-bit digital realm has tons of headroom and there's no need to use all of it to get a loud mix. Loudness comes from having a tight mix that can accept a lot of limiting, not by having loud levels in your DAW. Using Nebula actually requires you to have average levels of -18dBs on your master buss (which coincidentally is 0 VU on an analog mixer. Starting to get the picture?).



Sonimus Satson

This brings me to the latest thing, Sonimus Satson. In a nutshell, it attempts to get your DAW to behave like an analog console. It consists of two plug-ins – one for your channels and one for your master buss and/or group busses. You start by using the channel plug-in to calibrate each channel to 0 VU. Then, you are given some gentle low and high pass filters for your tracks to get rid of anything you don't need in your mix.

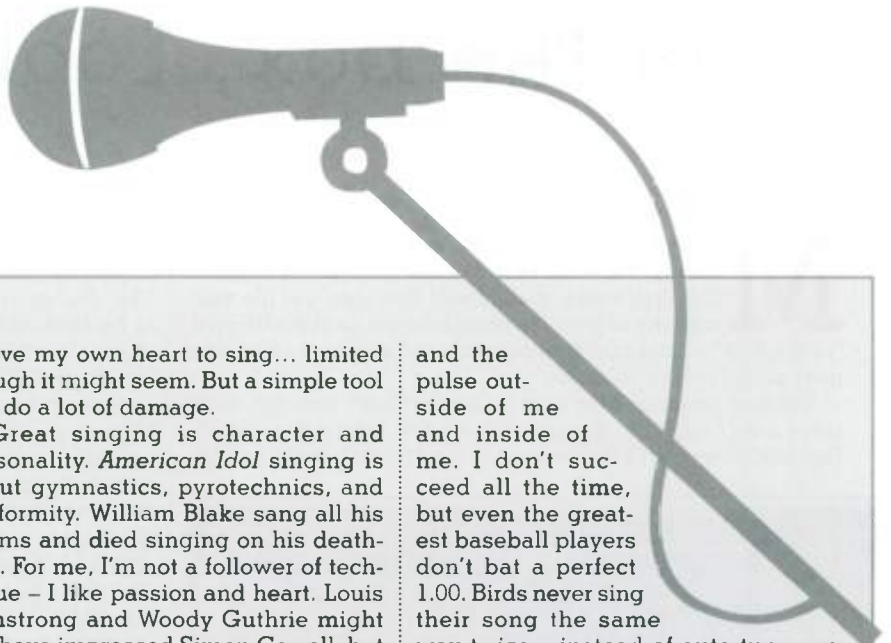
Here's the cool part though: as the needle approaches 0 VU and moves into the red, instead of digital clipping, you get simulated saturation! You can apply a little less or a little more to any given track. Meanwhile, on the master, the buss plug-in actually simulates cross talk for all the tracks that had the channel plug-in and provides the extra presence and glue one might expect from an analog console. It all works as a cohesive system, and if used with some restraint, can colour your mix in a good way.

Typically, the best ITB mixers have a long pedigree in the analog domain. Their ears are tuned to good sound and they practice the right fundamentals regardless of where they happen to be working, even if they work a little differently with plug-ins to arrive at the same place. Still, for everyone else mixing ITB, the analog experience leaves clues to help us improve.



By Kyp Harness

singing



I think it was a writer for a newspaper in Sudbury, ON who reviewed one of my albums thusly: "Kyp Harness and I have something in common – we both can't sing." Not surprisingly, I begged (and do beg) to differ – though I did get a laugh from the fellow's salvo (and even used it on a poster). I think the reviewer and I can both sing; how well is a subjective judgment. More to the point was a Toronto reviewer who said: "Harness, like Neil Young and David Byrne, has no voice but gets a kick out of singing his heart out anyway." Hey, I must have some kind of a voice if the guy can hear my heart sung out in it – and hearing a person's heart is always the only reason I listen to someone singing.

Just as all children draw pictures and somehow stop when they become adults and start drawing salaries, then drawing pensions, so all children sing from a vibration inside them that they somehow become deaf, or at least hard of hearing towards, as they get older. My voice is best when it's my voice. That is, not intimidated by fear or self-consciousness and not trying to be someone else's voice. Then I can see what it can do that is uniquely itself to carry the song. I sing because I write songs. I put the voice inside the song to live in it. My favourite singers? Sinatra, Billie Holliday, Garland, Howlin' Wolf, Dylan, Beatles. But I can't do like them and I'll never sing well if I stop believing

I have my own heart to sing... limited though it might seem. But a simple tool can do a lot of damage.

Great singing is character and personality. *American Idol* singing is about gymnastics, pyrotechnics, and conformity. William Blake sang all his poems and died singing on his deathbed. For me, I'm not a follower of technique – I like passion and heart. Louis Armstrong and Woody Guthrie might not have impressed Simon Cowell, but the kind of singing William Blake and Louis Armstrong did seems to me to be a lifetime excavation of the soul that also seems as effortless and beautiful as a raindrop going down the glass. I aspire to it though I can't aspire to it – I only go down my own chosen road, farther and farther. It's the kind of singing that draws on everything that happens when you're not singing, and then you realize there is no time when you're not singing – i.e., you're a tuning fork for the universe. I guess what I'm trying to say is that the feat is to become more and more myself (or for you, yourself) and less and less afraid of letting it fly. I don't have big range, so I concentrate on phrasing. I don't bowl 'em over with power, so I do subtlety. My voice ain't smooth, so I do ragged emotion. See?

But it's all a loss unless I'm doing me. Honesty, authenticity, reality – they won't come to me onstage if they're not present elsewhere. So I listen and try and hear the surging and the vibration

and the pulse outside of me and inside of me. I don't succeed all the time, but even the greatest baseball players don't bat a perfect 1.00. Birds never sing their song the same way twice – instead of auto-tune, we need soul retrieval. Singing is physical and spiritual and philosophical and should be fun. When you're singing, you're under oath: you got to tell the truth, or else you'll be held in contempt of music.

At one point, criticism from others made me think of all the things I wasn't – then I got turned around and started trying to do what I can with all I am. It's a long road but at least my foot's on it. There's no substitute for life experience – Billie Holliday did a record at the end of her life, *Lady In Satin*. Her voice was broken because of the hard times she knew and critics were harsh, but for jazz musicians in-the-know, it was an absolute masterpiece. They played it again and again. I learned from it to use what I had to go where I wanted.

The more I think about it, the more I think those reviewers are wrong; we can all sing and we all got a voice, and the sooner we realize that, the sooner we can get on with it.

THOROUGHBREDS



IronHorse Head shown with DHX212 Cabinet

DarkHorse Head shown with DHX12 Cabinet

IRONHORSE

- 40-Watt All Tube Compact Head
- Operates in Fixed Bias or Cathode Bias Mode
- Simple Gain, Bass, Treble, Master Controls
- Three Stage Clean/Pure/Solo Mode Switch
- Hand Selected 12AU7 (x 1), 12AX7 (x2) and EL34 (x2) Tubes
- Series Effects Loop
- Selectable 4 & 8 ohm Outputs for Varying Cabinet Configurations
- Accepts Optional Two Button foot switch
- All Metal Chassis
- Made in Canada

DARKHORSE

- 15-Watt All Tube Lunch-Box Head
- Operates in full Power (6V6) Mode or Low Power 2-watt (12AU7) Mode
- Simple Gain, Bass, Treble & Master Volume Control Set
- Brit / USA / Pure Switch for the Tone Stack
- Uses Hand Selected 12AX7 (x2), 6V6 (x2), and 12AU7 (x1) tubes
- Versatile Speaker Outputs
(allows Dark Horse Head to drive Varying Cabinet Configurations)
- All Metal Chassis
- Made in Canada



QUARTERHORSE

- 25-Watt Two-Channel Guitar Amp in a Compact Stompbox Format
- On-Board Digital Effects (Tape Echo, Tremolo & Reverb)
- Standard 1/4-Inch Speaker Output Jack Direct Connects to Cabinet
- 1/8-Inch TRS Headphone Jack with Speaker Simulation (*Doubles as Line Out*)
- Rugged Die Cast Enclosure
- Made In Canada

WARNING! This is NOT a Stompbox - It's a 25-Watt Microamp!

Traynor

Visit www.traynoramps.com for more information on the DarkHorse or any Traynor product.
Distributed in North America by Yorkville Sound



JAZZ
FESTIVAL

JU

JUL
BLACK

Passion, Power & Perseverance

By Andrew King

Jully Black should be an international celebrity.

Throughout her 16 years of navigating the odd landscape that is the Canadian music industry, the Toronto-born R&B soulstress has collaborated on tracks with the likes of Nas, Missy Elliott, and Destiny's Child and shared the stage with mammoth draws like Jay Z, 50 Cent, and the Black Eyed Peas, though in the latter category, her name is never the same size on the billboard.

It's certainly not for a lack of skill or smarts. If the impressive but far-from-comprehensive list of aforementioned artists isn't telling enough of her talents, simply spin one of her singles like "Sweat Of Your Brow" or "Seven Day Fool" and you'll hear one of our country's most prized voices on a track that wouldn't be out of place on HOT 97. She's a celebrity reporter for CTV's *eTalk* and her charm and charisma have landed her countless other high-profile public or televised appearances.

There's no question that Black, born Jullyann Gordon, is amidst a successful career – especially for a Canadian artist – though her current success belies both her abilities and ambition.

But Black doesn't like to dwell on the hypothetical; she's as real as they come, and plans to continue carving her niche in her home country for as long as it takes to make her dreams a reality.

(B)light is Black's fourth full-length, produced in tandem with longtime collaborator YoungPete Alexander and other members of what Black calls her "revolving family" of performers and producers. The album, released in September 2011, finds Black showcasing her signature range and dynamics while sharing her ever-encouraging and uplifting lyrical themes, though some new elements have been added in this time around.

"We always loved the drums, so the album is very percussive" shares the singer about her latest effort – a trait she attributes to her and YoungPete's shared Caribbean heritage. "A lot of songs even have a tribal type of feel to them, without going all the way there." That underlying foundation makes the music totally movable, and making a "record you can dance to" was one of team Black's priorities. Says the artist: "It's very important that you be able to move to my music, even if you're not a *So You Think You Can Dance* contestant."

While Black and YoungPete were the core of the album's composition, halfway through its construction, the pair started working with Jamaican-born, Toronto-bred choreographer and artistic director Luther Brown – perhaps best known for his appearances on *So You Think You Can Dance Canada*. "We've been friends since the third grade, and he's a songwriter as well," says Black of her friend and newfound creative fuel. "Coming together for this, though, was pure serendipity."

The initial fruit of their union was Brown's input on the mostly completed track "Can You Feel It," which the

choreographer felt would benefit from its own signature dance. From there, the trio, dubbed The Officials, wrote four new songs (half of the album, as its title implies) to replace four others previously set to appear.

YoungPete is also Black's touring drummer, and has been for the past four years. Joining him on the album from the singer's rotating family of musicians are guitarist Andrew Thompson and longtime backup vocalist D.Shon Henderson. The horns on tracks including "Rebound" were performed by trumpeter Steve Dyte and saxophonist Trent Reschny. "I'll always call them. Even if I'm in Amsterdam, I'll fly them there. They're the best," says Black of the pair she's lovingly dubbed her "weapons of brass destruction."



Live drummer & producer YoungPete Alexander

"We're a family," says Black of her band and crew. "It's very important for YoungPete and I to incorporate the people who are on this journey with us into what we do." And the bonds of that "family" seem pretty close to blood. Adrian Porter, for example, is often onstage programming Black's live shows, though more recently he's been occupying the same role for artists like Lil Wayne, Drake, and Keri Hilson. "It doesn't matter how far up the ladder he's gone; he'll always be my programmer," says Black, whose current show has been programmed by Porter. For the singer, it's all about projection and reflection. "You project the positivity – you ask the people you know are down with the movement, and they give it back. Back and forth."

In keeping with Black's seemingly ever-present optimism, the overall lyrical theme of *(8)light* is, as the singer so simply puts it: "Love – especially self-love." The album is fairly short – comprising only eight tracks with a running time akin to that of a sitcom – but Black is sure that it will nonetheless engulf listeners: "You're going to be dancing to this record, and it'll make you feel good."

But it's still hip-hop and it's still grungy, so a lot of that optimism is laced in, tucked underneath the beats and rhythms – "so while you're dancing to 'Pushin', it might take awhile before it reveals itself as a love song," says Black.

"Exposed" focuses on the concept of transparency and self-revelation. "I've been talking a lot lately about the power that's in transparency," divulges Black. "A lot of people are afraid to put themselves out there, but that's really when and how you grow."

On the topic of personal growth, the track "Crown Me" features guest vocals from young singer Savannah Re, who Black mentors as part of an at-risk youth program based in the GTA called The Remix Program. "I figured, there was nobody before me to give me an opportunity like this in my genre in Canada, so why not have her on

this track?" The song encourages people to "get up on their thrones and take a seat," an anthem of ambition and empowerment – two concepts for which Black could be one of Canada's key ambassadors.

"I was raised by a single mother and knew at a very young age that my ambition and how I conduct myself would not only be indicative of me, but how I was raised," shares Black about her background. "That umbrella has always been over my head: 'You're a woman; know how you're dressing, how you're speaking, how you're sitting.' It's had a profound effect on me."

The title of role model is one bestowed upon her quite regularly, and Black, as humble as she is, fully embraces it. "It doesn't feel like a responsibility anymore; it's second nature," she says. It stems from being comfortable in your own skin, embracing who you are as an individual and sharing your whole self with others. It's an agreeable assertion, though one Black admits to have learned the hard way.

