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Kid Koala

Goes Multi-Media
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The Bountiful
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Creative Ways
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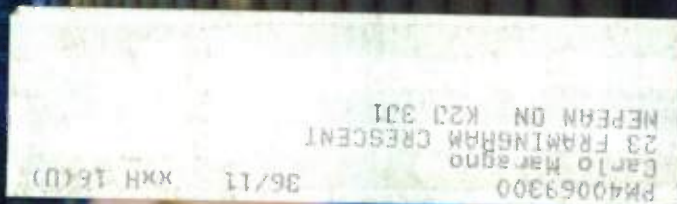
Social Media

New Ideas For
A New(ish) Medium

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Vol. XXIV No.3



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- Michael Piersante

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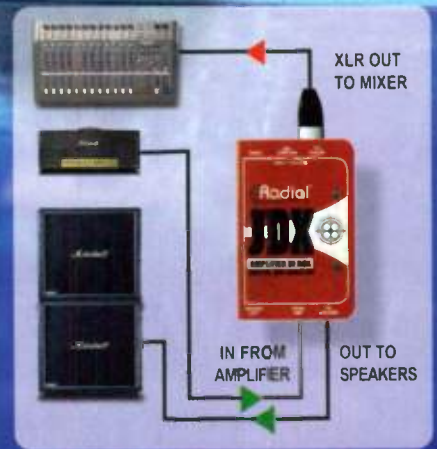
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~ Eddie Mapp

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~ Kevin Madigan - FOH
Lucinda Williams.

"Fans don't care about the technology... so long as the bass and guitars make Godzilla weep and hide like a beaten puppy. The Radial JDX works."

~ Doug Short - FOH
Megadeth, Judas Priest,
Van Halen, Iron Maiden.

"With the JDX, I get consistent, coherent tone night after night and the guitarists love the sound in their in-ears. It simply rocks!"

~ Eddie Mapp - FOH
Evanescence,
Stone Temple Pilots.

"The JDX is almost too good to be true. The artists hear the sound they are playing and I'm not fighting mic coloration. Plug it in & turn it up."

~ Jon Garber - FOH
Rascal Flatts, Brad Paisley.

"The JDX captures my sound with previously unobtainable control and clarity, offering our soundman a direct injection of sonic rage!"

~ Kerry King - Guitarist
Slayer.

"The JDX is nothing short of revolutionary! I can't believe the clarity and dynamics yet it still retains the grind of my amp. It breathes!"

~ Danny Miranda
Bassist - Queen, Blue
Oyster Cult, Meat Loaf.

"The Radial JDX captures the distortion from the bass amp without any loss of low end. And with such a loud band, it also helps eliminate spill."

~ Jon Burton - FOH
The Prodigy, Gomez,
Bjork.

"Folks don't realize how hard it is to make multiple guitar channels live happily together. With a JDX, mic placement is no longer an issue."

~ Bradley Johnson - FOH
Aerosmith, Whitesnake.

"The JDX gives character without the worries of bleed and feedback. I was so surprised how close it sounded to a SM57, I had to double-check."

~ Jim Warren - FOH
Radiohead, Arcade Fire,
Nine Inch Nails.

"I was looking to make the bass 'poke' through in my mix so I tried the JDX. It's a great alternative to mic'ing a dirty cab. I've been using it ever since."

~ Russ Gloux - FOH
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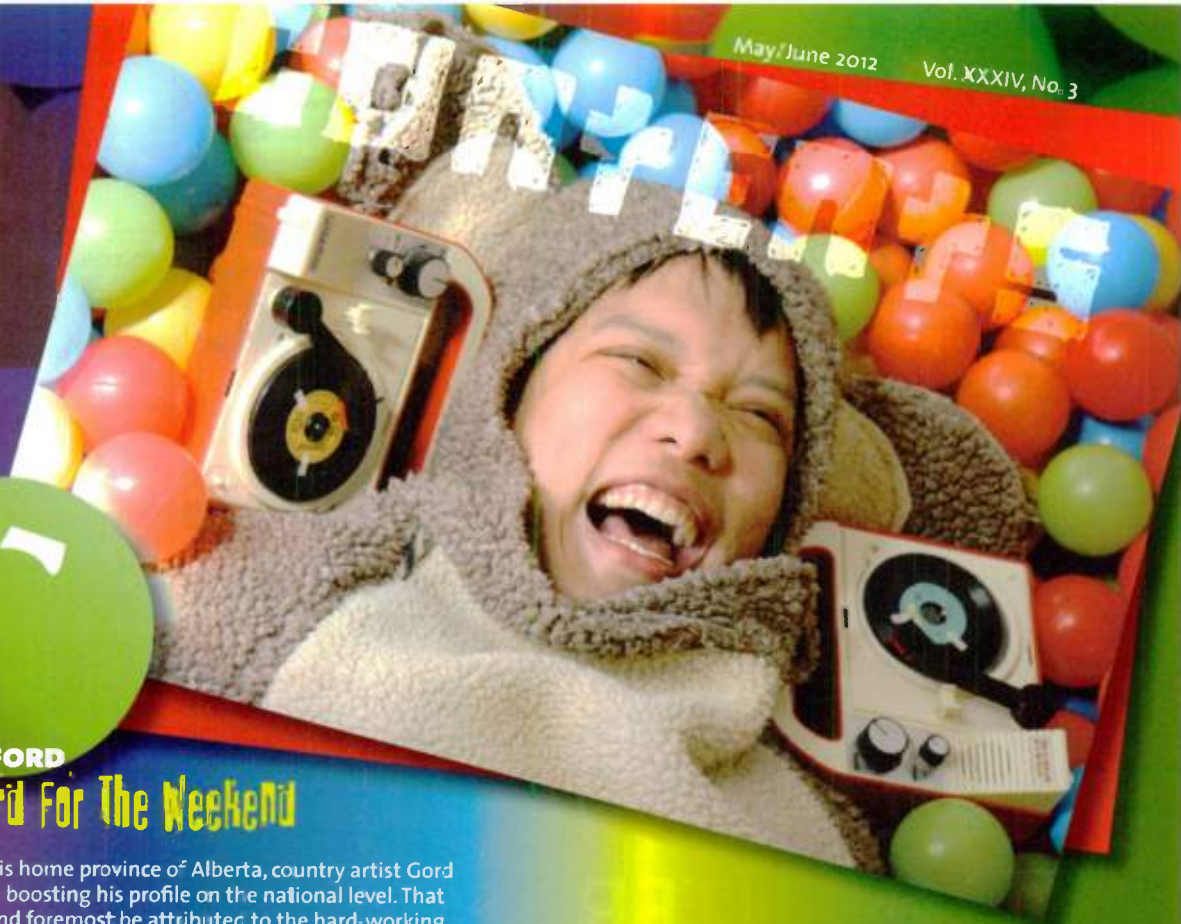
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BY ANDREW KING

Already a star in his home province of Alberta, country artist Gord Bamford has been boosting his profile on the national level. That success can first and foremost be attributed to the hard-working, grassroots approach he's applied to his craft and career.

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BY ANDREW KING

With each record they've released in sequence since their debut, it seems that every strummed chord, dreamy harmony, and subtle stroke of the bow brings Madison Violet a new fan, and 2011's *The Good In Goodbye* only continues that trend.

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BY CRAIG LEACH

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42 **INTERESTING & INNOVATIVE MEANS TO** **Social Media Success**

BY DAVID MCPHERSON

Social media tools have been increasingly integral to the success of musicians over the last decade plus. In *Canadian Musician* as we share some innovative ideas to help make the most of the tools available to musicians today.

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BY ANDREW KING

We've got one hell of a lineup for this year's "Guitar Special," including the massive double-header of Ian Thornley on 31g Wreck's *Albatross* and the almighty Slash on the upcoming *Apocalyptic Love*, plus Michael Occhipinti, Cancer Bats, and more!

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EDITOR
ANDREW KING
 aking@nor.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR
CRAIG LEACH
 cleach@nor.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
 MICHAEL BARTH, ARUN CHATURVEDI, ASHLEY CONDON, BEN CONOLEY, MIKE EDWARDS, PETER JANIS, DOUG JONES, AARON LITTLE, KORY LIVINGSTONE, DAVID MCPHERSON, TERRA NOBLE, JASON RASO, ETHAN RISING, HAL RODRIGUEZ, DANIEL SCHNEE, GLEN SOBEL, KIT WATSON

ART DIRECTOR
JULIE FLEMING
 jfleming@nor.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
KAREN BASHURA
 kbashura@nor.com

CONSUMER SERVICES DIRECTOR
MAUREEN JACK
 mjack@nor.com

PUBLISHER
JIM NORRIS
 jnorris@nor.com

BUSINESS SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE
RYAN DAVID
 rdavid@nor.com

BUSINESS MANAGER
LIZ BLACK
 lblack@nor.com

COMPUTER SERVICES COORDINATOR
MATT NOJONEN
 mnojonen@nor.com

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 For more information on products advertised in *Canadian Musician*, please see page 71 or visit www.canadianmusician.com.