"I did a show for Pride Toronto last year and wore these shorts that I knew I wasn't comfortable wearing," she says with an audible cringe. "They were just too short, but I did the whole show in them anyway. For me to set an example for girls looking up to me, I should've just put on leotards. Simple. Because when I'm comfortable, I'm confident, but I didn't perform to my fullest abilities because I wasn't comfortable."

The essence of that example, the artist muses, can be applied across the board. "If you're going into a business meeting

and you're not comfortable in your own skin or not fully aware of your environment, you won't present yourself properly. I live by that mandate now – make sure I'm always being authentic. Love me or hate me, I'm going to be authentic."

And authentic she is, even when faced with more serious and delicate topics. For example, does it frustrate Black that after all she's accomplished – both for herself and her peers in the genre for which she's a key trailblazer – she still hasn't received the recognition of so many of her US-based contemporaries and collaborators? It used to. A lot. "I'd be lying to say it didn't," she admits, "but I had to check myself. Complain? Life is not that bad."

What's helped her overcome the disconcertion – even over the last six months – was being able to look at successful artists like Beyoncé and get to know them from a distance. "If there's a DVD, I'll buy it; if there's a special, I'll set my PVR. I've gotten rid of those jealousies just being able to admire the drive behind these successful artists and adopting it myself." She's using that insight she obtains to propel her forward towards

her goals. "O2 Arena? Air Canada Centre three nights sold out? It's happening. I just have to keep going."

Black is in a fairly unique situation in that progress she makes in her career is oftentimes parallel to progress made by the genre as a whole because she, in several senses, is the flag bearer for Canadian hip-hop and R&B. So how does she feel about the scene she's worked so hard to cultivate? "I'm optimistic, but we need a push. We could be self-sustaining."

Part of what's hindering the development of the genre is in many cases

institutionalized – not the malice or ill-will of any individual or group. "I used to feel guilty thinking this, but as my mentor tells me, it's just fact," begins Black. "It's a fact that in 40 years, we've had one bi-racial host of the JUNOs. 40 years. You call a spade a spade."

It's what the artist calls "simple demographics" – many of the individuals making decisions that affect the industry have been making them for years; however, their children and grand children are living in a time of increased diversity and acceptance. "They don't see colour or even genre; they just love music," says the singer of the current generation of music fans. "They can listen to a goth



Backstage with backup vocalist D. Shon Henderson



Greeting fans before hitting the stage

song, and then a Jully Black song. A lot of people in decision-making positions don't seem to see that. Those of us that recognize it, though, just have to persevere."

Canadian audiences are always quick to claim their exports as their own, though it's usually after they've been recognized and celebrated elsewhere. It's not just musicians – comedians, film actors, athletes; so many have had to develop their crafts outside of their country. According to Black, that has to change. "Whether you're a comedian, singer-songwriter, whatever – look at what we're exporting. If we could celebrate these accomplishments among the 34 million of us here first, we could be self sustaining. I'm fighting to bridge that gap."



Black & her band onstage at the Downtown Waterloo Jazz Festival

#positivity

Like many Canadian artists, Jully Black has taken to social media to bridge the figurative gap that exists between artist and fan. Her Twitter page, for example, is updated several times daily by the singer herself, most frequently with posts directed at specific fans or with universal messages of uplifting positivity and encouragement. Have a look at Twitter done right:

JullyBlack
"When I feel the heat I remember diamonds are made outta pressure" – Crown me Ft. @SavannahReMusic
#(8)IGHT
18 Jul

JullyBlack
Love you more! *hugz*RT @freshcoastify: @JullyBlack - U are an inspiration. I love U! 3
17 Jul

JullyBlack
You are so right! Thanks for this reminder. RT @jeanettejenkins: In a state of appreciation all good things will flow to you.
10 Jul

JullyBlack
Thx for the love! So happy you enjoyed the show!
@iLuLuOnline: @JullyBlack's set was AHmazing!!! She left EVERYTHANG on the stage!!
9 Jul

Still, despite some minor hardships, Black isn't going anywhere. She's extremely proud to be Canadian, and if staying here means she has to work a little harder to get where she wants to be, so be it. Hard work yields ample rewards. After all, says the artist, "This is my home. Why should I run away with my art? I was able to build this and groom it right here in Canada, so I feel okay that I'm giving it 100 per cent."

Though she's already fostered plenty of change, she continues to do so and on a number of levels. While her many TV and onstage appearances give her a direct line of communication with the masses, she also operates on a grassroots level, bridging the figurative gap existing between the artist and her adorers.

The Internet hasn't been totally kind to Black. Her 2005 single "Sweat Of Your Brow" was reportedly illegally downloaded 2.5 million times while Black struggled to sell 15,000 copies of the album that contained it. It's an unfortunate reality, but instead of fighting it, Black and her camp are trying to harness that power for their own benefit.

"What happened in the past is a blessing," says Black. "It helped us realize there were two-and-a-half million somebodies that wanted the song. That same summer, I toured with the Black Eyed Peas. That same summer, eTalk saw me and picked me up. If we'd dwelled on 'illegal downloading, we would've been distracted from the blessings flowing our way."

Prior to the release of (8)ight, Black's camp released the track "Zodiac Drug" as a free download for fans, with several others to follow in exchange for e-mail addresses for her mailing list

or social network posts. Once they've heard the music, they're then more inclined to buy into Jully Black as an artist, and will maybe go out and see a show.

"For artists like me, it's about getting on the road," says Black emphatically. "If I give these people an experience, then they'll run to the merch table. That's the business I'm in. The live experience can't be replaced with a computer. It doesn't matter how many online streams you want to watch; nothing beats being there and seeing the beads of sweat on, say, Tina Turner's lip. Nothing."

She and her team have taken strongly to social networking sites. There's been a learning curve, no doubt, but it's one that's easily overcome so long as you're being true to yourself. "If you can just be real about it, things become really easy," Black believes. "There are so many platforms, so it can become like a science experiment, but it's been a lot of fun."

For the rest of 2011 and leading into the new year, Black will be on the road, hitting "every corner, every crack, and every crevice" of this country. "I'm 100 per cent committed to being an artist and a storyteller," she says with an obvious ambition. "I want people to not only see me, but to hear me and feel me."

Though her goal is to reach the entire world, she's starting with Canada, trying to have everyone's hearts beating to the same rhythm – maybe even those found on (8)ight. Though despite her hopes for the future, Black is living in the present, and excited by what it's bringing her.

"Do you know how proud it makes me to be in *Canadian Musician* magazine?" she asks rhetorically. "I'm the youngest of nine kids and the only one born in Canada. My mother chose Canada in 1968. She sacrificed so much, working for \$1.65 an hour, and right at this moment, I'm reminded that it wasn't in vain."

But the reality is that a few pages of ink are only a fraction of the attention she deserves – and a fraction of the attention she herself has drawn to urban music in Canada. But even without that deserved gratification, you can be sure Jully Black will continue sweating it out in the studio, on stage, and in the community, working hard for her family, her fans, and herself. ■



Andrew King is the Editor of *Canadian Musician*.

By Chris Gallant



Surfing the crowd at a stop on the annual Vans WARPED Tour.

It takes more than a swipe of your debit card to send that million-dollar hit to the masses. After all of the recording sessions, promotional expenses, and pit stops on tour, the only break you get to look forward to is that guitar malfunction. An oft-applied method of relieving some financial hardship in this industry is to acquire an endorsement deal. In a nutshell, you get easier access to your favorite products and services in exchange for some form of advertising to the supplier.

Everybody knows that celebrities help sell stuff. Television commercials are nearly plagued with appearances from actors and athletes confessing their love for some kind of a sports car or cold medicine, and the viewers aren't ignorant to the rewards paid out for these cameos.

Musicians, however, often enter the world of sponsorships from a different angle. In the time leading up to their chart-topping success they can be found spending their last penny on that piece of gear, signature outfit, or stage prop that allows them to charge on and break new ground in this industry. Though they effectively mean the same thing, the music industry tends to prefer the word "endorsement" to "sponsorship," something that hints to a feeling of support and passion rather than charity or corporate image. Musicians are quite vocal about the brands they trust, whether they partner with them or not; you won't usually find an actor tweeting about their favorite toothpaste or eye cream without some hidden motivator.

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

It's pretty clear how an artist benefits from an endorsement, but there are more lenses to use from the manufacturer's standpoint. "The feedback that we get from players using our pedals helps us refine what we do and improve our products," says Aimish Wallace, Director of Operations at Diamond Pedals. Fans of bands become fans of the

brands they use and this Nova Scotia-based company has attributed a lot of its sales to its association with Buddy Miller (Band of Joy/ Emmylou Harris). "He's known as a real 'tone guy' and I think the people that are aware of that look pretty closely at the stuff he's using to achieve his sounds."

When you're looking to get free gear you'll probably think you have to be famous. SABIAN Cymbals' Sales and Artist Relations Manager, Terry Ryan, describes it as visibility. Drummers like Daniel Adair of Nickelback and Neil Sanderson of Three Days Grace are keeping brand recognition alive when they

THE PAIRING

beat their splashes and crashes in front of thousands of fans every night.

That being said, Ryan also thinks it's very important to foster the relationship at an early stage when you find the right act. "Artists tend to need you more when they have no money," he says, outlining the importance of fostering loyalty in order to keep your advertising economical. "You hope they elevate their career." Assuming they do, a band that becomes an international success will prove a worthy investment for any endorser. "If you're in Spain and Rush performs, our logo is the same... It gets us a wider visibility at a minimum cost."

Ask Fred DiSanto of Godin Guitars what matters most and he'll say: "Heart! All of our artists have played a Godin even before we were aware of it." The company's artist program is a vital part of its success as a manufacturer and goes hand-in-hand with media coverage and a great dealer network.

Rarely do reps like Wallace, Ryan, or DiSanto find themselves scouting for new artists when they get so many sponsorship requests from bands all over the country,



@JULLYBLACK
jullyblack.com

NEW ALBUM

8IGHT

FALL 2011



Jully Black

Photo: Koby



WE ARE **MUSIC**



YAMAHA

ca.yamaha.com

World Radio History



Amos The Transparent

Every band with a good business plan should be able to demonstrate growth and profile, two key items that will open the gates to discounts and free wares. Drop a few hints about your goals for the next year and how they can involve the company. Be realistic: It's hard to believe that a band drawing 50 people a week is going to be playing Glastonbury. (Not to say it's impossible.) Useful items including how long you've been together and where you're at in your discography would help as well. While your website and press releases should be available to them, you still want to make it easy to digest a fractional but punchy slice of what you're all about so that they are inclined to research you further.

Stress your mandate. What is so special about you? There are some companies who are going to want to jump on the "next big thing" while some might feel safer about working with an artist who is fairly homogenous. Align yourself properly. Do your research and try to get a feel for what they look for and understand if it matches what you do.

Probably the most important aspect of your pitch should be your love for what they provide. Have you actually been using their stuff or are you just excited at the idea of someone helping you out? Here's a test: What was the next thing you were going to purchase before hitting the road or playing that showcase? What do you need to replace? Is there something you can't perform without? Find out who makes it – that's the company you should be targeting. The best position you can put yourself in is to approach someone who could give you a discount on something you were going to buy regardless of the deal. If the deal doesn't happen, you didn't lose anything by trying. If they take a pass on you, thank them for their consideration and, if you're still interested,

touch base after you've developed your career some more. Building that relationship is more important than any material help.

Be sure to keep yourself in check and mull over the reasons why you're looking for an endorsement. You can get caught up in the very idea of it and start to lose sight on the bigger picture. As cool as it could be, the sponsorship should be nothing more than another tool in your business plan. The last thing you want to do is start measuring your success by how many brands are backing you up. You're an artist, not a stock car.

While it's easy to talk about instruments when you're on the topic of endorsements, there is a wealth of products out there you use night after night that could make your life easier. Basically anything that you can pay for has some kind of markup. Fortunately for you, this markup translates into a margin of sponsorship. With ever-evolving trends and fads, clothing is one of the bigger expenses you will face as an artist. You present yourself to people in photos, onstage, and at conferences, so you have to look your best within the parameters of your genre's norms (unless you want to shatter those standards).

Pop-rockers Neverest – who've recently come off a tour with New Kids On The Block and the Backstreet Boys – aligned themselves with PF Flyers and Lucky Brand Jeans in order combat the war



Samantha Pickard



SABIAN's Terry Ryan

with laundry while on the road. "Clothes are definitely at the top of the list, especially when touring," says lead singer Spee Chalkiotis. "The wear and tear of a tour is unbelievable." Chalkiotis would like to drum up more lifestyle-oriented sponsorships with beverage companies, car companies, or cell phone providers to further cut down on daily expenses. "Everyone has needs."

Neverest have been very happy with the relationships built with the brands they love. One thing Chalkiotis has noticed is the room for opportunity an endorsement can open up

including subject matter for the red carpet, invites to perform at corporate events, and in-store concerts. "That not only brings business into the store, but we get exposure." The discounts and free wares are only the beginning. "Don't be afraid to start small and build on that relationship. Think outside the box." And while he recognizes the need to promote the products used by Neverest, the singer couldn't be happier to help. "We're basically 'walking billboards,' but we definitely look forward to that."