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Rattling The Room Revisited

Got those copies of the mag in the mail today. Thanks so much for having those sent along. That was a fun article you guys put together by the way ("Rattle The Room! CM's 2012 Bass Feature" from the March/April 2012 issue). I enjoyed reading about all the different (and similar) perspectives everyone has.

Take care,

Eva Gardner
Bassist (P!nk, Telstar)



CM Editor Andrew King catches up with Toronto indie rockers The Balconies.

For Your Viewing Pleasure...

Head over to www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia for a whole slew of new videos for your viewing pleasure. Get tips on giving an effective interview with the CBC's Bob Mersereau, or let Kevin Sinclair from SpinCount tell you about radio tracking and whether or not it's something you should be considering. We've got quick tidbits to boost your career from Canadian media icon Alan Cross, TuneCore Founder & CEO Jeff Price, eOne Music Canada's Eric Alper, plus artist interviews with Halifax electro-pop master Rich Aucoin, the hard rock machine that is Monster Truck, plus Radio Radio, The Pack a.d., Arkells, and many more!



A Quick Compliment

Just so you know, I have been reading since the very first issue, and been a subscriber for most of that time. I think you guys are doing a great job.

Terry Fernihough
Nepean, ON



Give Your Career A Boost @Blog Central

Head over to www.canadianmusician.com/blogcentral and check out all the goodies on offer from our talented team of bloggers. We've got Vancouver-based vocal coach and author Angela Kelman offering up some valuable tips for vocalists, publicist Sari Delmar of Audio Blood sharing all kinds of tidbits to take you further, recording engineer Shawn Bradley on getting the most from your recordings, Conestoga College's Mike McConville on guitar repair and design, plus Paul Lau's Hot New Tech Toys blog, and others! There's something there for everyone, and more to come!

WHERE'S MY SHARE?

How Best To Spend Your Time & Money On Social Media



YouTube™



By Kit Watson

Social media is THE buzzword right now, but is it more than that? You may have heard that industry types won't look twice at you unless you can fill the "online stadium," and yet having thousands of Twitter followers doesn't mean anything to the club owner down the street who refuses to book you. Whether you "don't get" Twitter or it's the centre of your universe, you have probably asked yourself more than once, "Why the heck am I doing this?!"

As a small business owner, that's a perfectly valid question. The benefits of social media are usually nebulously alluded to, and many musicians are already feeling the Facebook burnout. So let's discuss what you need in order to make social media work for you, where to expect the opportunities and money to roll in from, and how to spend to give your media a social shove.

Social media is not, by any stretch, a new concept. We have been sharing stories, songs, and art for millennia. The only thing that's new about this new incarnation of storytelling is that we're doing it through personal effects, such as cell phones, which connect us to a network of other users we may either love dearly or have never met. While technology has made it very easy to share content, what we choose to share, and where we choose to share it, provides a roadmap to getting tangible results from social media.

Decisions, Decisions...

The first important decision to make is which social media sites you will use, and then it's up to you to provide the right content. My clients have had the best results from being heavily active



KIERAN STRANGE

on Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, and their own websites. Facebook is always at the top of everyone's list, but your personal profile is likely to get you more activity due to the one-on-one nature versus a Facebook Fan Page, which won't see the same volume of comments and likes. Picking three outlets to spend most of your time on makes it easy to start building a solid base.

It's All About Content

Your next goal is to provide unique

content for each of these outlets. Good content is at least one of three things: funny, emotional, or educational and noteworthy. Examples of good content are well-written blog posts, cover songs on YouTube, photos posted to Twitter, and your original material presented in a way that's fresh. Another area for good content lies in the act of reaching out to fans. When you put your fan in the centre of your focus, you build a lasting emotional connection to them that elevates them from a simple number

CARLI & JULIE KENNEDY

to super-fan. In all of this, interactivity is key, and this will lead you to begin reaping the ROI (return-on-investment) of your social media campaign.

Reap The Rewards

The first area of ROI artists see from their social media is entirely non-monetary, and entirely necessary: a consistent base of emotional support. Your friends may not get why you spend all your time in your basement studio, and your family may not understand why you don't put the drumsticks down and get a real job, but your fans DO.

When you've paid your "social dues," have been there for your fans, and given them great content, they're going to be there to remind you of why you're doing this. "Twitter has been one of the best marketing and fan-building tools for us as artists. Through Twitter, we are able to connect with our fans on a personal one-to-one basis," says Julie Kennedy, one half of the country-folk twin set Carli and Julie Kennedy. "It is so encouraging to log on every day and receive personal messages from people who support us and listen to our music."

The second area of ROI is the amount of creativity and resources you will be able to tap into, which translates into more albums sold and more shows booked. There's a lot that a large Twitter following can do for you as an artist, in ways you may not expect. Forget about the industry – in the end, they won't be paying your bills. Not only can you ask your fans to submit designs for a t-shirt, but you can also look to them to help you book tours. Music fans go to shows, know who's hot in their area, and which venue has toilets that always back up.

"My best show opportunities have always come from my fans. They've told me who to play with and have even gone out to the venues to drop off press kits for me and find out what promoters to work with. I just had to tell them what to say, and what to ask," says UK-born Kieran Strange, an electronic-rock artist who now resides in Canada. "A fan in Texas happened to know a talent buyer for a major festival. She passed a



Nirvana cover I'd done over to him, and the next thing I knew I was booked to play in front of 8,000 people in a place I never toured before."

Hired Help?

There are situations where you need to invest money into social media. They relate to two areas: content and strategy. Invest in your content. Have your own domain; don't rely on Facebook or MySpace. It's worth the money to invest in decent recording equipment so you can record good covers for YouTube at home. License your covers and push them out as singles to iTunes to pay for a videographer for larger-scale cover videos and sign up for services like Mailchimp (mailing lists) and Hootsuite (push updates out to multiple sites at once).

Putting content aside and moving onto strategy, it's worthwhile to hire a social media professional. Like any artist, a good consultant lives and breathes social media like it's their form of art, and having them come up with a strategy for you over several months can be a lifesaver if you're floundering. Picking the right consultant is important, though. Don't pay for services that promise "500 followers in five days" (they're not likely to be real accounts that follow you, and if they are, they have no emotional connection to you)

and don't take anyone on their word that they can make your video go viral. Social media growth should be steady. Too many new fans or followers in a day can flag your account to be taken down off of Twitter or Facebook, wasting all the time and money you've put into building it!

Once you have a firm grasp on what content to push out onto what sites – and that it is more important to reach out and communicate with people first rather than waiting for them to come to you – you will see the direct rewards of investing time and money into social media. It will allow you to stay in touch with fans when not touring in their area and continue to build your following while you're in the studio. There's also nothing like unlocking your iPhone after getting a bad album review only to find 50 of your fans defending your work and reminding you of how you've touched their lives with your music – the reason you're playing in the first place.

Kit Watson is the founder of RockitGirl – a management, booking, development, and social media group working with both signed and independent artists of all genres. Her clients have won social media awards and have walked red carpets. Contact her at: kit@rockitgirlmedia.com, www.rockitgirlmedia.com.

PHOTOS: DANIEL BRAY

Canadians Swarm SXSW 2012



THE BALCONIES (ON)

FACTOR (SK)



JORDAN COOK (SK)

SXSW 2012 By The Numbers

• This year's edition of South By Southwest (SXSW), which took place from March 9-18, 2012 in Austin, TX, welcomed musicians and members from international music industries to congregate, network, and take in some great live performances. Here's a breakdown-by-numbers of this year's SXSW:

- **Music Festival Showcasing Acts:** 2,286 (547 international acts from 49 foreign countries)
- **Music Festival Stages:** 104
- **Music Festival Bands That Applied:** 10,313
- **Music Conference Participants:** 18,988
- **Music Conference Sessions:** 182
- **Music Media in Attendance (approximate):** 3,220
- **Auditorium Shores Stage Attendance over three days:** 55,000
- **SXSW Trade Show Exhibit Spaces/Attendance:** 583/65,000
- **Music Gear Expo Exhibit Spaces/Attendance:** 51/20,500
- **Official SXSW Parties:** 165
- **Hotel Room Nights Booked:** 50,814



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JUNO HOST WILLIAM SHATNER



FEIST PERFORMS "THE BAD IN EACH OTHER" DURING THE 2012 JUNO BROADCAST

Feist & The Sheepdogs Lead The Way At The 2012 JUNO Awards

• The 2012 broadcast of the JUNO Awards, which took place in Ottawa on April 1, saw favourite Feist and first-time JUNO nominees The Sheepdogs both pick up three awards, leading all other nominees.

Feist was presented with the JUNO Award for Artist of the Year at the broadcast, having already accepted awards for Adult Alternative Album of the Year and Music DVD of the Year at the Gala Dinner & Awards held the previous night. Meanwhile, The Sheepdogs picked up the New Group of the Year and Rock Album of the Year awards as well as the award for Single of the Year for "I Don't Know."

Other big winners at this year's broadcast were: Dan Mangan, who accepted two awards; Michael Bubl , who garnered the JUNO Award for Album of the Year; and Justin Bieber, who won the Fan Choice Award for the second year in a row. Rock icons Blue Rodeo were inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame by Sarah McLachlan, who then joined them onstage for a performance of "Lost Together."

The broadcast, hosted by William Shatner, was CTV's highest rated show that evening with over 1.6 million viewers. As always, winning and performing artists benefited from an increase in record and digital music sales post-broadcast, dubbed the JUNO Effect. Sales of Feist's latest album *Metals* doubled, while digital track sales for several performers significantly rose over the week leading up to the awards.

The 2013 JUNO Week and Awards celebrations will be held in Regina, SK from April 15-21, with the Gala being broadcast live on CTV from the Brandt Centre on Sunday, April 21, 2013. For more information, visit: www.junoawards.ca.

12-Year-Old Strums His Way To 2012 Domenic Troiano Scholarship

• Winnipeg's James Graham was recently presented with the 2012 Domenic Troiano Guitar Scholarship, a \$10,000 award which is presented annually to one Canadian guitarist who will be pursuing a post-secondary education on guitar.

"I felt really excited and it's an honour to be chosen as the winner," says Graham on being selected. "Whatever I do later on, I always want to be playing guitar," adds the youngster, who is registered in the Enrichment Program at the Division of Preparatory Studies at the University of Manitoba and recently completed his first recording.

The application deadline for 2013 is November 30. Visit www.domenictroiano.com for more information.



JAMES GRAHAM WITH HIS INSTRUCTOR RYSZARD TYBOROWSKI.



THE SHEEPDOGS

30th Edition Of CMW Breaks Records

- Music, interactive, and broadcasting professionals from around the globe converged to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Canadian Music Week (CMW), held in Toronto over five days from March 21-25. Registering record numbers, more than 2,400 industry representatives, 4,743 musicians, and 1,054 bands from over 43 different countries attended the annual conference, music festival, and awards ceremony.

Industry-related seminars, initiatives, and conferences were presented over the five days. Musical icons Burton Cummings, Paul Rodgers, and Slash shared stories and insights during in-depth celebrity interviews while renowned promoter Harvey Goldsmith addressed delegates on the ins-and-outs of concert promotion.

The Canadian Music and Broadcast Industry Awards honoured husband and wife duo Chantal Kreviazuk and Raine Maida with the Allan Slaight Humanitarian Spirit Award while Riley O'Connor and Daniel Lanois accepted their Lifetime Achievement Awards and John Derringer was presented with the Allan Waters Broadcast Lifetime Achievement Award.

The SiriusXM Indies awards featured performances by Pavlo, The Pack A.D., Young Empires, Dan Mangan, The Sheepdogs, and Indies Hall of Fame inductees Treble Charger, who reunited after a decade apart.

The 2013 edition of CMW will take place March 20-24. To view all of Canadian Music Week's winners and performers, visit www.cmw.net.



SLASH BEING INTERVIEWED DURING THE CONFERENCE.



MC FLIPSIDE

CDJ Show Grows Again In 2012

- The 2012 Canadian DJ Show (CDJ Show), which ran March 17-18, 2012 at the Doubletree by Hilton Toronto Airport, marked the largest edition of the show in the three years since its inception.

"Canada has an incredible amount of talent," says Ryan Schroyens, CDJ Show Founder, of the nation's DJ community. "It's essential for us to get together as an industry and get this industry going. The Canadian DJ Show is the platform to do that."

The first day of the two-day event provided attendees with a slew of seminar topics and panels while the second offered exhibiting companies a chance to show off the latest products and technologies catering to the nightclub and special event venue owners, promoters, agents, and mobile DJ companies on the show floor.

For more information on next year's show as it becomes available, visit: www.cdjshow.com.

(L-R) JESSE PERIARD, ROWEN GALLANT & CALEB GALLANT OF PEI'S TEN STRINGS AND A GOAT SKIN HAD FEET STOMPING AT THE OLD TRIANGLE IN MONCTON.

ECMA 2012 Makes Plenty Of Noise In Moncton

• After a successful run from April 11-15, the 2012 edition of East Coast Music Week culminated the evening of the 15th with the annual Awards Gala where Hey Rosetta!, Matt Andersen, David Myles, Keith Mullins, and Scott MacMillan were all presented with multiple awards.

PHOTO: JON BURKE



PHOTO: MIKEY WASNIDGE



FREDERICTON'S WHALE SKIN DOMINATED THE DANCEFLOOR AT THE OXYGEN CLUB.

The week itself was full of showcase performances by the east coast's best, from up-and-coming acts through to household names, scattered across the city of Moncton, NB in a myriad of venues surrounding the host hotel, the Delta Beauséjour. Also presented over the course of the event was the annual conference programming, featuring plenty of panels and presentations designed to advance the careers of the Atlantic provinces' musicians and industry members.

CM was onsite during the event. Visit www.canadianmusician.com/blog for a recap and www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia for helpful videos with some industry insiders as well as some artist interviews.

For more information on the event and the association, contact the ECMA: 800-513-4953, www.ecma.com.



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STEVE'S MUSIC'S MONTREAL STOREFRONT

“The End Of An Era”

Steve Kirman: 1947-2012



STEVE KIRMAN

• On Saturday, March 3, 2012, the Canadian music industry lost a titan in the world of music retail. Steve Kirman, President and Founder of the Steve's Music chain of music stores, passed away at the age of 65.

Kirman, affectionately known as Mr. Steve among the employees of his iconic chain of music stores, first opened the Montreal location of Steve's Music 47 years ago in 1965 at the age of 19. That store remains a landmark in the city, and over the years, Steve's Music opened two additional locations in Toronto and Ottawa, both of which have been established as destination stores in their respective cities.

Canadian Musician extends its deepest sympathies to the Kirman Family and those at Steve's Music.

New Showcase Site To Support Aboriginal Artists

Musique Nomade, a mobile studio service designed to meet the career development needs of First Nations musicians in Quebec by allowing them to make professional recordings and videos, has launched its website. This interactive website includes online profiles of Aboriginal musicians, video clips, songs for free download, photos, a concert calendar, music tips, and information about the Aboriginal communities and nations in Quebec. Visit the new site at: www.musquemomade.com.



BAD RELIGION

PHOTO: ANDRIJA DIMITRIJEVIC

Get Ready! NXNE Announces Prelim Lineup

• The Flaming Lips, Bad Religion, Good Riddance, No Use For A Name, Raekwon, Ghostface Killah, and Matthew Good, among a buffet of others, have all been confirmed to perform at this year's NXNE, taking place in the streets, clubs, and squares of Toronto from June 11-17.

Hit up www.nxne.com for the complete low-down, including what's on the schedule for the Interactive portion of the annual conference and festival.

TY SEGALL



JOHNNY HILAND

Stellar Lineup Slated For Guitar Workshop Plus 2012

• The 2012 Guitar Workshop Plus program has announced its artist lineup for this year's edition of the annual intensive guitar instruction sessions. Slated for this year are Tommy Emmanuel, Guthrie Govan, Billy Sheehan, Johnny Hiland, Dave Martone, and Ian Thornley, among several others.

The two Toronto sessions will take place July 15-20 and July 22-27 at Appleby College in Oakville, just west of Toronto. The Vancouver session will run August 12-17 at Quest University, just north of Vancouver in Squamish, BC.

Courses are offered for all skill levels, ages 12 through adult, in styles including blues, jazz, rock, acoustic, and classical. Each day consists of morning and afternoon classes and late afternoon clinics, ensemble performances, and evening concerts.

For more information, contact Guitar Workshop Plus: 905-567-8000, FAX 905-785-2831, info@guitarworkshop-plus.com, www.guitarworkshopplus.com.

Alan Parsons Master Class Session Coming To Toronto

• Global Music Depot has confirmed the first Canadian Master Class Training Session with producer/engineer Alan Parsons (The Beatles, Pink Floyd), taking place at Noble Street Studios in Toronto on May 26, 2012.