If you've got the goods but lack the ability to negotiate a deal with your target sponsor, you may want to enlist the help of someone like Samantha Pickard, VP of PR firm Strut Entertainment. 3 Street Management gave Pickard the responsibility of hooking Neverest up with threads so that their resources could be better spent promoting and booking the act instead of dressing



PHOTO: BIJO FRANKLIN

NEVEREST

OF ARTIST & BRAND

but it can happen. When it does, the terms of the relationship are quite varied. Dan Hay, guitarist of Amos The Transparent, cites how his deals with Empress Pedals and Wicked Guitars came together: "When [we] started touring more and playing some bigger shows, they asked me if I'd like to use some of their gear on stage." While working with these suppliers, Hay can happily play whatever piece of equipment he likes on stage.

"It's a case-by-case thing and we always make sure that the company understands our desire to expose a product that we love in a very organic way. We don't wish to become sales people...we are here to help spread the word."

Holding a global perspective has allowed Vans to give back to those in need. An effort between the shoe company and Pearl Jam bassist Jeff Ament will see the proceeds from a signature sneaker help build a skate park on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota – a community with a tragic past and high rates of poverty. Overholser says that working with musicians has opened doors to these types of opportunities and is a very important bi-product of endorsement. "We want people to wear Vans because they care about what we're doing."

"They're pretty easy going about my obligations. Unlike other companies, Wicked doesn't require me to only use their guitars... same with Empress." Amos The Transparent's latest album features many tones shaped by his Empress pedals, including one that sounds like "a backwards spaceship."

Being on the roster for a gear company comes with other perks than discounts and promotional outlets. Occasionally you'll be privy to new products or services. Stinco explains: "We have access to some special tweaks that are not necessarily useful or available to the general public but help us out on the road."

Advertising requirements are usually a big concern for somebody considering an endorsement deal – everything comes at a price, right? Simple Plan guitarist Jeff Stinco says it's circumstantial but it can happen: When they weren't busy recording, touring, and releasing their latest album, *Get Your Heart On!*, they were doing ads for manufacturers like Sennheiser, DiMarzio, T-Rex, Mesa Boogie, and Fender.

The other issue you might face with an endorsement is your ability to continue using the other brands you enjoy. Vans – well known in the music industry for their annual Warped Tour – expect a certain degree of exclusivity from their athletes but like to keep things more organic with their artist roster. Chris Overholser, Senior Marketing Manager for the company, says: "One of our main tenants is to support creativity. By being heavily involved in music we get to be front and centre."

MAKE IT HAPPEN
Getting endorsed is not like winning the lottery. Artists that have a plan and know how to pitch themselves make for perfect candidates. If you've been booking your own shows and handling the publicity for your act, the pitching part should come fairly naturally. If you lack that experience, the best way to gain it is to dive in and learn to talk the talk.

You would speak differently to a music programmer at a radio station than you would a talent booker. The same can be said for gear companies. What needs to sit at the core of any pitch, however, is the mutual benefit attained by both parties involved in a prospective deal.

You need to demonstrate how your supplier is going to increase sales by offering you easier access to whatever it is you're asking of them. If you've never toured, don't have an album, or you're playing one show a month at the local watering hole, you may want to reconsider the request. Tell them how many people you usually play to or which well-known artists you've shared the stage with. Anything impressive is going to show that opportunities come your way – opportunities that will come their way should their logo be somewhere onstage. Remember: They're running a business, but so are you.



PHOTO: CHAPMAN

SIMPLE PLAN

[continued...]

them. "They're sweating through clothes on a nightly basis," she says. "It's very important to be saving that kind of money." Seeing an opportunity to help the band stay on budget while looking good, she demonstrated to companies like PF Flyers how they could benefit from having a high-traffic, well-received group showcasing their line in the public eye. "Brands with less money to spend are looking at more grass roots partnerships." She built a win-win situation for the client to digest and the deal was born.

Atypical Clothing, a relatively new apparel maker run by co-owners Logan Traynor and Matt Gardner, has been relying on the help of up-and-coming Canadian bands like The Artist Life and Victory Sweet Victory to spread hype about their designs. Without the ability to launch a multi-million dollar advertising campaign, the boys worked on the niche they were carving out and sent t-shirts to some of the bands they wanted to work with. Traynor thought the collaboration would benefit everyone involved: "It's really hard to start out as an independent brand. The bands really help us grow."

Those who accepted were usually so excited to represent the brand that they would immediately do photo shoots and post the pictures online for the fans to see. Atypical Clothing doesn't feel the need to outline any promotional expectations with their artists because of how important it is to maintain this level of excitement with them. "You can't get better than people on the Internet wearing your shirt," observes Gardner.



Matthew Gardner & Logan Traynor
of Atypical Clothing

"A lot of bands wear their clothing sponsorships as a badge of honour."

Once you've secured and nurtured one sponsorship, the rest are easier to come by. "Once you've built one positive brand relationship, you can leverage that in other categories," advises Pickard. For those companies who have formal endorsement applications, you'll often notice they ask for a list of other companies who are working with you already. This will not only demonstrate that people want to endorse you, but it also shows them whether you are picking products that match your lifestyle or if you're just being whimsical.

Ryan at SABIAN also thinks it's a good spot to determine if there is a conflict of interest between brands: "There's kind of an unwritten rule in the industry where you don't go out trying to steal people from other companies."

You have to wear a lot of different hats in order to further your career in this industry. Convincing someone to give you things for free or on the cheap can be tough, especially if it's too early in the game for you, but recognizing when an opportunity presents itself and how to capitalize on it is paramount.

If all else fails, you can always redeem your Air Miles. ■

Chris Gallant is a singer-songwriter and touring musician from PEI who likes to write about the things he wished he knew before entering "The Industry." He can be reached at chris.s.gallant@gmail.com.



Fred DiSanto of Godin Guitars



Diamond Pedals' Aimish Wallace

Quick Spots

HERE ARE SOME WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THOSE IN-THE-KNOW:

Do Your Research

"You've got to have a very solid plan and go up to brands that are going to reflect your lifestyle."

— Samantha Pickard of Strut Entertainment

Read The Fine Print

"Know the terms of the deal and honour that commitment with the brand."

— Spee Chalkiotis of Neverest

Don't Take Just Anything

If you're going to accept an endorsement, make sure it's something you actually want to use and a company you stand behind."

— Dan Hay of Amos The Transparent

You Are What You Use

"Do these things with integrity and remember that the people who will see you play or wear certain things will associate these items with who you are as an artist. It's important to be honest with your public."

— Jeff Stinco of Simple Plan

MIC CHECK

Has one of your shows (or a show you've seen) ever been ruined by a poor sound mix/technician?

Absolutely - 77.5%
Not that I know of - 15.0%
No answer/Not completed - 7.5%

If you had the option of bringing a veteran sound engineer on your first national tour, but had to cut him/her in as a member of the band, financially speaking, would you take the opportunity?

For sure - 22.5%
Probably - 35.0%
I don't know - 17.5%
Probably not - 12.5%
No way - 7.5%
No answer/Not completed - 5.0%

Do you bring any of your own audio-specific gear (mics, DIs, headphones, etc.) to gigs even when a PA is provided?

Yes - 67.5%
Sometimes - 22.5%
No - 5.0%
No answer/Not completed - 5.0%

Do you consider yourself knowledgeable about live audio and the way you sound onstage, or do you leave that up to the designated sound person?

I know the game pretty well & can offer detailed feedback - 45.0%
I know a bit & will speak up if necessary - 42.5%
I know a bit, but not enough to take an active interest - 5.0%
I don't know much about it & leave it to the sound person - 5.0%
No answer/Not completed - 2.5%

If you own your own sound reinforcement equipment (mics, speakers, cables, etc.), which of the following is most important to you in terms of what you purchase?

Price - 7.50%
Durability/lifespan - 52.50%
Portability - 20.0%
Popularity - 0.0%
No answer/Not completed - 20.0%

1-2, 1-2

LIVE SOUND 2011

I remember reading music and sound magazines as a kid, picking them apart with a fine-toothed comb trying to find that one trick that would turn my career around – that one bit that I could use on my next tour to impress the band that hired me. But let's face it: there is no one secret that will make you mix better overnight.

I could go page after page of details and specs, math, and problems, but professional mixes come from years of hard work and dedication. The real trick with this piece is to make you think.

If I get only one point across, it would be that good audio technicians are people who have spent years studying the relevant technology and theory to learn how to become efficient problem solvers. You'll need to develop a strong heart, and sharp mind, to become a good audio tech.

From the biggest festivals to the smallest club gigs, there are certain factors that will remain constant throughout your entire career. You'll run into the same scenarios time and time again and will need to acquire the proper information to solve and prevent common mistakes. The people who make it are the people who took the time to understand what was going on around them. Music may not be rocket science, but if you want to impress, or you just want tonight's show to go smoothly, it doesn't hurt to have a basic understanding of what's going on.

LOAD-IN

The first step on any gig day is walking into the venue and assessing your situation. Regardless of your title or role in a show, what you do will affect other people around you and their ability to do their job. For any-sized event, there will be someone in charge of making decisions that will affect how the show will run as a whole. It's crucial to have everyone involved on the same page.

Worlds will collide and people's gear will get in the way of other people's gear. From the moment you walk onto a concert site, you have to be thinking about the most efficient way to load your equipment, how to avoid conflicting use of space, how to make it run at peak efficiency, and how to get it out with the most ease – all using the least amount of man hours. These details will not just take care of themselves, so address them as early on as possible to avoid any confusion closer to or during the show.

Look at the size of the room and make educated choices as to where and how to set up. Think about where the band is playing in relation to the audience. How much room do you have onstage for your backline and monitor rig? Finally, how much PA do you need and where should it go? Hockey arenas have an abundance of space on and off stage; the same can't often be said about a dingy rock club; therefore it is extremely important to make wise decisions on where and how you set up your band and your PA.

BY MARK DESLOGES

POWER TRIP

Everyone's gear needs power – the band, the PA, the lighting... Knowing that everyone will need it, and knowing that electricity can be extremely dangerous, it's prudent to study up on it, even just a little. A lack of understanding of or respect for electricity goes along with countless horror stories – from blown amplifiers to electrocution. Your best bet is to do your research. Volts, amps, watts, ohms – learn what they are and how they can come into play.

Source-out where onsite power is available and how much you can draw. This will tell you how much cable you will need and how much equipment you can safely run without tripping any breakers. On that note, it is important that while assessing your power you familiarize yourself with which breakers are attached to the circuits you are using. If you trip a breaker mid-show, the

BREAKER BREAKDOWN

Say you have a guitar amp that draws 200 watts. If you divide that 200 watts by your standard 120-volt circuit, you'll be drawing 1.67 amps out of a possible 15 on a typical 120-volt circuit.

The same equation applies to speakers and power amplifiers. If you have a 1,000-watt speaker amplifier, by dividing 1,000 watts by 120 volts, you will find that it will draw 8.3 amps. If you wanted to put two of those 1,000-watt amplifiers on one 15-amp circuit, think again – two 1,000-watt speaker amplifiers will draw a combined 16.6 amps, and if run at full power, will trip the breaker of a 15 amp circuit.

Even worse is when you have two 750-watt powered speakers plugged into one outlet, drawing a combined 12.5 amps, and a band decides to plug some equipment into the same circuit. All of a sudden the room goes quiet because the overloaded circuit has tripped its breaker and the juice is cut off.

This is why it is important to dedicate circuits to certain components. If you don't know the draw of a particular circuit or what's attached to it, ask somebody before just plugging something in.

last thing anybody wants is to see you running around trying to find where the breaker panel is. To avoid problems, know how much electricity your equipment is going to draw and how many circuits you will need to properly run it. By using Ohm's law, you can calculate how many amps your equipment will require, which is the determining factor in discovering how many circuits you will need to run your system.

PA-RTY

Most shows are run on a budget – often a tight one. The harsh realities of small-budget shows are small-budget systems, so learn to make the best of what you're provided. That, my friends, is the secret to becoming a truly talented audio tech. The trick will be setting up the system in a way that will achieve its maximum output potential with the least amount of headaches or stress.

Let's say, for example, that the venue in question has provided two self-powered 750-watt mid-high speakers (tops) and two 1,000-watt self-powered low frequency drivers (subs) as a PA to fill a room that holds 300 people. Not a big system; however, with proper alignment and tuning, you can achieve the best possible results and walk out sounding good.

The first concern is speaker placement. An old trick I've used for years while building small PAs in box-shaped rooms, is to calculate the best way to get subs to evenly cover in a given room.

The method I use is to take a room's width, divide it by four, and place the subs one-quarter of the venue's width away from the left and right walls, leaving half of the venue's remaining width between the two stacks.

The advantage of this method is a fairly even spread of bass across the entire room with minimal sound cancellation, resulting in a higher SPL (sound pressure level). Based on the way the subs couple, you will achieve a bass boost going down the middle of the crowd and a build-up at the edges of the room, so keep this in mind later when choosing your FOH mix position.

The second part of the trick is placing the mid-high speakers directly above the subs, preferably on the factory-made poles that link the subs and tops together to try to place the speakers in phase of each other, thus preventing odd time delays or phase cancellation that would decrease the SPL and colour the sound of the PA as a whole.

The last piece of the puzzle is to determine the angle of coverage that the mid-highs produce and tilt them slightly inwards towards each other, pointed to the centre of the crowd. This will not only benefit those front-and-centre; it will keep excess sound waves from bouncing off the sides of the walls, which causes noise cancellation.