Attendees will receive a copy of Parsons' 3-DVD set *The Art & Science of Sound Recording* as well as an invite-only ticket to the evening's VIP Meet & Greet event. Some refreshments and meals are also included.

For more information, including ticket options and prices, visit www.globalmusicdepot.com.



ALL GEARED-UP



THE HOOTENANNY

Music & Hockey Collide At 2012 Hockey Summit Of The Arts

• Hockey teams from across Canada comprising members of the national arts communities embarked on the annual Easter weekend pilgrimage to Toronto this year for the 13th Hockey Summit Of The Arts hockey tournament, which pits artist-based teams from various locales across the nation against one another over three days of hockey, music, and community.

"The mission of what we're trying to do is build community through hockey and the arts," comments tournament Founder Tom Goodwin. "We really work hard on making it a collective effort with everyone sharing the accountability and responsibility of running the event." Those responsibilities and community-building events include mingles, artistic endeavors, and charitable work, happening throughout the year and during the tournament. Perhaps the highlight of these initiatives are the cabaret-style Hootenannies that take-over the infamous El Mocambo both nights of the tournament weekend where each team is tasked with performing a set.

Teams interested in playing next year's tournament are encouraged to contact the organizers. The 2013 Hockey Summit Of the Arts will again take place during the Easter weekend in Toronto. For more information, visit: www.hockeysummit.org or www.hockeyaa.net.

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- Matt Sabb
Monkey Junk



info@dreamcymbals.com - www.dreamcymbals.com

NSAI Toronto Presents Tin Pan North

• Celebrating the craft of songwriting, Tin Pan North is hosting its 13th annual festival May 24-26, 2012 in four clubs across Toronto. The festival, organized by the Toronto chapter of the Nashville Songwriters Association International, pays homage to the Tin Pan South Songwriter's Festival that takes place each spring in Nashville.

"This festival has come a long way in a decade," says Bart Herbison, Executive Director of NSAI, "from a little showcase in a suburban library to a major music festival featuring some top names in songwriting. We applaud our

Toronto Chapter's efforts to expand the reach of Tin Pan South and the celebration of songs and songwriters."

This year, the festival will feature headliners including Victoria Banks, Ryan Laird, The Jeffersons, Marshall Dane, Jory Nash, and Rob Crosby, among others, and will take place at Black Swan, C'est What, and Moonshine Café, with the Gala being hosted on Saturday, May 26 at The Eton House Tavern

For more information, contact the NSAI Toronto Chapter: 905-453-6104, nsaitoronto@gmail.com, www.nsaitoronto.com.



HABANA COMPAS DANCE GROUP

KoSA Cuba 2012 Continues Track Record Of Success

• KoSA Cuba held its annual workshop and festival from March 4-11, 2012. The one-week intensive study program included conferences, hands-on classes, private lessons, and evening concerts in historic Havana. The week started with an educational conference and an introduction to Cuban music by ethnomusicologist Dr. Olavo Alén.

The event featured programming like Conga drum classes were lead by Tomas Ramos "El Panga," Yaroldi Abreu, as well as Adel Gonzales. Timbale classes were conducted by Jean Roberto Figueroa from Klimax, sharing his personal "timba rhythm" approach to the instrument. Special guest Roberto Smith, inventor of the new foot maraca shaker, demonstrated the ultimate independence in performance as a solo percussionist covering all percussion parts. The 2013 edition of KoSA Cuba and the Havana Drum Festival will take place March 3-10.

For more information, visit: www.kosamusic.com or contact KoSA at info@kosamusic.com.



Name: Stevie Connor
(www.weedanmusic.com)
Location: Port Credit, ON
Brand/Model: Henderson Bagpipes
Year: Circa 1890-1910
Price Paid: \$2,000
Estimated Value Today: \$16,000

When, where, and how did you obtain this piece of gear?

My father, a world-class piper from Scotland, received a phone call to say that someone's uncle had died and they were selling his pipes that had been lying under his bed for years. The caller

wanted someone who would play them and care for them, so my father bought the pipes for \$2,000. He is also a bagpipe maker and recognized that the instrument was over 100 years old and in mint condition. He showed them to me and I fell in love. When I played them I did not want to give them back, but my father's intentions were to refurbish and sell them.

Have any modifications/upgrades been made to this piece of gear?

My father sent them to a bagpipe maker to have silver mounts put on them at his own cost, increasing the value considerably. The bagpipe maker went into receivership whilst the pipes were in the shop and, after some struggle to prove the pipes were his, my father got them back and they had already had the silver mounted, for which he did not have to pay. The increase in value was enormous and it is now a much sought-after instrument. After a lot of thought, he knew I would care for and play them with all my heart, so he sold them to me for the price he paid: \$2,000.

What's your favourite feature of this piece of gear?

The sweet tone of the drones is amaz-



ing! I'm playing an instrument that is over 100 years old and a real piece of history. The company that manufactured them closed in 1910 and had only manufactured pipes for 20 years. There are not a lot of these instruments anywhere in the world and the fact that they sound so sweet today is amazing.

What's your most memorable moment with this piece of gear?

When I first played them in my father's living room, I played a tune, stopped, looked at my dad, and we both smiled at each other. His words were: "You need the pipes, and the pipes need you."

Do you have a rare, unique, or just plain interesting piece of gear you want to share with the Canadian Musician readership? Visit www.canadianmusician.com/gearheads, fill out the form, and upload a high-res photo of you and your gear. We'll take care of the rest.

■ Taylor Guitars Road Show

Toronto, ON
May 15, 2012
619-258-1207
www.taylorguitars.com

■ Taylor Guitars Road Show

Niagara Falls, ON
May 16, 2012
619-258-1207
www.taylorguitars.com

■ Taylor Guitars Road Show

Hamilton, ON
May 17, 2012
619-258-1207
www.taylorguitars.com

■ Date With A Demo

Toronto, ON
May 29, 2012
416-961-1588, FAX 416-961-2040
events@songwriters.ca,
www.songwriters.ca

■ New York Amp Show 2012

Secaucus, NJ
June 2-3, 2012
818-992-0745
loni@ampshow.com,
www.ampshow.com

■ PianoTexas 2012

June 7-July 1, 2012
817-257-7456, FAX 817-257-0178
info-pianotexas@tcu.edu,
www.pianotexas.org

■ Montreal International Musical Competition: Voice 2012

Montreal, QC
June 8, 2012
514 845-4108, FAX 514 845-8241
info@concoursmontreal.ca,
www.concoursmontreal.ca

■ Mahtadi International Drumming Festival

Toronto, ON
June 9-10, 2012
416-848-3838
www.muhtadidrumfest.com

■ NXNE 2012

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

■ ASBDA 2012 Convention

Asheville, NC
June 19-23, 2012
563-252-2500
www.asbda.com

■ 2012 NAFME Music Education Week

Baltimore, MD
June 22-25, 2012
703-860-4000
www.nafme.org

■ 2012 COCA National Conference

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

■ S.C.E.N.E. Music Festival

St. Catharines, ON
June 26, 2012
www.scenemusicfestival.ca

■ Montreal International Jazz Festival 2012

Montreal, QC
June 28-July 7, 2012
514-871-1881
commentaires_jazz@equipespectra.ca,
www.montrealjazzfest.com

■ Montreal Guitar Show 2012

Montreal, QC
June 29-July 1, 2012
514-525-7732
info_sgm@equipespectra.ca,
www.montrealguitarshow.com

■ Charlottetown Summerfest 2012

Charlottetown, PE
June 30-July 2, 2012
www.charlottetownsummerfest.com

■ Stickman Drum Experience

Black Strap Lake, SK
July 4-7, 2012
306-529-3589, FAX 306-543-0336
info@stickmandrumexperience.com,
www.stickmandrumexperience.com

■ 2012 Halifax Jazz Festival

Halifax, NS
July 6-14, 2012
902-492-2225
info@jazeera.com,
www.halifaxjazzfestival.ca

■ Summer NAMM 2012

Nashville, TN
July 12-14, 2012
760-438-8001, FAX 760-438-7327
info@namm.org, www.namm.org

■ 35th Annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, BC
July 13-15, 2012
604-602-9798, FAX 604-602-9790
info@thefestival.bc.ca,
www.thefestival.bc.ca

■ Guitar Workshop Plus Toronto 2012

Toronto, ON
Session 1: July 15-20, 2012
Session 2: July 22-27, 2012
905-567-8000
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ 2012 Beaches International Jazz Festival

Toronto, ON
July 20-29, 2012
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064
infobeachesjazz@rogers.com,
www.beachesjazz.com

■ KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Drum Camp & Festival

Castleton, VT
July 24-29, 2012
800-541-8401
info@kosamusic.com,
www.kosamusic.com

■ Hillside Festival 2012

Guelph, ON
July 27-29, 2012
519-763-6396, FAX 519-763-9514
info@hillsidefestival.ca,
www.hillsidefestival.ca

■ The Canadian Guitar Festival

Kingston, ON
August 3-5, 2012
888-506-1418
llhpark@gmail.com

■ 35th Annual Canmore Folk Music Festival

Canmore, AB
August 4-6, 2012
403-678-2524
info@canmorefolkfestival.ca,
www.canmorefolkfestival.com

■ 40th Annual National Flute Association Convention

Las Vegas, NV
August 9-12, 2012
661-299-6680, FAX 661-299-6681
nfapc2012@gmail.com,
www.nfaonline.org



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Event 20/20 BAS V3 Studio Monitors

By Ethan Rising

The Event 20/20 studio monitor is a design well-known around the world. Different incarnations have hit the market over the years since its original launch in the mid-'90s, which put Event on the map as a serious loudspeaker designer. Most popular was the Bi-Amplified version that was adopted in studios around the world – arguably the most successful speaker of its kind.

Event has since designed and released more current models using more current technology, but the demand remains for the sound that users have come to depend on. In response, Event has taken the same cabinet layout and size with the same front-ported design and re-tooled the electronics, amps, and drivers using techniques discovered during the design of its Opal monitors. The result? A classic sound with more juice and less noise. Their trusted design and fact that they're available for under \$1,000 per pair makes them a very tempting option for today's engineers.

The cabinet maintains the same layout and volume as the original, but it is apparent that it has received some structural upgrades with a bit of a face-lift as well. Weighing in at 17 kg, the speaker feels very sturdy and durable. A rugged design helps ensure the speaker will handle higher SPLs without generating unwanted resonances within the cabinet. The cabinet also has a modernized aesthetic with its rounded edges and corners and a sleek matted black finish that gives it a very professional and utilitarian look. The 20/20 also employs a 7.1" woofer and a 1" silk-domed tweeter, each discretely amp'd with 80 W Class AB amps (capable of an advertised 250 W burst power per speaker). The inter-

nal crossover is set at 2,300 Hz and I found it to be very transparent. Its rear panel layout is straightforward and features separate high and low frequency controls (+/- 3dB) and output trim (+/- 12dB), two inputs (XLR and RCA), a standard Euro-style power input, and an on/off switch. I would like to have seen notched gain controls for easy alignment between speakers; however, at this price point I am willing to forgive. Advertised frequency response of the monitors is 35 Hz-20 kHz \pm 2dB, which is very respectable.

When I first hooked up the 20/20s in the studio, it was immediately apparent why Event has been using the slogan "Big Ass Sound." I would describe the sound as "thick." There seems to be an emphasis on the lower-mids while still delivering the lows. At first I found that the high end seemed a bit soft compared to what I am used to, though I was able to dial up the HF on the rear controls to suit my taste.

The speakers translated very well, giving a nice stereo image with decent transient response. Given the 20/20 BAS' price point, I was more than satisfied with its capabilities. This speaker is one of the best performers I've heard in its price range. Where I found the speakers excelled was during tracking. I found myself really enjoying the low-mid boost while laying down drums, bass, and electric and acoustic guitars. Also, the monitors handle high SPLs very well, making my clients and I smile when we were able to blow the doors off the room with what we'd just recorded. Distortion only became



apparent at uncomfortable volumes, displaying a well-designed and over-powered amplifier section.

These speakers are a true bargain. A professional sound and design at less than \$1,000 a pair makes for a great deal. I can see these speakers being an ideal choice for hip-hop, pop, or electronic music-oriented studios with their fat sound and loads of gain. Looking for a pair of monitors can be a difficult process, especially when on a budget! There are many features people look for in monitors: accuracy, available frequency range, low distortion, and pure SPL, but what makes someone love a monitor is comfort. Having the ability to know how you're affecting your mix for every speaker, and not just your speakers, can only come with a degree of trust. Event has made a working combination that has been a mainstay in studios for over 15 years. That's a true sign that engineers have come to trust this design, and their reputation is upheld with this latest version. In the end, however, monitor selection is a very personal choice. Only you can decide what monitor is right for your ears, but if you're in the market for a pair of monitors, be sure to give these a listen.

Ethan Rising
Producer & Co-Owner of Winding Path Media
www.windingpathmedia.com



HARRIS
I N S T I T U T E

Harris Grads Leading Canadian Music Industry



Graduates of Toronto's Harris Institute are in leadership roles in every area of the Canadian music, audio and digital media industries.

The college's alumni are in senior positions at Universal Music Group, Sony/ATV Music Publishing, IMAX Corporation, Metalworks Studios, Lacquer Channel Mastering, Technicolor, EMIMusic Canada, SOCAN, Phase One Studios, PA Plus, CTV, Sony Music, Alliance Films, CBC, S.L.Feldman & Associates, Nelvana, Rogers, Catherine North Studios, Westbury National Show Systems, Arts & Crafts, Norwegian Cruise Line, FACTOR, Joao Carvalho Mastering, Pente Group, Ontario Science Centre, Astral Media, Vapor Music, Toronto Special Events, Tour Tech East, MaRS Discovery District, The Orange Lounge Studios, Ubisoft, Production Design International, AVW-TELAV, Toronto Musicians Association, Warner Music Canada, Tattersall Sound, The Agency Group, Metalworks Institute, The Management Trust, Pilchner Schoustal International, among others and many graduates have started their own successful companies.

In preparation for its 25th anniversary, Harris Institute is celebrating graduate accomplishments with a new "Where Are They Now?" section on its website.

"The only true measure of a post secondary school is the outcome for its graduates," says John Harris, who founded the college in 1989. "Our faculty and staff are thrilled to see so many former students achieving their goals and strengthening the Canadian music industry."

See "Where Are They Now?" at

HARRISINSTITUTE.COM

BOSS GT-100 Guitar Processor

By Hal Rodriguez

The GT-100 is the latest model in BOSS' popular line of GT multi-effects units and has several new features that set it apart from the preceding GT-10 model. These include newly-remodeled COSM amp models, a dual LCD screen interface, and an A/B channel switching option for each preset for even more tonal possibilities while playing. The GT-100 ambitiously aims to put all of the most desirable guitar amps and effects, complete with deep editing capabilities, into one definitive effects unit.

I tested the GT-100 through the clean channel of a tube combo amplifier at moderate volumes. The unit contains a total of 200 factory and user presets, 21 different types of overdrive/distortion models, and 25 popular amp models suited for clean to high gain settings and everything in between. Add to this an abundance of delays, modulators, and other novel effects, including a "defretter," and you have a dizzying array of sonic options ready for action at your feet.

The most striking aesthetic feature of the GT-100 is its dual LCD screens, which displayed large, bright, and easy-to-read menus as I scrolled through the presets using two bank pedals. Each bank contained four presets that I could access using any of the four numbered pedals on the unit. The screens displayed the name of each preset and had eight knobs right below that allowed me to quickly adjust controls such as gain and EQ.

Upon trying the presets, I immediately noticed how full and warm-sounding all the GT-100's high-gain rhythm and lead tones were. They effectively turned the clean channel of my amp into a saturated and natural-sounding lead channel without any detectable noise. The GT-100's "Accel" pedal also enabled toggling between two A and B channels, which differed in the amount of gain. This made the "Accel" pedal a very handy feature for switching between lead and rhythm playing once I settled on a desired preset.

By pressing the two bank pedals simultaneously, I entered the unit's "Manual" mode, where I could control the effects assigned to eight pedals and the expression pedal. This is where the GT-100 flexes its powerful editing ca-



pabilities. In this mode, the dual screen displayed a virtual pedal board layout, which made it easy to see which effects were assigned to the pedals. By pressing the "Effect" button, the left screen changed to display the entire chain of effects (consisting of up to 13 programmable units) in the preset. In here, I could use the knobs to scroll through each effect in the chain while the right screen displayed submenus containing all the possible parameters that could be adjusted.

In this mode, I was able to audition the GT-100's exhaustive collection of amp models and effects. The higher-gain amps like the "5150" and selection of overdrives were excellent, and I could control many other variables beyond EQ such as speakers, microphone, and even mic placement. I found the latter two controls to be essential in achieving the right amount of realism from the unit.

While this manual editing process provides the user with detailed control over every aspect of their tone, BOSS also offers a simpler and quicker way to dial in a sound with the "EZ Tone" button. This button brought up a menu on the right screen that allowed me to scroll through a list of tones categorized by genre such as "Blues," "Progressive," "Modern Metal," and more. In addition, the "EZ Tone" menu also features a virtual EQ graph where the X-axis represents the highs, the Y-axis represents the gain, and a marker indicates where the current tone lies. By using the knobs, I could move the marker to

different areas of the graph and adjust my tone until I found my sweet spot.