Another method more commonly used at larger shows is pointing mid-highs straight out with the subs and placing

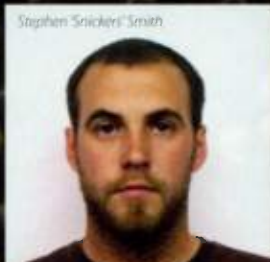
smaller speakers on the stage to fill out the mid-high frequencies for the front-and-centre. These smaller speakers are called front-fills. You can even go so far as to add more speakers to the sides of the main mid-highs to fill out the sound for the people sitting to the far sides of the stage. These are called out-fills. Going even further, for larger shows, you can have speakers further back among the crowd that are time-aligned to the main speakers called delays. With all these options available, you need to keep your system under control. More speakers doesn't always mean better sound, but it always means more thought and tuning, so plan your system carefully.

The next step is setting up your front-of-house mix position. It's ideal to be in the centre of the room at 75 per cent of the depth of the venue back from the stage; however, you are not always that lucky. It's best to stay away from walls and balconies where you will be surrounded by bass traps and your perception of what the PA actually sounds like will be skewed.

Once you're set-up and ready to mix, listen to your PA. Just because you set it up the way you usually do doesn't mean it'll sound that way. Start by playing noise and confirming that every speaker is outputting the way it should. The next step is to listen to reference music. This is a high-quality song or musical piece (not an MP3, preferably) that you know extremely well and have heard on several systems. Does it sound the way it's supposed to? Is it lacking bass? Or is there a crunchy sound in the high-frequency range? By using either a processing unit, graphic EQ, or both, you will be able to adjust the sound of the PA as a whole. Science is able to help you cheat and cut corners, but the real trick is listening with your ears and learning how to tell the difference between a frequency that needs to be brought out and exposed, and one that is causing feedback and needs to be crushed.

Now assemble and test your monitor rig. The most typical monitor set-up is stage wedges. Before any show, these will need to be checked and tested the same way you would test the PA. Play noise to confirm they are operating properly, and then play some music through them to see how they sound. Once you've confirmed that the monitors are suitable, set-up a vocal mic and speak into it. See how it sounds, and how loud you can push it until it feeds back. Find which frequency rings first, then use an EQ to bring that frequency down in the mix. Push it up loud again and repeat this until you've pulled out three or four major rings and can speak into the mic at a loud level without feedback. This is the loudest you'll be able to push your monitors before they take off and assault everyone with atrocious noise.

Another option to look at is in-ear monitor systems. These can replace the need for wedges onstage and can be a life saver on gigs where the in-house



Stephen 'Snickers' Smith



Trevor Coppen



Rob 'NeV' Nevalainen

SOUND CHECK WITH...

STEPHEN "SNICKERS" SMITH

(Joel Plaskett, In-Flight Safety)

CM: If a typical rock band is playing a club with only two stage wedges available, where does it make the most sense to place them for the best experience for the band as a whole?

SS: You have two solid options. You can place the two up front, split on centre where they will best cover most of the stage, or you can put them up on cases and use them as side fills. This design seemed to work for many years with rock bands when wedges weren't really an option.

CM: What kind of thing makes for a bad room to mix in, and what are some ways to combat or compensate for those shortcomings to save a show?

SS: There are so many variables – low ceilings, hard surfaces, over-hangs, weird walls... Some options on making the best of a bad room are keeping the stage volume down, side-washing amps to keep them from peeling faces, having drummers use rods or lighter sticks on as many songs as you can, and choking back cymbals if possible. Hanging a back-drop can help dampen sound. And if you or the club has any fabric to spread around hard surfaces, that'll help, too.

TREVOR COPPEN

(Metric, Death From Above 1979)

CM: Is there a particular smaller piece of gear that most clubs don't have that you recommend someone bring along with them to save time or make for a better-sounding show?

TC: Compression – one good bus compressor across the stereo mix of a PA can really tighten things up and bring a PA to life. A good compressor on bass or vocals can also smooth things out. Love 'em. Learn to use them, find one you like, and travel with it.

CM: If a typical rock band is playing a club with only two stage wedges available, where does it make the most sense to place them for the best experience for the band as a whole?

TC: Prioritize. Figure out what's most important to be heard for monitoring. Most likely, it's the lead vocal, and an instrument for the lead vocal to stay in key (rhythm guitar, keyboard). If you're playing somewhere with only one or two monitors on one mix, be practical. Downsize a bit, and maybe use smaller amps or turn down and make sure whatever's necessary be in those monitors. Chances are the venue is sized accordingly, so you don't need a snare and you won't need the full 50 watts of your guitar rig.

monitor rig is sub-par and space is limited. It can also be a far superior way to monitor your playing. The catch is it requires more set-up and someone trained in the art and science of making them work. It also is a more costly endeavour, so try them out before investing in low-quality or unsuitable rigs.

The final piece of the puzzle is to place all of your microphones, lines, and snake, and then perform a line-check. Start by placing your mics on stands roughed into their final resting position and labelling the cables attached to them with the name of the relevant instrument or performer on each end. This way, if you need to change or fix something later on, you won't waste time tracing cables to figure out what you've got going on. Once they're ready to go, have someone onstage talk into them one-by-one, while the person who will be mixing at front of house is checking them not only at the sound console but over the PA. Once you know all your lines work, it's time to place your mics. Once you've done that, get the respective musicians to play one at a time to set your gain on the individual channels.

The goal is to set up your gain structure so that all your inputs and outputs are working at their peak range. To do this, solo your channel and adjust the gain pot on the console for each channel until it reaches 0dB (or unity) on the meter. At this point, listen to each source one-by-one over the PA. Make adjustments via the channel strip's EQ, and when you're satisfied with the tone of each instrument, slowly push all of the faders up to 0dB and see how it sounds as a whole.

Remember that if something is lacking, you can't just push the fader up and hope that volume will help. There is only so much headroom, and you will reach a point where you will have to push other instruments down to bring out the volume of the one that is lacking. Be smart about your mix, but trust your ears. If you feel like something is missing, it probably is. Good mixes leave nothing behind, so don't be afraid to tweak a little.

The science and technology behind professional music is constantly changing.

ROB "NEV" NEVALAINEN

(The Tragically Hip, Bryan Adams, www.GearForce.com)

CM: If an up-and-coming band wants to look into IEMs to improve their show, what would you say are the key things to be aware of that often get overlooked by new users?

RN: Quality ear monitors will give a quality listening experience; get the best you can afford, and take care of them!

I also strongly urge you to listen in stereo. The human brain doesn't like to listen in mono. That means extra outputs and inputs, which may mean a larger monitor console or FOH console with more aux busses. I've helped a few smaller acts get started by carrying their own little mixer with a built-in splitter, and they gain the advantage of stereo monitoring as well as consistency from night-to-night. If you add some inexpensive reverbs, you can create a wider stereo image with a little creative panning of some of the instrumentation.

CM: At what stage in the game do you recommend a young touring band consider bringing a designated sound person on-tour, considering how tight touring budgets can be when you're paying your dues?

RN: I would say as soon as you can afford it. When I started in this industry, I was the drummer in a band and remember having a band meeting discussing the need for our own guy – someone to look out for us and represent us. There was initially a lot of arguing about the guy we were hiring because he was going to make more than any of us, but in about two months, we were able to start playing better gigs for more money, and I attribute a lot of that to how good he helped us sound.

It can be extremely hard to stay on top of the latest trends and gear; however, there are many standard principles that will always come into play, so have an active interest in and good grasp of the mechanics involved with live sound to be able to perform your best.

A quote I heard years ago that I've lived by ever since is: "It's better to have a competent audio tech on awful gear than an uneducated one on the greatest gear." Argue all you want, but good sounds are produced by smart people. You can't drink beer and pray to the rock gods for better sound and expect results. You have to read manuals, study, and work hard for it.

But in the end, the bands that sound the best and go the farthest are the ones that knew exactly what they were doing. You will never cease to be amazed at how far a little science and know-how will take you. ■



Mark Desloges is an Audio Technician with Tour Tech East and has toured with acts including Cancer Bats, Classified, and Stereos.

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World Radio History

PRODUCER

ENGINEER

Two Sides of a Valuable Coin

By Andrew King

HOME RECORDING 2011

Thanks to reputable music magazines or the liner notes of widely-adored albums (on various formats), the title of producer/engineer is one with which even the most casual of music listeners is likely familiar; however, to that casual listener through to some of the more established musicians and members of the industry, the definitions of the two sides of the title are often unclear.

Whether you're recording your own music or that of another artist or band, it's likely that you'll be wearing both hats, though it's important to understand what each entails in order to draw clear lines in the sand as to your exact role. That way, should the time come to act as either or both on a more serious project, you'll be prepared to perform your duties to your fullest potential without muddying the waters.

To get a good sense of what the roles of producer and engineer entail, and how to work towards developing your skills as either, we've rounded up a range of well-respected and prolific producer/engineers, as well as some artists who've grown to adopt the two titles. While their backgrounds and outlooks may differ, what they all have in common is the ongoing longing to develop their skills making great records – regardless of title.

"The producer's role embraces both the musical aspects as well as the sonic. Even if the producer is not an engineer, he or she should be guiding the way the recording sounds so that it works with the musical creativity and enhances its emotional intent."

-Warne Livesey

ENGINEER VS. PRODUCER

Embracing the role of producer/engineer can really only come when you've amassed some experience as each. That of engineer is arguably easier to define. As famed producer Warne Livesey (The The, Matthew Good) frames it, the engineer's role is "primarily to operate the recording equipment and properly capture the sounds." The definition is relatively simple; mastering the art certainly isn't.

Defining the producer's role, on the other hand, is a bit more verbose, though as producer/engineer Brian Moncarz (Silverstein, Circa Survive) explains, "The roles of producer and engineer are quite defined. The producer is in charge of the overall sound, performance, and execution of a project," he explains, whereas, like Livesey says, the engineer is "responsible for taking the producer and band's vision and capturing it to tape or hard drive."

Still relatively early in his career, accomplished producer/engineer Dan Weston (Shad, City & Colour) offers some insight in that the roles of producer and engineer can "often meet in the middle" – especially when it's one individual acting as both. "As an engineer, a big part of the job is making sure things go smoothly and seamlessly during a session," he offers. "When you're engineering and not producing, it can be easier to focus on that and the sounds you're getting. Even still as an engineer, you have to keep the vibe positive and often steer the session to the right place."



www.joelplaskett.com
 Plaskett began recording his own demos on a 4-track TASCAM 224 cassette machine and eventually graduated to an Otari ½" MX5050 8-track reel with his band Thrush Hermit and later on his first solo record, *In Need Of Medical Attention*. He's since been developing his engineering chops behind the console of his own studio, the Scotland Yard. He's produced albums and songs by acts like Sarah Slean, Two Hours Traffic, Shotgun Jimmie, and Dave Marsh and the True Love Rules. He's currently working with emerging songwriter Mo Kenney. His most recent release, the critically-acclaimed triple-album *Three*, was self-recorded and produced at Scotland Yard with its follow-up expected for next year.

Unlike that of an engineer, the role of producer can often extend into time spent outside of the recording studio, before or after a session. As C'mon frontman and producer/engineer Ian Blurton (The Weakerthans, The Lowest Of The Low) shares, his job as a producer is "to have the band ready to go before even getting into the studio," so everyone knows what they're doing, but also to have time to "explore any awesome ideas that might come up."

It's a tough title to properly capture, though Halifax's Joel Plaskett (Two Hours Traffic, Steve Poltz) – a celebrated artist in his own right who's recently taken to producing and engineering projects in his studio, the Scotland Yard – sums it up rather nicely: "As a producer, I aspire to make records that the artist loves, their audience will love, and that I love – in that order."

"In all disciplines, less is often more - less microphones, less tracks, less clutter, more songs. That's why (The Rolling Stones') *Exile On Main Street* rules."
 -Joel Plaskett

PLUGGING-IN TO PRODUCTION

Whether it's through a diploma from one of the many revered schools or institutions offering an audio recording program or through the old school of hard knocks (or, perhaps most effectively, a combination of each), the path to establishing oneself as an engineer is relatively well-mapped. That to becoming a capable producer, however, is arguably far more abstract.

"Oddly enough, I felt pretty comfortable calling myself a producer from the

start," begins Moncarz about adopting his twin title. A musician for a large portion of his life, Moncarz found his biggest challenge to be getting his engineering abilities up to speed to make his job as a producer more fluid. He adds that the opportunity to see some of his projects find success has increased his overall confidence as a producer. "Experience is everything," he says. "Each day in the studio is a learning experience that you can draw on at any time on any given project."

"I believe that every idea needs to be heard and tried. Even bad ideas can lead to amazing ideas down the road."

-Brian Moncarz

Already an accomplished musician in his own right, Plaskett's path to becoming a producer was more gradual. Through co-producing his own album, *Down At The Khyber*, with Ian McGettigan (Two Hours Traffic, Peter Elkas), Plaskett absorbed as much as he could from his partner. He added to that knowledge working with Gordie Johnson (Gov't Mule, The Trews) on Joel Plaskett Emergency's *Make A Little Noise* and *Ashtray Rock*. He considers Two Hours Traffic's first full-length, the Polaris Prize-shortlisted *Little Jabs* from 2007, as his first real job as a producer, helping to shape the arrangements and sounds found on the blissful collection of bouncy pop. "I didn't really know what I was doing from an engineering standpoint," he admits, "but you work with the skills you have." And perhaps to encourage others who want to take a crack at producing without formal training behind the console or computer screen, he

PRODUCER'S POLL

CM REACHED OUT TO RECORDING ENTHUSIASTS NATION-WIDE TO GET THEIR THOUGHTS ON TESTING OUT THE PRODUCTION WATERS.