Conclusion

For guitarists who want the utmost flexibility and control in shaping their tone, the BOSS GT-100 offers a comprehensive array of amps, effects, and editing possibilities. This powerful unit's "Manual" mode gives one maximum control over their amp and chain of effects while the "EZ Tone" button feature is handy for finding a tone quickly for demo recordings and rehearsals. The GT-100's collection of amps and effects provides high-quality tones for every possible style and excels at higher gain settings. With all its remarkable features, BOSS's GT-100 is a serious contender for the leading unit in the world of multi-effects.

Hal Rodriguez is a Toronto based guitarist, bassist, songwriter, and music teacher. Check out his blog, The Six String Shed, at www.canadianmusician.com/blogcentral. He can be contacted at halromusic@gmail.com.

Manufacturer's Comment

Other features of the GT-100 that users might find valuable are the unit's 38-second phrase looper with unlimited overdubs, allowing guitarists to stop and re-trigger their loops in a live situation, and its USB audio interfacing capabilities for computer recording.

Carl Langevin
Guitar & Amplifier Sales Specialist
Roland Canada Ltd.

Fender Mustang Floor Multi-Effects Unit

By Hal Rodriguez

The Mustang Floor is the first ever multi-effects unit from Fender. Part of its new Mustang series of amplifiers, the Floor offers the guitarist vast sonic possibilities with 100 factory and user presets, 12 amp models, and 37 effects. The unit boasts simple operation with its sleek design and intuitive control using a Data Wheel, LCD screen, nine footswitches, and a control pedal.

I tested the Mustang Floor through the clean channel of a tube amplifier at moderate volumes. Despite the myriad of tones it offers, the layout of the Mustang is clean and user-friendly. A single footswitch toggles between two modes: Preset and FX Select. In Preset mode, I was able to easily scroll through all 100 presets contained in the banks, using two "Bank" footswitches. Five other footswitches enabled immediate access to all five presets in each bank and their names were clearly displayed in the small but easy-to-read LCD screen.

There were more than enough sounds available from extremely clean to high-gain settings. Some of the many presets that stood out for me were "Bassman Drive" for Texas-inspired blues and "AussieRock" for classic rock tones. These presets added a pleasing, natural character to my amp and had desirable medium gain tones ready for use without any tweaking necessary; however, it was the Mustang's lush clean presets that I found to be the most impressive. They had a fullness and complexity that lent itself well to finger picking chords and playing harmonics. A separate Tap Tempo footswitch also automatically lit up for the clean presets that had delays and modulation effects assigned to them.

At first I found the higher-gain metal and solo presets to be slightly noisy and harsh in the high frequencies; however, it was easy to access the controls for the presets' noise gate, treble, and presence. By simply pressing the "Amp" and "Stomp" buttons below the LCD screen and using the large Data Wheel to scroll through the menus, I found the controls I was looking for. Other presets were novel and fun to use, such as the remarkable "Reverse Delay" and "Double Track Stack," the latter of which simulates playing through two stacks.



Switching to "FX Select" mode, I was able to customize the tone and effects assigned to each preset and save the settings into the user banks. In this mode, the footswitches for different presets now become on/off pedals for four different categories of effects: stomp, delay, modulation, and reverb. I accessed each effect and its controls with the correspondingly-labeled buttons underneath the LCD screen. For example, pressing the "Delay" button opened up the delay menu in the screen. From here, choosing between different types of delays and adjusting its controls was easy using the Data Wheel. I found that the Mustang had great-sounding compressor, delay, chorus, and reverb effects. The compressors preserved the tone of my guitar while boosting it for solos and the tape delay had a desirable warm tone that belied its digital nature. The choruses and Fender Spring Reverb effects were fun to use and sounded rich at both high and mild settings.

In this mode, I was also able to change amp models with the "Amp" button underneath the LCD screen. As expected, there was a wide variety of classic Fender models to choose from like the '65 Deluxe Reverb, '65 Princeton Reverb, and '65 Twin Reverb. These models were the highlight of the Mustang Floor for me, as their dry, unaffected sounds alone were inspiring to play through. The distinct character of each amp type was easily recognizable and had satisfying tones already dialed in. Once I settled into my desired amp model, turning on the delay and other

effects while playing was straightforward and a joy to listen to.

Conclusion

Fans of Fender's signature amplifiers will be happy to find a wide variety of well-modeled tones in the Mustang, along with pleasing compressors, delays, choruses, and reverbs. More impressively, Fender has created a multi-effects unit that is highly appealing in its intuitive operation. Learning to operate the entire unit using the footswitches, LCD screen, and Data Wheel took less than 15 minutes and it was easy to remember how to find certain controls and options as there were minimal submenus and buttons. For plug-and-play guitarists who are just getting into the world of effects and amp modeling or those looking for an easy-to-use but versatile solution, the Mustang Floor is a solid choice.

Hal Rodriguez is a Toronto based guitarist, bassist, songwriter, and music teacher. Check out his blog, The Six String Shed, at www.canadianmusician.com/blogcentral. He can be contacted at halromusic@gmail.com.

Manufacturer's Comment

Try the global tone controls that are found in the Utility menu if you find any presets to be harsh. These are used for tweaking the tone of all presets to suit a particular amp, PA, or recording set-up.

Shane Nicholas
Senior Product Manager, Fender Guitar Amplifiers

“Best of All Worlds”

YGL1

Maximum Tone

The Traynor YGL1 15-watt all-tube combo uses hand selected tubes, a unique cathode bias circuit design driving the single 12-inch Celestion Greenback speaker making it the ultimate tone monster for stage or studio.

Find Your Sound

Simple Gain, Bass, Mid, Treble and Master controls make it easy to dial in that perfect tube tone. The three-stage mode switch makes the YGL1 one of the most versatile small combos in this class.

Unmatched Versatility



The USA / Brit / Pure mode switch gives the YGL1 the ability to be three amps in one. USA mode delivers a crisp 'American' sound with clarity and definition. Brit Mode delivers that classic British grittier 'spongy' tone associated with the great UK amps of the 60s and 70s. The Pure** option bypasses the tone stack entirely, delivering mid and gain boost with the most direct path possible between your fingers and the speaker.

Built for Reliability

The Traynor YGL1 combo is made in Canada using solid plywood cabinet construction, heavy gauge steel chassis, high quality pots and jacks and is covered by Traynor's famous two-year unlimited warranty*



Find us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/TraynorAmps

*US and Canada, other territories may vary.



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Aaron Little is a professional guitarist, instructor, and entrepreneur currently touring and playing with Canadian band See Spot Run. Along with being an accomplished writer and performer he's also a successful business owner and inventor of the Wanderers Music Stand. Aaron performs for nearly 60,000 people each year across the country. Visit www.seespotrunk.ca, www.lilaaron.wordpress.com, and www.wanderersmusic.ca.

GUITAR

Photo: Heather Marshall Photography

By Aaron Little

DEALING WITH GEAR MUTINY ON STAGE

If you've been playing live shows for a while then you've likely dealt with what I affectionately call "gear mutiny." This is the horrible phenomenon of everything, or even just one small thing, breaking or going haywire on stage and causing your sound to either become a feeble version of what it once was or, even worse, stop altogether. Fear not, young padawan; we've all been there and know that awkward, helpless feeling. The important thing is to be prepared, relax, and logically find a quick solution to keep the show going.

I'll never forget a special gig I had years ago. I showed up with only five days of prep work (it was a last-minute call), feeling anxious from my lack of practice ahead of time, but I at least felt confident in my gear. It wouldn't let me down, or so I hoped. My always-reliable Fender tube amp blew *four* fuses in the same gig, shutting me down entirely each time. I kept fiddling and fixing things throughout the entire show trying to get my gear to work properly. Thankfully I had a full supply of fuses with me and the other guitarist had a few just in case. In the end, a bad extension cable supplied by the venue was the culprit. I learned my lesson well.

If you're a guitarist, a second guitar is always necessary. If you don't bring two for the sake of your sound then you at least need a second instrument for times you break a string on stage. Patch cables, spare tubes, extra strings, picks, power supplies for any pedals you may have – anything that might break, you'll need two of or more. Even a spare amplifier is handy to have at the gig. If your main rig goes down, you often won't

have the time or ability to pinpoint the problem. Having a small but effective spare rig is extremely helpful in a time of need.