HERE'S THE LOWDOWN:

1. Do you have a home studio of any size set-up to record your or other people's music?

Yes – 88.24%

No, though I plan on setting one up in the next year – 5.88%

No – 5.88%

2. What is the total approximate value of the components in your home recording set-up?

\$0-\$1000 – 5.88%

\$1000-\$2000 – 11.76%

\$2000-\$5000 – 11.76%

\$5000-\$10,000 – 35.29%

\$10,000+ – 35.29%

3. How much do you plan on spending in the coming year on products for your recording set-up?

Nothing this year – 23.53%

\$0-\$200 – 0%

\$200-\$500 – 29.41%

\$500-\$1000 – 11.76%

\$1000-\$2000 – 17.65%

\$2000+ – 17.65%

4. For the most part, which types of projects are you recording with your home set-up?

Only work for yourself/your band – 35.29%

Work for yourself & close friends – 47.06%

Demo work for paying clients – 11.76%

Album tracking, mixing, and mastering for paying clients – 5.88%

5. In your opinion, is there still a need for professional, large-scale recording studios?

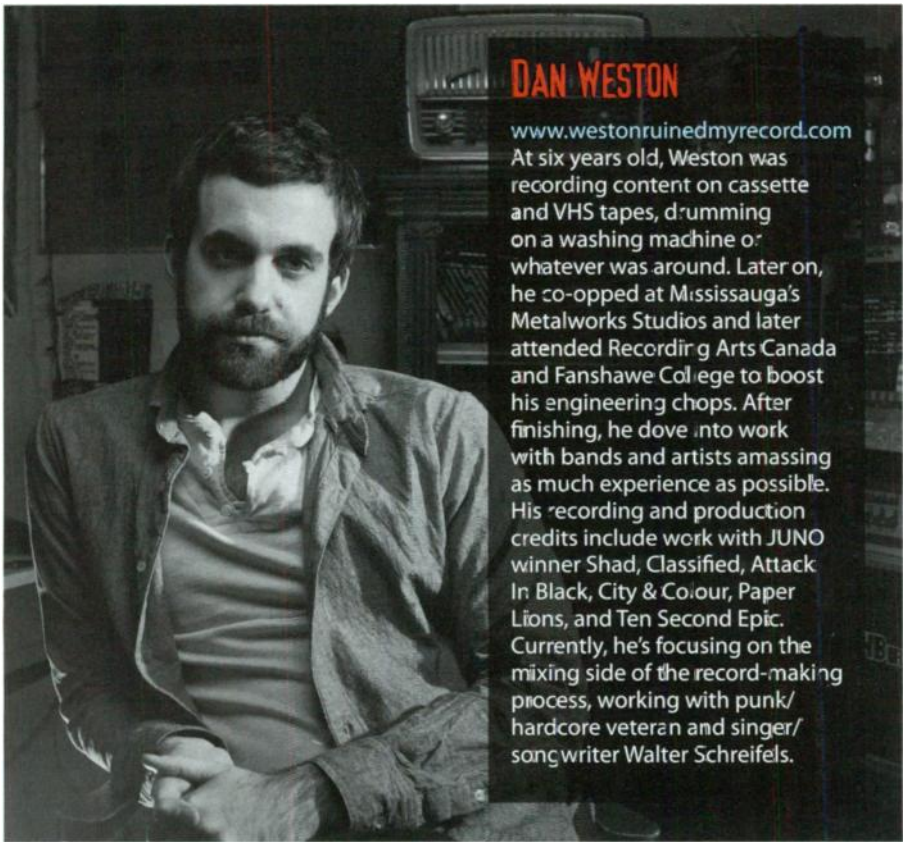
No – 5.88%

Yes, but technology is continually progressing and could make them obsolete – 11.76%

Yes; they should be able to exist in tandem with smaller studios – 64.71%

Yes; the lack of professionally-recorded projects is hurting the music industry and there isn't a substitution for large-scale studios – 11.76%

No answer – 5.88%



DAN WESTON

www.westonruinedmyrecord.com

At six years old, Weston was recording content on cassette and VHS tapes, drumming on a washing machine or whatever was around. Later on, he co-opped at Mississauga's Metalworks Studios and later attended Recording Arts Canada and Fanshawe College to boost his engineering chops. After finishing, he dove into work with bands and artists amassing as much experience as possible. His recording and production credits include work with JUNO winner Shad, Classified, Attack In Black, City & Colour, Paper Lions, and Ten Second Epic. Currently, he's focusing on the mixing side of the record-making process, working with punk/hardcore veteran and singer/songwriter Walter Schreifels.

EARNING THE CREDIT

Being invited into the creative process comes with a great deal of responsibility. In most cases, the artist or group with whom you're working will have already written the material they want to record; they've invited you in to put some polish on the project, though how that polish will manifest itself depends on a number of factors – the quality of the material, the quality of your ideas, and the quality of your working relationship with the artist.

"A band is always going to be a little weary at the beginning, and rightfully so," shares Weston. "You're messing with their sacred baby and they're afraid you might kill it." He advises initiating as positive and productive an environment as possible at the offset. "I always try to be honest and keep it casual," he adds, noting that he usually becomes a member of the band throughout their time together.

Livesey likes to work in an environment "free from any obvious hierarchy, control, or final say." In his 25 years producing records, Livesey can "count on one hand the number of times that anyone – either [he] or the artist – has felt the need to argue about who has final say. In the right environment, the best ideas always prevail naturally." He says that it's the producer's responsibility to give constructive and honest feedback that enables an artist to

adds: "I'll take a scrappy-sounding record of cool songs over [the opposite] any day."

Like both Plaskett and Moncarz, Blurton notes that abilities "ultimately come from experience and watching some of the best in the biz work their magic," citing experiences like those working with accomplished engineer Joe Barresi as some of the most influential of his career. When testing the waters of production himself, like many, Blurton says he did "a ton of work for free at first," actively seeking out bands and asking them if they'd want to record with him. Making mistakes, or watching others make mistakes, he adds, only promotes learning.

"Lately, I've put an emphasis on getting things going quicker as an engineer to benefit the flow of a session. If you spend too much time messing with EQ or a vocal sound, you can wear out everyone's excitement."

-Dan Weston

It can be truly difficult to assess your own abilities as a producer. As Weston explains, "There is no real job description for what being a producer entails, and no set way on how to become one." After acting as a producer on a few projects, Weston grew comfortable with the title. "I think having some musical background and being able to work well with people goes a long way," he shares – two traits he believes to be at the root of the role.

improve what they do. "As you build rapport with the artist and create a generally positive and productive vibe, the artist will then be more willing to accept criticism."

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WARNE LIVESEY

www.warnelivesey.com

Livesey began his storied career as a musician, with his first studio experience coming at 18 after leaving high-school. He built his chops organically through "experimentation and sheer will and determination," and later took on an engineering role with producer David Lord, working on major-label projects behind the console while still engineering and producing smaller acts on his own. After his production work on The The's *Infected* in 1986, he was receiving around 20 offers to produce major-label projects per month. Along with *Infected* and its follow-up *Mind Bomb*, Livesey has produced five records with Midnight Oil, mixed Xavier Rudd's most recent release, produced three with Matthew Good Band and four with Good as a solo artist (including 2011's *Lights Of Endangered Species*). He's currently mixing songs for Vince Vacarro.

Warne Livesey (centre) at Vogville Studios with Matt Good (left) & Stuart Cameron.

THIS FROM
THE
MUSIC



SHAWN BRADLEY

Producer, www.fadernoise.com

From March/April 2011 Recording Column

"Another Pile Of Recording Tips"

"When miking a open back guitar cab, put on microphone in front of the speaker and then try putting a second microphone behind the cab. Flip the phase of this second microphone and blend it with the front mic to your liking."



Photo: Jess Baumung

GREG DAWSON

Producer, BWC Studios,
www.reverbnation.com/bwcstudios

From May/June 2011 Recording Column

"Killer Kick & Snare Sounds"

"The first thing I do when starting a project is set up just the kick and snare drums, get my mics out, and create my own samples. I have the drummer sit down behind his or her kick or snare and begin recording single hits of each instrument. Of course, I make sure he or she is really smashing 'em."



JON TIDEY

Owner/Operator, Revolution Audio,
www.revolutionaudio.ca

From July/August 2011 Recording Column

"Recording, Processing & Mixing Vocals"

"Most home recordists can't afford the cost of constructing a vocal booth, or simply don't have the space for one. The next best thing is some acoustic treatment that surrounds the mic. This helps reduce the sound of the room in the mic, getting you closer to that tight, dry vocal booth sound – and quite affordably."



THE INDIE 500

There's been an explosion of late of new modular products for the 500-series frames sold by various manufacturers. The 500-series was first initiated by iconic recording brand API to provide use of modular mic preamps, compressors, and

EQs, though over the last several years, other companies have been manufacturing modules compatible with the 500-series spec. While their limited powering capabilities is still a concern, 500-series products offer small and easy-to-operate modules from new and reputable manufacturers alike – some smaller or scaled-back modules of well-known existing outboard units. They additionally free up space for smaller studios, and finally, can save big money for owners through their smaller shapes and shared power supplies. Consider this route for a lot of variety in a small space or on a small budget.

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In 1998, having graduated from the School of Radio and Television Arts at Ryerson University, Moncarz decided to open a small recording studio and begin honing his skills as an engineer. A few years later, landed a gig producing, engineering, and mixing a band called The Junction. It was around that time that he met and began working with renowned producer Bob Ezrin (Pink Floyd, KISS), expanding his engineering and mixing chops. After working with Ezrin, he began engineering for producer David Bottrill (Tool, Peter Dinklage). Moncarz mixed Circa Survive's *Blue Sky Noise* for him and the two co-produced Moneen's *The World I Want To Leave Behind*. He's recently captained projects by Dean Lickyer, Kai, and Nash, with The Jimmy Bowskill Band and Schomburg Fair on the horizon.

here and there. "I'll fight for ideas I believe in," he says, "but at the end of the day, the band is paying the bills."

If you're doing your job to the best of your abilities, chances are you're going to introduce ideas that you believe will benefit the project that will conflict with those of the artist. Effectively communicating those ideas to the artist so that they come off as constructive and not condemning is a key component to the job.

"I try to focus on the positive and use it to bring up the negative," divulges Moncarz. "For example, I'd say something like: 'That vocal melody is killer, but we need to work on the lyrics.'" He adds that using "we" during communication ensures that a performer doesn't feel singled out or isolated, instead promoting a team mentality. He ensures that everyone involved in the process is having fun while working hard, taking the edge off of interactions that might otherwise be intense.

Speaking as both an artist and producer, Plaskett believes that "it's good to have your ideas challenged from time to time," usually leading to bits of insight that stick with you, regardless of which side of the glass you're sitting on. He notes that part of being a good producer is recognizing an artist's strengths and weaknesses, and by hiding the weaknesses, the strengths essentially become stronger.

"I've been very lucky to work with some amazing artists, and they can always teach you about songwriting, arranging, phrasing - whatever. Even if it's a totally different genre than your own, it's easy to be inspired by beauty."
-Ian Blurton

Should things ever grow tense or tumultuous, professionalism is paramount – it should get you out of the situation with a newfound trust among those involved in the disagreement. "With bands, I find there can be more disagreements between members than between band and producer," says Livesey of his experience. In such situations, the producer often becomes the mediator or arbitrator.

If it is a disagreement between you and the artist with whom you're working, be fully-aware of the situation. How important is what you're suggesting to you? To your artist? To the song? As Weston asserts, "If anyone cares enough about something to really fight for it, it means it's important to them. I can't argue." He continues: "It's their record and they have to play it every night onstage. I think, ideally, they give me the same respect; if I'm adamant about something, it's probably for a good reason."



www.thisiscmon.com

No stranger to the Canadian music scene, Blurton began his career at 16 playing with Change of Heart. After six full-lengths with the band, he went on to release two records with Blurtonia, later joined Montreal's Bionic and toured extensively, and most recently, started and continues to tour and record with his hard rock band C'mon, who most recently released *The Mountain 10*". He started recording on Portastudios from cassette deck to cassette deck early-on in his career and has been growing his talents since, earning engineering and production roles with acts like The Weakerthans, The Lowest Of The Low, Rheostatics, and The Motorleague. Recent work includes recordings for Little Foot Long Foot, The Getdown, Lee Rogers from The Mercy Now, Thinly Veiled Double Entendres, and Bella Clava.

more willing to accept criticism."

Blurton's approach to the process was first informed by his experience as an artist. He faced some negative encounters early on in his career with producers who "insisted on doing things 'their way,' which

wasn't always the best thing for the band or recording." Because of this, he's adopted the mantra that since it's the artist hiring the producer, it's the producer's job to get the artist's vision down, with a few fingerprints from the producer popping up



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"I THINK WE'VE GOT IT!"

"We learn from both our successes and our failures," muses Moncarz, and that's how your production skills will develop. "Whether you're assisting, engineering, or producing, being in the studio every day is the best way to grow into the producer's role. Just be open-minded," he advises, "and constantly try to improve your skills."

Play on your own strengths and weave them into the work you're doing. "I've never been much good at simply pressing record and keeping my mouth shut," admits Plaskett. "I like working on songs and figuring out what works and what doesn't." The longer you're at it, the better you'll be able to instinctively tell what "works." Therein lies your value as a producer. "Every record is different," adds the musician. "There have been a few tough experiences where things have gotten intense, but I learn from every project and stay friends with the people I work with."

If you can come away from any project with some new knowledge and experience and a healthy relationship with your clients, consider it a successful stint in the producer's chair. Like Weston so nicely says, as the producer, you're simply hoping to help make "an enjoyable record that gets lots of plays on people's iPods." ■



Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.

HOME RECORDING RECS

Looking to absorb more info and insight about the art of home recording? Try out one of these titles – just a small sampling of what's available on the subject from the newly-redesigned Music Books Plus website (www.musicbooksplus.com).

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Jeff Touzeau
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By Greg MacPherson



the danger of possibility

As a musician and an avid music fan, I find that the recordings and performances I enjoy most are those that capture the raw energy of surprise and possibility. Possibility, to me, is the essence of rock and roll music; it represents the danger of circumstances, the capacity of the imagination and the tightrope walk between what we think might happen and what actually does. In my opinion, many musicians make the mistake of thinking more than they should and feeling less than they need to, planning themselves into unwanted safety and taking no real risks with their work.

This is no easy cage to escape, especially for those working within a market that demands status quo. I believe that half the battle is fought in our approach to and the process by which we create music or performance. Many great songwriters, for example, will tell you that their best work began unexpectedly. They hadn't sat down with a pen and paper or a 4-track recorder planning to walk away with a great song; the great song or the essence of it simply came to them, all at once. In this way, creating circumstances that encourage our imaginations to work freely can be just as critical to the end result of the songwriting process as hours of focus and laboured effort. As a writer and performer myself, I have come to believe that an open mind, freed of expectation, is more likely to bring surprise and excitement than one that is

focused and narrow.

In the 1998 film *Zero Effect*, actor Bill Pullman plays Darryl Zero, the world's greatest private detective. Over the course of the film, the main character explains his approach to searching for clues and solving complicated mysteries. He suggests that on the one hand, if a detective goes into a room looking for a specific clue, the chances of finding that clue are limited. On the other hand, if he or she goes into a room looking for anything interesting, their chances of finding something useful are very good. I find this approach to be a valuable metaphor for songwriting. If we go into the creative process with one, lofty goal in mind, it will take a masterful artist to walk away with exactly the song they intended. The rest of us may find that an open mind and some creative strategies will be a much better recipe for success.

What is truly remarkable about Darryl Zero is his professional method for solving the most complex mysteries on Earth, which oscillates between field work and days of drinking himself into a stupor, locking himself away in motel rooms, and staring at blank walls, seemingly incoherent and semi-conscious. Watching this film, I am struck by how accurately it depicts the method by which many of us, as creative people, tap into our subconscious for answers to the dangerous questions that our more literal, conscious minds would be less inclined to relinquish.

Like Darryl Zero, I've found that

moderate amounts of confusion and disassociation are as useful to me in my work as are the professional habits of showing up on time and tuning my guitar properly. All work requires focus, study, and discipline, but the work of the imagination sometimes takes special efforts and varied approaches.

Some methods I've employed over the years include simple things like changing the way I dress on a given day or altering my guitar tuning. I've also taken to waking up in the middle of the night, staring into the darkness, and writing down anything that comes to mind. On occasion I will drink too much, and instead of going to bed, I sit down at my computer and try to say something I couldn't say sober. I'll often wake up early, before everyone else does, drink shots of espresso until my heart's pounding, and then channel that energy into whatever wants to come out. In performance, I try to avoid set-lists so that I'm reacting in real-time to choices we make on the spot.

There are longer-term ways of pushing your imagination and creativity: reading great novels will expand vocabulary and watching thought-provoking films will help us see imagery and composition in new ways; however, if we are stuck in a limited mindset, it can take anything from cold water in the face to a dramatic change of scenery to shake us loose.

The end result, music that surprises you and inspires the listener, is worth the extra effort.



Warne Livesey is a multi-platinum selling record producer with over 25 years experience in the music business. Originally from the UK, he now lives in Vancouver. For more information, please visit www.warneivesey.com

RECORDING

By Warne Livesey

producing with intent

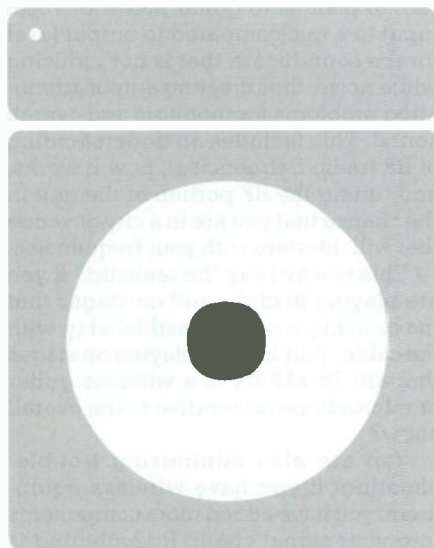
It's unwise to talk about production without first talking about songwriting, which is at the heart of what we do. Music is essentially a communication of ideas and emotions. Artists express themselves and the listener relates to, and is moved by, sharing in their human experience. So, in this regard, the main aim of producing is to efficiently enable and enhance the artist's communication with the listener. Now I admit this all sounds a bit artsy-fartsy, especially if you are working on a simple pop song, but even if a song is about partying, it's still sharing a human experience. I also acknowledge that a lot of what happens in creating music is not thought out but occurs intuitively. But from a production perspective, I think it is at least worth thinking about what is going on.

The producer's role normally starts after the songs are written and the artist is committing to entering the studio. But I think it is valuable for the producer to be involved whilst writing is in progress, even if not directly. When I was working on Midnight Oil's *Diesel And Dust*, I was communicating with the band for six months before we green-lighted the recording. They would send me batches of demos, I would give very generalized feedback, and the band would write more. They must have written 25-30 songs and only recorded 11. "Beds Are Burning" was in the last batch of songs. The album was incomplete without that track, not only because it gave them a huge international hit, but also because lyrically, it is the keystone of that album.

I always like to do pre-production, particularly now, as budgets are so tight it is wise to experiment cost effectively. I don't normally try to nail down every aspect at this stage, but there are key

things I want to establish before recording. Obviously tempo and key are essential, as is the arrangement. Does the song need a bridge, intro, or solo?

I also like to work on the transitions and dynamics. Transitions are often key moments in songs. Normally I am aiming to first record a bed track that



at least involves keeper takes of drums and bass, but sometimes also basic guitars. Those Midnight Oil records and the early Matthew Good Band stuff were all started like this. I really think this helps to establish an organic and vibey feel for the recording even if there's a lot of overdubbing afterwards. Experimenting with substitute chord changes, melodies, or counter melodies and instrumentation at this stage can really enhance the emotionality. The worst that can happen in pre-production is that you end up thinking the original way was best,

but at least now you know for sure. But often you discover all sorts of new and exciting elements and I find the group creative atmosphere a very stimulating and positive start to recording.

In tracking and mixing, we also enhance the artistic expression through EQ, effects, acoustic space, and other recording techniques. Again, this is an area where it is worth at least referencing to what the intent is: what is the listener going to connect to? Sound is four-dimensional to me. I hear a lot of unsatisfying recordings that seem to only exist in two. Sound for sure has a sonic dimension: the power of bottom-end, the airy beauty of highs, and the energy of mid-range etc. There is also the stereo field. Then there is the third dimension of dynamics and space. I find space one of the most challenging aspects of producing. I think this all comes down to confidence that the one or two simple elements you have are all that's needed. Matthew Good and I really focused on this on his new album, *Lights of Endangered Species*.

Then there is the fourth dimension, which I think of as distance: how far behind (or in front of) the speakers does the sound appear to come from? This can be achieved either with spatial effects like reverb and delay, but also with mic placement. Thinking of sound in this way can really open up a recording for me and give it a multi-layered depth. The most effective recordings always have all these elements and producers like Daniel Lanois, Nigel Godrich, and Ethan Johns are masters of this.

Music is an awesome and rewarding creative experience, but meaningless beyond that if listeners cannot connect to it.



By Trevor Coppen

YOU, YOUR BAND & WIRELESS GEAR

In today's growing competitive markets for pro and semi-pro audio, there is a growing accessibility to affordable wireless equipment. My suggestion for this investment and progression is to be "realistic."

I've seen a lot of bands rush out to get wireless systems for their guitar or bass rigs, wireless vocal systems, and in-ear monitor systems, not being aware of all that they encompass.

There is such an abundance of wireless equipment and usage in this world; television, cell phones, walkie-talkies, radio stations, the Internet, and the list goes on and on. All of these applications and companies are fighting for air space and there is only so much space available. In fact, when touring a lot of countries (like Japan, the UK, and Australia), a formal application must be filled in and paid for ahead of time to use your allocated frequencies. It goes as far as the promoter sending you links to be sure it is filled in and wanting to see receipts of application. In North America, you are restricted from using certain frequencies. Visit the Sennheiser or Shure websites, for example, and you will see recalls and notices about using certain frequencies in certain continents.

Apart from the restrictions implemented by broadcasting (essentially what you are doing) your "flashy guitar riffs" or "amazing vocal prowess," there are other things to consider....

You are going to need batteries for each of your shows for your transmitters (guitar belt packs, microphones) and receivers (in-ears) which can add up in cost very quickly, also depending on how many are being used. With multiple systems of transmitters, you will most likely need to buy a larger "paddle style" antenna and a cable for that antenna apart from the usual stubby antenna that is supplied at purchase with your equipment.

There is also the consideration that the fidelity of your product (guitar, bass,

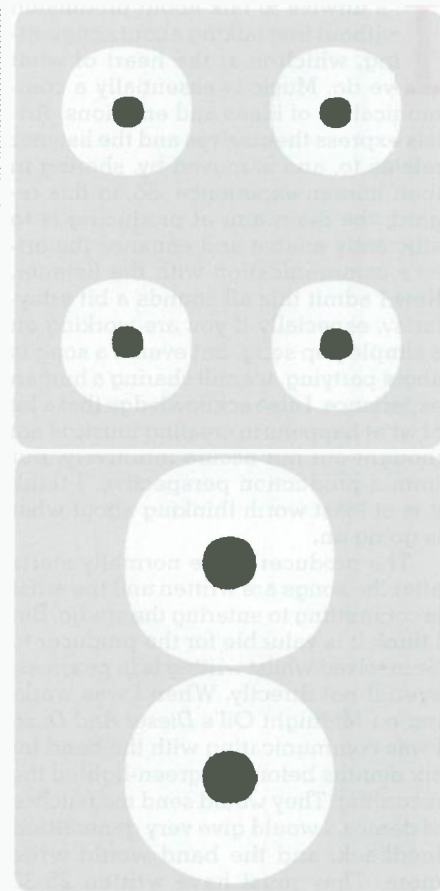
vocal) is also slightly compromised by the compressors (compression/expansion) used in the wireless equipment.

Apart from these factors, there needs to be instruction for using your equipment as well – attenuating the unit to work with the rest of the gear in your rig, getting the balance between signal (guitar), to pedals, to guitar heads or vocal input to a mic compared to output level for the soundboard that is not inducing white noise, thus creating output attenuation problems for monitors and overall sound. This includes an understanding of RF (radio frequencies), how it works, and tuning the RF portion of the unit in the chance that you are in a city or venue that will interfere with your frequencies.

This is why I say "be realistic." If you are playing in clubs and on stages that make using a cable feasible, stay with the cable. Your band is playing on stages that are 15 x 15 ft.; is a wireless guitar or microphone imperative to the overall show?

You are also minimizing troubleshooting. If you have wireless equipment, you have added more components into your signal chain. If something is not working, there are a few more possible issues. Is the receiver getting signal? Is the transmitter sending? Is the receiver output cable plugged in? Is the output cable working? How good are the batteries? All very trivial elements, but if your band has only 25 minutes to play on a Friday night, and the club is packed, do you want to waste the first two songs on no one hearing you because later you found that the house sound tech had accidentally unplugged the cable from your receiver? It happens.

Just like the time you spent researching that new 5-string bass before you bought it, or that great sounding amp, spend the time to get schooled on the wireless equipment you want to buy. Talk to other musicians that have invested and talk to sound engineers that have experience with the gear. The manufac-



turers also provide information on their websites. The retailers are exactly that: they want to sell things. Of course they want to "sell" you the gear and abolish the myths.

Know your environment. Be realistic. Perhaps that \$500 you were going to spend on a wireless unit would be better spent on a surplus of spare guitar cables that you know will work, and in different lengths in case you come across smaller and/or larger stages? Or perhaps you could purchase a couple microphones? A great guitar mic, a vocal mic, or a couple of DIs for your keyboard player? Maybe...

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YOUR SOUND, YOUR STYLE.



By John Abrams

building A credible Audience

In a business undergoing such radical changes, it is a rather difficult task to establish any blueprints for success. The Internet has had a considerable effect on how we seek out new music. Downloading, both legally and illegally, has utterly destroyed the behemoth that was physical album sales only a decade ago. Traditional radio broadcasting is gradually being replaced by online playlists, satellite radio, and quite simply, iPods. The irony of the Internet music universe is that anyone can market themselves to a large amount of people at any given time, which in some ways actually makes it harder to be noticed. The old adage rings true: "If everyone is special, no one is special."

So how do artists, especially new artists, navigate through what can sometimes be controlled chaos at best? There is one thing that people never seem to get tired of: live music.

Live performance touring is the only way an artist can develop credibility with an audience. Touring is the foundation on which great music careers are built, and while the industry is changing, this remains a constant in all aspects of the business: how the public receives an artist, and how the artist receives the public.

Building the early stages of a music career is much like the early stages in the construction of a house; it cannot stand without a foundation. There are really only two routes to the top of the business: one happens overnight; the other takes a whole lot longer.