If you're a keyboardist, horn, string, or woodwind player (cowbell player?) then all of the above still applies. Spare XLR cables, mics, reeds, ligatures, drum heads, sticks, and drum hardware all need to be considered. Our drummer once had a snare stand break and the drum skin was pierced right through by the leftover stand on the very next hit. Never underestimate the number of things that can go wrong.

It's impossible to account for every possibility. Eventually, no matter how prepared you are, things are going to break. The only thing you can do is try and anticipate the obvious. Here are a few things that'll help your cause:

Be Prepared

I can't emphasize this enough! If you're unprepared, you have no one else to blame.

Check Your Gear Regularly

Things are bound to break and regular maintenance of your instrument, electronics, and accessories is required. If you've had adapters or cables for a while and they're feeling worn, it's worth replacing them even if they still work. Never take unnecessary chances; it's not worth it.

Don't Put ANYTHING Off

We as musicians usually try to find the cheapest solution to the problem and occasionally procrastinate (say it isn't so!). If you hear or feel an issue with your instrument or any of your equipment, tend to it immediately.

Good Cases = A Good Investment!

Touring musicians and groups tend to load things quickly and when that happens, their caution also tends to waver a little. Good cases for your equipment are a worthy investment, especially if you're flying. Airline workers aren't always mindful of "Fragile" stickers. That said, you don't need road cases for everything. Remember, you're often your own roadie and the heavier your equipment, the more tiring it'll get to load in and out each night. Unless you've got roadies, speaker cabinet road cases probably aren't necessary.

There are few certainties in this world. Death and taxes are a couple, but if you're a performing musician, then equipment failing at the most inconvenient of times is also an inevitable reality. Remember the points I've laid out and above all remain calm while performing and fix the problem. For example, if your amp goes, can you plug direct into the mixer from your pedal board? It'll sound awful, but it works (and I've done it).

Sometimes, the most important part of dealing with gear mutiny is survival. It doesn't have to sound good; it just has to work. Remain calm, think through the problem logically, and I guarantee you'll make it through the show looking and sounding like a pro.



By Kory Livingstone

CAN YOUR EYES HEAR? CAN YOUR EARS WRITE?

Self-taught rock musicians have often developed a talent for composing or transcribing the musical ideas in their heads by sitting down with a keyboard or other instrument and just picking out the notes and chords by ear. Many do not read music so they have to mentally store their ideas for later retrieval or record them for later access.

On the other hand, classical musicians, often very fluent when it comes to reading music notation, may struggle when it comes to playing music by ear.

Jazz musicians and singers are often somewhere in the middle. Most can read with some fluency and can play and sing by ear with varying degrees of success.

As professional musicians, we should be constantly trying to improve all of our musical skills, including the ability to both hear the actual pitches and rhythms of music notation and being able to write down what we are thinking without the aid of our instruments. After all, musical instruments are really only extensions of our minds.

There are many books and programs out there that will help refine your listening skills, each one promising success; however, these programs present acquiring this skill as a mysterious process when actually it's just a process of diligent practice.

Being able to identify pitches is a valuable tool for singers in terms of sight reading new music and singing on pitch. For musicians and songwriters, it's a must if you need to write or read music without the aid of an instrument, not to mention the fact that most musicians often need to transcribe songs from recordings for band rehearsals.

Playing by ear is possible through a process called "Ear Training." Let's start with a very basic exercise, using the common major scale: Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do.

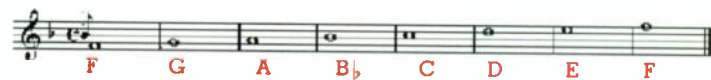
Using solfeggio, sing a major scale. Sing in your own individual range so you don't strain your voice. Feel free to use the piano or another instrument to stay in tune.



Repeat using numbers instead of solfeggio.



Now sing the scale using the letter names.



Repeat all three exercises above but this time sing each note of the scale in a different register. Once you get comfortable with these exercises, try them without any instrumental support.



How Well-Known Melodies Can Help Us Improve

Once you get comfortable with the above exercises, you can now use them in a practical application with music you know, regardless of genre. Sit down with your instrument and pick out the tunes. Once you get a handle on this, let's go to the next level by searching for tunes that are diatonically based, meaning that the melody goes up or down the scale.

"This Heart of Mine" starts off like this: Sol, La, Ti, Do.



"As Time Goes By" starts off with Mi, Fa, Mi, Re, Do, Re, Mi.



Look through your music books and search for tunes that contain diatonic melodies and work on them. Don't forget to play them in all the keys!

Go to www.canadianmusician.com/livingstone to hear MP3s of each musical exercise from this column.



By Jason Raso

Jason Raso is a professional bassist from Guelph, ON. His new album, *The Red Arrow*, is available now at www.jasonrasomusic.com. Jason maintains a busy teaching and gigging schedule and is endorsed by Spector Basses, TC Electronic Bass Amplifiers, and Wyres Strings.

GIVING YOUR CREATIVITY A KICK

Many of us bass players have a bunch of unused ideas floating around in our heads – cool little riffs or grooves that never get developed into a finished product. At times it can be a real struggle to expand on your ideas and I'm not a big fan of sitting around waiting for inspiration to strike. Sometimes the creative process just needs a kick in the pants. Here is a concept that I use from time to time to help jumpstart an idea.

Ex. 1 shows a simple funk riff using an Em7 chord in the key of G.

EX. 1

Root	3 rd	5 th	7 th	Chord
E	G	B	D	Em7
C	E	G	B	Cmaj7
A	C	E	G	Am7
F#	A	C	E	F#m7b5

This table shows how I arrived at the chord progression I use in Ex. 2. I simply chose E to be a common tone. Staying within the key of G, E is the root of Em7, the 3rd of Cmaj7, the 5th of Am7, and the 7th of F#m7b5. (Note: you could choose any note from the Em7 chord to be your common tone. This would then give you a different set of chords, which you could use to expand the idea even further.)

EX. 2

Next, I arranged the four chords in the order I thought sounded the best (Em7, Am7, Cmaj7, F#m7b5). I then used the same pattern from Ex. 1 for each new chord. The pattern is Root, 5th, 7th, Root, 3rd.

I often use the tapping technique as a tool for writing. It allows me to hear the chord above my bass line. In Ex. 3, I tap the 3rd and 7th of each chord over the original Em7 idea. This creates a cool sort of implied chord progression. In Ex. 4, the bass line moves with each chord change. Sometimes I keep the tapped chords as part of my bass line, but quite often I turn the chord part over to a keyboard or guitar player.

EX. 3

Ex. 3 showed us that Em7 worked with each chord in the progression. So, in Ex. 5, I use Em7 as a melodic figure over each chord. The Em7 would also work great for soloing over the progression, as would the E minor scale.

EX. 4

This concept provides an interesting way to expand your ideas. You can use it with any chord in any key, so dust off that killer riff you never used and get to work! This could be just what it needs to develop into your next masterpiece.

EX. 5

Glen Sobel is a Los Angeles-based drummer currently playing with Alice Cooper. Last year with Alice, Glen played 100 shows in 23 countries on five continents. Other credits for Glen include Sixx:A.M. with Nikki Sixx, Paul Gilbert, Vivian Campbell, Beautiful Creatures, and more. Glen's recording credits include playing on the new version of the *Monday Night Football* theme. Watch for Glen on tour this summer with Alice when they come through Canada with Iron Maiden. Visit Glen online at www.facebook.com/drummerglen, www.youtube.com/xoanon88, and www.glensobel.com.



By Glen Sobel

CREATIVE DOUBLE BASS

When the subject of double bass comes up among drummers, what often comes to mind is speed – single strokes being played at breakneck tempos over sixteenth notes or triplets. If you are interested in becoming a proficient double bass drummer, this is one component; however, there are other avenues to explore, such as experimenting with different hand-foot combinations, working on stamina to sustain steady sixteenths or triplets, practicing limb independence to play figures with the hands on top of double bass, and finally, approaching double bass from a rudimental standpoint.

This article deals with the latter, specifically the three-stroke ruff – one of my favorite things to play using both bass drums! You'll see how this can develop into several of your own new ideas based on what you can already play and we'll formulate it into some exciting new grooves and ideas.

Simply speaking, the three-stroke ruff consists of three notes played in rapid succession using single strokes (RLR). If you can play two eighth notes or two sixteenth notes in a row with your right foot, then simply insert a note in between them with the left foot. Let's start with a basic pattern (Ex. 1).

EX.1



Now, between one and the "and" of one, insert a note with your left foot, which will be on the "e" of one. Also, insert a note with your foot on the bass drum on the "and" of two and the downbeat of "three," which will be on the "a" of two. You should now have two three-stroke ruffs in this groove (Ex. 2).