In the former, an artist is extracted from normality, often times with little experience performing in front of an audience, and simply thrown into the limelight. In this case, the public often receives the artist because they simply

cannot avoid the artist. A listener's reaction will be one of "I see their picture everywhere, everybody knows about them, so they must be famous. I should probably pay attention." In this case, the audience is less attached to the art itself, rather the attraction is based on superficial hype. This is where the problems begin. If everyone likes an artist because they think that everyone else likes the artist, then nobody really likes the artist. Consequently, for the artists themselves, there is no foundation on which to build longstanding success.

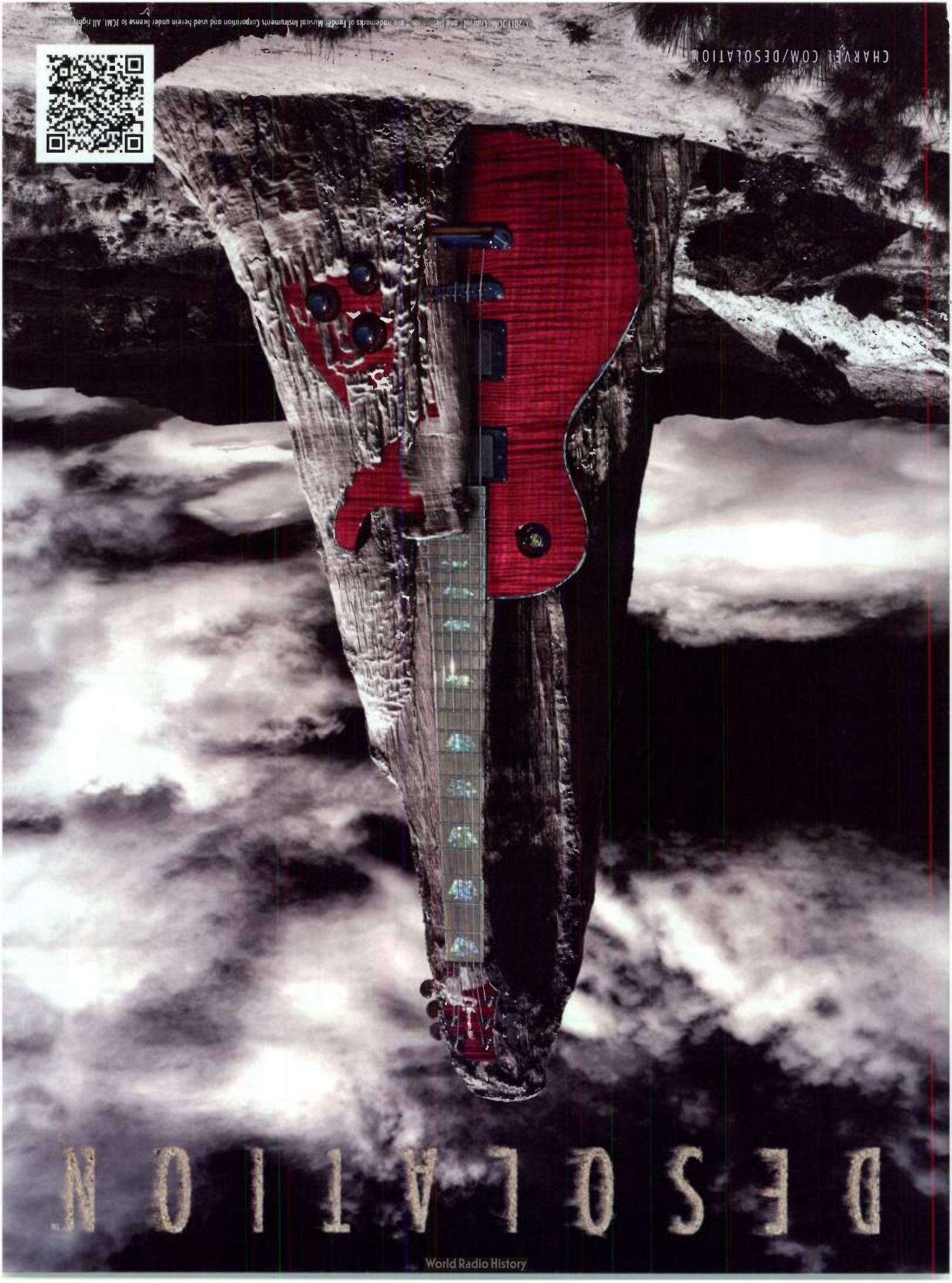
In the second scenario, fans come to the band because of a direct emotional connection to the music. Fans become devoted to the art because they are moved by it, and they pay attention because the music evokes in them a completely brand new feeling, indescribable outside the language of music. This is the foundation. As a result, fans are motivated to listen to the band out of their own experiences, rather than the perceived experiences of others. This kind of development takes a significant amount of time and patience, but in time the audience will grow, and the artist actually earns an ownership of that audience.

Chris Brown is an accomplished songwriter, producer, musician, performer, and a founding member of the Bourbon Tabernacle Choir. Brown has also toured with B.B. King, Willie Nelson, Neil Young, and the Barenaked Ladies to name only a few. Brown says that "by touring, you develop a direct relationship to your audience, unmitigated and not contingent on anything else." The result is that your audience is your audience. It's not like "your audience brought to you by Pepsi." It's earned. There's nothing that will substitute for that.

The trouble with the first scenario is that the artist becomes a disposable entity. Whether talented or not, the first priority in selling the artist is through their visual marketability. A certain demographic is selected, the record company labels it as their "audience," and everything surrounding the artist becomes devoted to one narrow group of people, like boy bands and 13-year-old girls. Unfortunately, generations age, demographics change, and generally speaking, the teenage girls leave the boy band behind like any other phase.

My brother and I have a band called The Abrams Brothers. We have been on the road for 10 years, and at 20, I am the oldest member. Coming out of bluegrass music, we were able to develop a career organically, building a base of fans that are dedicated to an authentic style of music. Many of our early fans were older; however, our new album *Northern Redemption* is no doubt a culmination of all our touring experiences in front of audiences in Canada, the US, Europe, and even Israel. Due to both the time spent on the road and a more recent blend of styles (we now play "bluegrass rock"), we are starting to see a wide span of generations come to our shows, anywhere from teens to seniors. The bottom line is: you can't buy this kind of audience.

Building a credible audience, and thus a long lasting music career, is like making honey. The bees go through an extremely time-consuming process collecting nectar, and the beekeepers delicately harvest the honey. People have been eating honey for thousands of years, and it is the only food that never spoils. Everything else is cotton candy: sweet at first, disappearing immediately.



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Voltage Guitar Cabinets VB112CL & S212D Cabs

■ Voltage Guitar Cabinets has expanded its VB and S lines with the announcement of two new cabinets, the VB112CL and the S212D.

The VB112CL is a slightly oversized cab and features a slant baffle and variable back. A classic valence is also available for a vintage look. The unit also features the baffle dadoed into the cabinet surround, designed so the cabinet will not "mush out" at high volumes.

The S212D cab features more standard sizes, a straight front with classic floating baffle, and the option of a split, three-quarter, or closed back.

Both are designed and crafted in Winnipeg and feature 100 per cent void-free baltic birch construction, interlocking joinery, heavy-duty hardware, and quality finishing materials and electronic components. The cabs are available with a selection of speakers from WGS, Eminence, Weber, and Celestion. Customers can match drivers or mix speakers to create a custom tone. Additional customization includes a variety of Tolex and grill cloth colours to choose from, as well as piping colour, hardware colour, and logo.

For more information, contact Voltage Guitar Cabinets: 204-237-4299, sales@steamcomusic.com, www.voltageamps.ca.

Reunion Blues Continental Ukulele Case

■ Reunion Blues has announced the release of its Continental ukulele case, available in both concert and tenor sizes.

The case features a 1" thick shock-absorbing Flexoskeleton exterior lined with reinforced impact panels and an exterior EVA-reinforced multi-pocket. A non-slip rubber side rest and knurled abrasion grid on the bottom is also included to help resist scuffing. A large zippered accessory pocket is provided, along with adjustable, hideaway padded backpack straps.

Access to the inside of the case starts with water-resistant, reversed, luggage-grade zippers, which also serve as a dust seal. Inside, the RB Continental neck brace suspension system can be found which includes an adjustable locking strap that is built on a dense foam block. Further protection includes high-density dual-layer walls that are softer on the inside and harder on the outside. The interior is crafted with a quilted double helix velvet lining.

A ballistic Quadraweave exterior features corded edges and seams that are double-stitched with high tensile thread and reinforced at tested stress points, topped off with the RB Continental Zero-G palm-contoured handle designed with weight distributing foam core.

For more information, contact Reunion Blues: 800-950-1095, FAX 707-762-1899, sales@reunionblues.com, www.reunionblues.com.



Big Bends Nut Sack Guitar Care Kit

■ Big Bends has unveiled the Nut Sack, a complete fretted instrument care kit that includes five of Big Bends' maintenance products.

The kit includes Fret Board Juice, a dressing that is made with 100 per cent white mineral oil to help clean and moisturize without the use of any solvents. Also included are String Cleaning Wipes, which are treated cotton pads that are double bagged and designed to quickly remove dirt, oil, and oxides. Big Bends' Gloss Sauce Polish is also contained in the kit. This product cleans and polishes simultaneously and is non-streaking. An AXS Wipes polishing cloth, a 144 sq. inch Microfiber polishing cloth with zig-zag cut edge, also comes in the kit. The final product in the Nut Sack is Nut Sauce, a lubricant that is applied to the nut, string guides, and pivot points of the bridge to help the strings stay in tune longer and avoid breakage.

For more information, contact B&J Music Ltd.: 905-896-3001, FAX 905-896-4554, bjmusic@kmcmusic.com, www.bjmusic.ca.



TC-Helicon VoiceTone H1

■ TC-Helicon has announced its VoiceTone H1, a two-part vocal harmony processor combining NaturalPlay guitar control and key/scale operation designed to allow vocalists of any musical background to get lush-sounding background vocals.

Featuring NaturalPlay harmony algorithms from TC-Helicon's vocal processor VoiceLive 2, the VoiceTone H1 offers eight voicing combinations which can be set through the harmony mix, providing the choice between guitar control using the guitar pass-thru input or selecting a key and scale.

The VoiceTone H1 also has a Mic Control feature, which allows vocalists to switch the effects on and off from TC-Helicon's MP-75 Modern Performance vocal microphone.

For more information, contact TC Group Americas Inc.: 519-745-1158, FAX 519-745-2364, inquiries@tcg-americas.com, www.tcggroup-americas.com.

Levy's Brass Grommet Guitar Straps

■ Levy's Leathers Limited has announced the release of its new Brass Grommet line of guitar straps. Each strap features 2" cotton webbing with printed designs, complemented with antique brass eyelets or grommets. Pictured is model MC8PG available in six original designs.

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



Roland TD-4KX2 & TD-4K2 V-Drums

Roland has announced two new additions to its line of V-Compact Series V-Drums, the TD-4KX2 and TD-4K2.

Both the TD-4KX2 and TD-4K2 include the TD-4 Percussion Sound Module, featuring drum and percussion sounds that can be easily edited, allowing the user to quickly customize the kit. Ambience effects optimized for drums are included for a more expressive performance. The Coach and Quick Record/Quick Play functions are meant for effective practice, providing drummers with feedback.

The TD-4KX2 features Roland's multi-layer mesh heads for the snare and toms while the KD-9 Kick Pad includes a new cloth-designed bass drum head. The kit is outfitted with CY-13R ride (with three-way triggering) and CY-12C crash V-Cymbals.

The TD-4K2 V-Compact Series V-Drums kit also features the multi-layer mesh head for the snare and KD-9 Kick Pad. The TD-4K2 is also expandable with an optional V-Pad or V-Cymbal.

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



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Traynor QuarterHorse Micro Guitar Amp

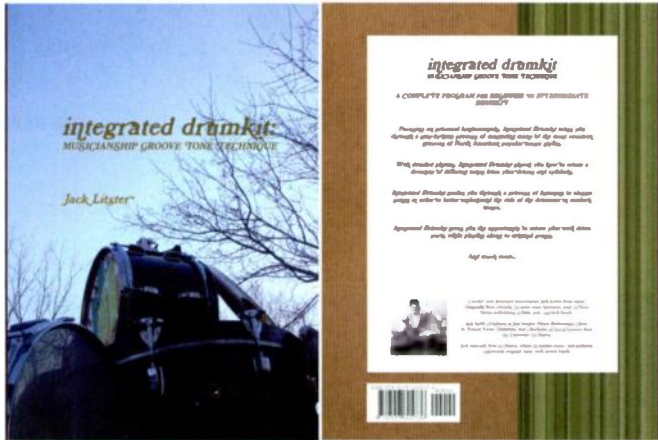
Traynor has announced the release of its 25-watt micro guitar amp, the QuarterHorse. This amp is a solid-state two-channel "head" with effects in a compact stompbox format.

Designed for rehearsals, small gigs, recording, and practice, the QuarterHorse amp has been developed to fit the pocket of any standard guitar case or gig bag.

Its two-channel design delivers clean and lead tones. Channel controls include clean volume, drive gain, drive treble, and drive volume. A micro-toggle switch selects either tape delay or tremolo effects with both effects having full control. Three integrated footswitches allow quick one-touch channel select, effect bypass, or reverb bypass.

A standard 1/4" phono jack output allows simple direct connection to any typical 8-ohm guitar cabinet. The additional 1/8" output TRS headphone jack doubles as a stereo line out for recording or private practice.

For more information, contact Yorkville Sound: 905-837-8777, FAX 905-839-5776, canada@yorkville.com, www.yorkville.com.



Lulu Press Integrated Drumkit

Lulu Press has announced the availability of *Integrated Drumkit* by Jack Litster. *Integrated Drumkit* focuses on practical concepts that are necessary for learning to play drumkit in a band. This book reveals how to play 25 common drum grooves, add new elements to simple grooves, explore a variety of drum and cymbal tones, play along to classic songs in multiple genres, and create drum parts for songs.

The tones section of the book features 40 photos of the author demonstrating various tones that the drumkit can produce. *Integrated Drumkit* also focuses on training a drummer's ear, as the book guides the player through a process of listening to classic recordings and answering analysis questions, plus how to write out the songs' drum grooves on a staff using drum notation. The 34 artists whose songs are analyzed in the book represent a broad sample of music styles and include: Michael Jackson, Aretha Franklin, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, John Coltrane Quartet, Paul Simon, AC/DC, Radiohead, Willie Nelson, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Bob Marley, among others.

For more information, contact Integrated Drumkit: socialmusic.jl@hotmail.ca, www.lulu.com/spotlight/JackLitster.



Eagle Mountain Lock-It Guitar Strap

Eagle Mountain has introduced its Lock-It Guitar Strap, a strap designed to prevent guitar slips. The EML11BK Eagle Mountain Lock-It strap features a strap lock mechanism called Lock-It built into each end piece.

To fit it, the Lock-It tab is pulled back and the strap is attached to the end pieces as normal, then the tabs are closed. The Lock-It mechanism then holds the strap tightly around the guitar's strap buttons, preventing the instrument from slipping or falling.

For more information, contact Eagle Mountain: +44 0-1132-865-381 FAX +44 0-1132-868-515, webinfo@jhs.co.uk, www.jhs.co.uk.

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Di Marzio Angel Acoustic Guitar Pickup System

Di Marzio Pickups has unveiled its Angel acoustic guitar pickup system, consisting of a magnetic sound hole pickup, a Shadow Nanoflex under-the-saddle pickup, and a circuit built into the endpin jack which incorporates the Angel's active system. It also comes with volume and tone controls positioned at the sound hole.

The Angel pickup is also available in a pre-set active system with volume and tone controls that can be attached to the sound hole of the guitar. This version can also be used as a passive transducer by bypassing the endpin jack with a standard guitar cable, which is included.

The Angel pickup system is designed for use on acoustic guitars with a 3 1/2" (89 mm) or larger sound hole, using bronze or steel strings.

For more information, contact Wes-Can Music Supplies Ltd.: 800-661-9960, FAX 800-600-6646, wescan@telus.net, www.wescanmusic.com.



Olympus LS-20M Linear PCM Video/Audio Recorder

Olympus has announced the availability of its LS-20M Linear PCM recorder, capable of capturing high-definition video.

The LS-20M captures and edits 1080p HD video while recording 24-bit/96 kHz Linear PCM stereo sound and offers four different optional Magic Movie special effects features. The camera lens and microphones are located on top of the unit, while a 2" colour LCD on the front of the device displays the video as it's being shot. Below the video LCD is a 1.46" LCD data screen that displays time, audio levels, and battery life.

The camera features a 4.1 mm (16:9 at 49 mm, 4:3 at 59 mm) autofocus lens and 4x digital zoom. The device captures dynamic sound with two condenser mics and boasts the ability to record in linear PCM (WAV files) and MP3 formats.

The Olympus LS-20M includes a 2 GB SD card, one rechargeable Lithium ion battery, and a USB cable. The battery is charged by plugging in the LS-20M into a computer. For added memory, the LS-20M can handle SDHC cards up to 32 GB.

For more information, contact Audio Distributors International: 450-449-8177, FAX 450-449-8180, info@adi-online.net, www.adi-online.net.

IK Multimedia iKlip MINI

IK Multimedia has introduced the iKlip MINI, a universal microphone stand adapter for all versions of Apple's iPhone and iPod touch.

The iKlip MINI allows easy mounting of the iOS device on a mic stand, pole, or tripod. The iKlip is manufactured out of thermoplastic and is compatible with every existing iPhone and iPod touch. iKlip MINI firmly holds the device in place in both horizontal and vertical positions, and its multi-angle adjustable design allows for optimal viewing and accessibility to all controls, buttons, connection ports, and the camera, free from obstruction. It can also be rotated from portrait to landscape position by loosening or tightening a knob. It can be mounted on the vertical pole of a mic stand as well as on its horizontal boom.

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



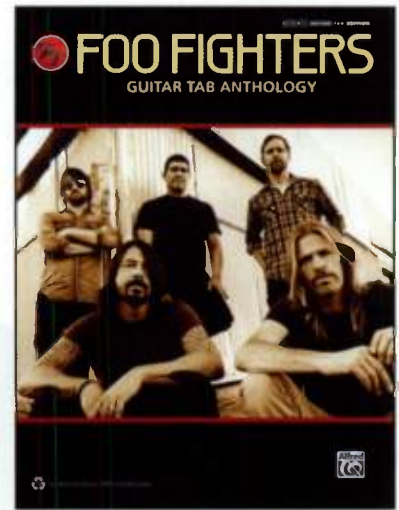
Alfred's Foo Fighters: Guitar TAB Anthology

■ Alfred Music Publishing has released *Foo Fighters: Guitar TAB Anthology*, a commemorative songbook of some of the band's greatest hits.

The collection contains 17 of the alternative rock band's songs in full music notation and tab, including chord symbols and lyrics. The songs included span the Foo's career up to their 2007 release, *Echoes, Silence, Patience & Grace*.

The songs included are: "All My Life," "Best of You," "Big Me," "Breakout," "Everlong," "Everlong (Acoustic Version)," "Have a Cigar," "Learn to Fly," "Long Road to Ruin," "Monkey Wrench," "My Hero," "Skin and Bones," "The Pretender," "This Is a Call," "Times Like These," "Wheels," and "Word Forward."

For more information, contact Alfred Music Publishing: 818-891-5999, FAX 800-632-1928, sales@alfred.com, www.alfred.com/guitar.



Godin Guitars 5th Avenue Jazz Guitar

■ Godin Guitars has recently released its new 5th Avenue Jazz archtop guitar. Featuring an arched back as well as an arched top, the 5th Avenue comes in two high-gloss custom polished finishes, including piano black and natural flame.

The guitar is outfitted with a floating mini-humbucker jazz pickup, an ebony fingerboard, ebony volume and tone knobs, a classic multi-layered binding, high-ratio open-gear nickel tuners, an engraved floating pickguard, a custom tail-piece, and an adjustable Tusq bridge by Graph Tech.

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

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Korg microPIANO

■ Korg has introduced the microPIANO, a compact and portable piano featuring 61 keys. The microPIANO borrows many design elements from a grand piano, including an adjustable lid.

The microPIANO gets its piano sound and stereo piano samples from Korg's flagship digital pianos. In total, there are 61 authentic sounds available. Keyboard sounds include electric pianos, harpsichords, accordion, celeste, organs, clavs, toy pianos, and more. In addition, there are also flutes, strings, harps, bells, and mallet percussion sounds such as marimbas, vibes, steel drums, kalimbas, and music boxes.

Of these 61 sounds, 25 are short phrase sounds that can automatically generate phrases simply by holding down a key. The Natural Touch keyboard provides 61 mini-keys proportioned to provide both the skilled player and the novice with a comfortable playing experience.

The microPIANO features built-in speakers, a headphone jack, and the option of battery power. It is available in black, white, and red.

For more information, contact Korg Canada: 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, www.korgcanada.com.

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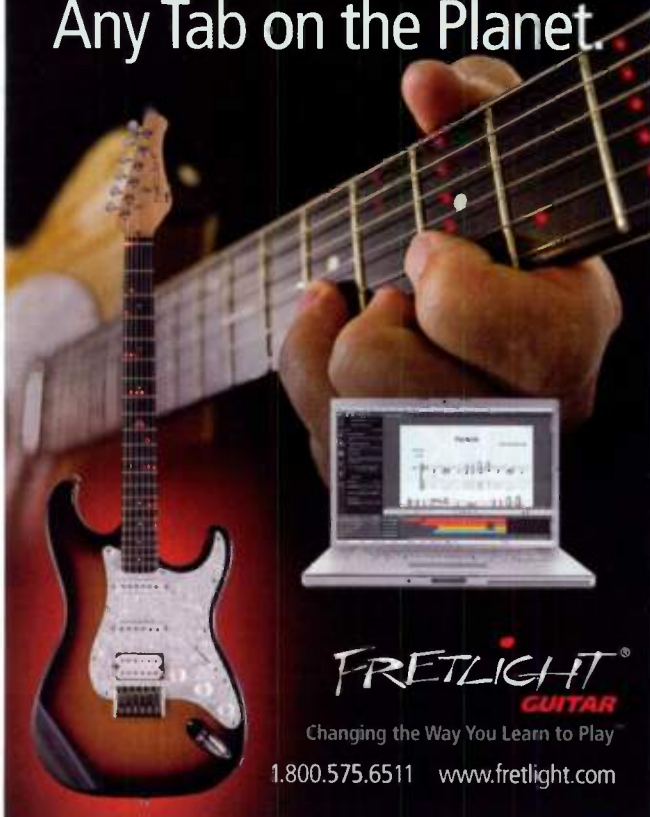
Fender has introduced the first two basses in its new Blacktop line, the Blacktop Precision Bass and Blacktop Jazz Bass guitars.

The Blacktop Precision Bass guitar features two Blacktop Bass humbucking pickups, three Jazz Bass control knobs (volume for each pickup and master tone) and a HiMass bridge. Features include an alder body, maple neck with C shape and gloss urethane finish, rosewood fretboard with 9.5" radius and 20 medium jumbo frets, three-ply black-white-black pickguard, open-gear tuners, and chrome hardware.

The Blacktop Jazz Bass features dual Blacktop split-coil Precision Bass pickups, an alder body, maple neck with C shape and gloss urethane finish, rosewood fretboard with 9.5" radius and 20 medium jumbo frets, three-ply black-white-black pickguard, three Jazz Bass control knobs, a HiMass bridge, open-gear tuners, and chrome hardware.

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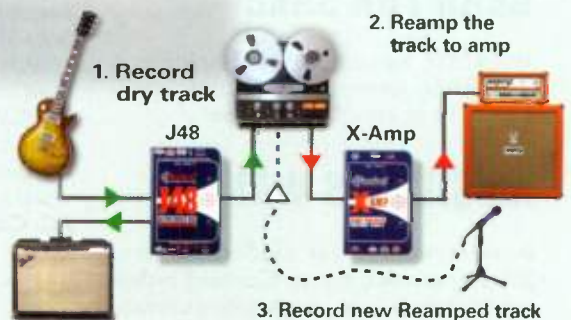
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by Ben Conoley



Sikadime

What: Hip-Hop/Rap
Where: Welland, ON
Visit: www.sikadime.com

Welland, ON's Sikadime isn't your typical hip-hop artist. The 27-year-old has been releasing music independently and through various record labels for the past seven years. In that time he's released 12 solo albums of his tweaked version of '90s west coast hip hop and toured through Canada, Europe, and the United States.

While he's yet to break through into the mainstream, he's received plenty of recognition from those within the hip-hop industry, including members of Cypress Hill (he contributed a verse on "Ride Out" from the group's co-vocalist B-Real) and Sweatshop Union. He's also won a number of awards and has shared the stage with Choclair, D12, Maestro Fresh-Wes, Onyx, and others.

After releasing his last album, *Chronicles Of Eli Razar*, Sikadime moved to California in an effort to get more exposure. While we'll have to wait to see if that pays off, there's always his dozen other a-bums to spin in the meantime.



Static In The Stars

What: Alternative Rock
Where: Vancouver
Visit: www.staticinthestars.com

Static In The Stars blast right out of the garage and into your stereo at a ferocity best experienced with your volume knob cranked. The Vancouver-based quintet plays loud stadium-ready rock n' roll with huge guitars and soaring vocals. The band's latest EP, *Kings Of Last Call*, is short, but packs a powerful punch. It's a follow-up to their 2009 effort, *No Grace In Goodbyes*, and transfers just as well to the stage, which they've shared alongside acts including Pearl Jam, Wintersleep, K-OS, and Billy Talent.

The band has spent the last year touring, picking up some awards here and there and catching the ears of people like Hedley's Tommy Mac, who produced *Kings Of Last Call*, and JUNO-nominated engineer/mixer Dean Maher (AC/DC, Bryan Adams, Nickelback, Rise Against), who also lent his talents to the effort. If the doctor has ordered you to listen to some straight-up rock 'n' roll, look no further than Static In The Stars.



Freeman Dre And The Kitchen Party

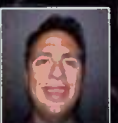
What: Alternative
Where: Toronto
Visit: www.freemandedandthe.kitchenparty.com

Freeman Dre And The Kitchen Party don't have the most ordinary name on the block, and neither do they have a typical style. The Toronto-based band recently won a *NOW Magazine* readers' poll that named Freeman as the city's best songwriter. It's no wonder: the band's anecdotal songs tell tales of life in their Parkdale neighbourhood, a stretch of blocks known for its diversity of people and culture. With songs about everything from relationships to 2010's G20 protests, there are few bands that are able to cover this much lyrical ground with any success.

The lyrics are paired with output from a six-piece band that plays a quirky alternative style, going from alternative to folk to eastern-European accordion jams and back. But forget descriptions; some bands just don't need them!

Freeman Dre And The Kitchen Party are worth checking out on record, but word on the street is that the real spirit of the band can only be captured at their legendary live shows, so make sure you don't miss the opportunity to catch them next time they are in your hood.

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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