EX.2



Let's take this a step further. Ex. 3 is a groove using sixteenth note double strokes on the bass drum. Insert a note with the left foot between the notes of each double stroke. You should now have two three-stroke ruffs in this groove in the form of thirty-second notes (Ex. 4).

EX.3



EX.4



This concept can also be applied to grooves based in triplets. Start with this basic shuffle pattern (Ex. 5). Insert a note before the downbeat of "3" as shown in Ex. 6.

EX.5



EX.6



This idea can also be used at the end of fills. When playing a fill around the toms, substitute the last three notes with the three-stroke ruff (Ex. 7).

EX.7



The double bass three-stroke ruff can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used to create interesting grooves, or used in fills. Some of the records where I've employed this concept would be *Momentum*, a record I did with Jennifer Batten (Michael Jackson's former guitarist) and *Madness* by Tony MacAlpine.

With a little bit of experimentation, I'm sure you can come up with many more ideas based on this concept. What is most important is to use these ideas in a musical sense but not overuse them. Until next time, keep practicing and have fun!



By Daniel Schnee

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

LESSONS FROM DEXTER

Though most of us get our jazz information nowadays from technical books and the Internet, historically, jazz education came mostly from live performance and the study of recordings until the rise of the art in universities, colleges, and online. But this was a vital form of development and still holds an important place in jazz, so let's look at saxophonist Dexter Gordon through this lens.

Dexter was not only a master of jazz; he also was a unique figure in the history of the music. He was John Coltrane's saxophone teacher, an Academy Award nominee, and also happened to be nearly 6' 6" tall. But beyond the trivia, he also brilliantly demonstrated one of the time-honoured truths of jazz: the value and genius of creatively-elaborated quarter notes in improvisation.

Unfortunately, this idea as well is not easily appreciated and understood these days. We now live in a hyper, "multiple-app" society, but if you really want to take your playing to the highest level, the sophisticated and clever use of quarter notes is essential. So let's look at Dexter's recordings and see what we can learn about quarter notes.

First of all, Dexter's playing has been described by fellow musicians, producers, and critics almost invariably using terms like: operatic, ebullient, poetic, bursting with ideas, beautiful storyteller, dry humor, and larger than life. This is because of his brilliant use of quarter and half note syncopation. Clear examples of this are the first few bars of both the melody and saxophone solo of "Cheese Cake," and the second bar of the melody and the beginning of the second solo stanza (00:53) on "Second Balcony Jump," both from the album *GO!* On "I Want More" from *Dexter Calling*, both the intro and Dexter's so-

loing contain a series of bars of simple, syncopated eighth note lines followed by a bar containing four quarter notes, occasionally tying them over the bar line, cleverly outlining the bare essentials of the harmony. The combination of harmony and quarter notes creates a beautiful, dramatic sound.

Secondly, Dexter seemingly does the impossible by single tonguing quarter notes and making them swing simultaneously! All our jazz lives we are taught to play in a legato manner with tongue accents on key notes, yet Dexter's soloing (especially on "Scrapple From The Apple" from *Our Man In Paris*) is filled with heavily-tongued quarter notes – but boy do they sound great! The key here is his time. Dexter had incredibly good time, and uses it to make these almost comically exaggerated quarter notes work.

Thirdly, Dexter utilizes a lot of rhythmic variety, even within the supposedly "limited" realm of quarter notes and half notes. The key to his success is note placement. For example, he might play one bar that contains three quarter notes and two eighth notes on beat four. The next bar will see the two eighth notes played on the first beat followed by three quarter notes. The next bar after that will contain two quarter notes, two eighth notes on beat three, and a quarter note on beat four. Audiences particularly love this kind of playing because it includes them in the process of the music. They quickly pick up on what is going on and almost invariably anticipate what will happen next eagerly, which is the fourth idea inherent in Dexter's playing.

As much as a little flash in one's playing is exciting, few people include "a little" of it! It is almost like modern jazz musicians don't trust the audience, assuming that they are only capable

of appreciating the athletic aspects of the music, which is not the case. Everyone loves a good story, and the audience will completely "get" and enjoy quarter notes and half notes if they are played with great time and in clever groupings. This includes outlining the essentials of the **harmony** as opposed to playing thousands of "clever" ornaments and sidesteps around it all of the time. A little strawberry on the top of a dessert is nice, but don't throw the entire strawberry basket at your audience!

Finally, Dexter was a voracious reader. He knew the lyrics to pretty much all the ballads ever written and spoke several languages on one level or another. With that in mind, we can appreciate the "spoken" quality of his music. Whereas eighth notes are like letters, Dexter's quarter notes are words. This, to me, partially explains why audiences politely clap for, but most often mentally tune out from, fast, long eighth note solos. It is like spelling out a story one letter at a time instead of speaking the words! And the story can be told by a clever combination of ideas with the quarter note as the starting point.

So to conclude: use quarter note and half note syncopation tied over barlines, use single tonguing occasionally to add drama to your solos, place your quarter notes in clever places, use quarter notes to outline the bare harmonic essentials in exciting ways, and tell a musical story through the combined use of the previous ideas. It will clarify your ideas, expand your sense of time, and open up exciting new areas of sound and rhythm to explore.

And if you are interested in checking out Dexter Gordon, I recommend the following albums: *GO!*, *Doin' Alright*, *Dexter Calling*, *A Swingin' Affair*, and *Our Man In Paris*.



By Michael Barth

EMBOUCHURE CONCEPTS

I would like to begin this column with a disclaimer: you are not going to find the secret to the perfect embouchure on this page.

This is because there is no secret, and the “perfect” embouchure is, in my opinion, a work in progress that can always be refined and improved. Embouchure development is a personal process that requires a great deal of dedication, patience, creativity, and guidance from knowledgeable teachers and reputable sources. Embouchures vary from individual to individual according to different physical and musical circumstances; therefore, it is not my intention to provide specific advice regarding physical characteristics of the embouchure, such as lip position, mouthpiece placement, and tongue position, etc. Rather, I would like to discuss the qualities of an efficient brass embouchure, and describe a few principles which, when thoughtfully applied, lead to greater ease of playing.

An efficient embouchure has several characteristics, perhaps the most obvious being that it is capable of functioning with little muscular effort. Brass playing can be a physically demanding activity, and every brass player is familiar with the feeling of tired embouchure muscles that comes after a long playing session. By minimizing muscular exertion during performance we are maximizing our endurance and the amount of playing we can do before fatigue sets in. Learning to minimize muscular effort is an important component of our practice, and I like to conceptualize this idea by thinking of transferring the workload from the lips to the airstream while practicing easy exercises with a

relaxed approach. (I especially like using the first few pages of Schlossberg’s method for this purpose.)

However, this is not to suggest that muscular development is unimportant. On the contrary, developing strong embouchure muscles is an essential part of developing an efficient embouchure. In order for muscles to perform in a relaxed fashion, they must be capable of producing greater strength than is required for a given task. Imagine that you have to carry a five-pound weight from one place to another. If you are only capable of lifting five pounds, this will use all of your strength and will not be an easy job; however, if you are capable of lifting 50 pounds, you could easily move a five-pound weight without much strain. Similarly, strong embouchure muscles allow the lips to function with relatively less effort than weak embouchure muscles. Muscular strengthening occurs when a muscle becomes tired and is allowed to recover. This principle is central to the development of a strong embouchure, as the regular practice of exercises that push the limits of endurance and range must be balanced by sufficient rest periods that allow the embouchure muscles to recover.

Another important characteristic of an efficient embouchure is responsiveness, which describes how well the lips vibrate in response to a player’s airstream. An efficient embouchure will vibrate freely and easily in response to a player’s breath, allowing for clear attacks, clean articulation, and a vibrant, colorful sound. Responsiveness can be developed in the embouchure through the practice of breath attacks (i.e. begin-

ning a note without the tongue), soft passages, articulation exercises, and by striving to develop a beautiful and relaxed-sounding tone quality in all registers.

An efficient embouchure also tends to be quite flexible, and combining a flexible embouchure with a smooth and constantly-supported airstream allows the player to move fluently through the instrument’s registers, connect notes smoothly, and perform clean slurs and lip trills. There are numerous methods that contain exercises for the development of flexibility including the works of Schlossberg, Arban, Bai-Lin, Irons, Hovaldt, and others, and becoming proficient with these exercises can be very useful in developing an efficient embouchure and overall playing technique.

My purpose in describing some of the qualities of an efficient embouchure is to provide some ideas as to how an embouchure may be improved without delving into the minutiae of the embouchure’s physical characteristics. It is very easy to over-think the embouchure and become concerned with small details that really aren’t that important in the overall picture of brass playing, sometimes leading to the unpleasant situation of “paralysis by analysis.”

Above all, it is important to remember that the purpose of embouchure development is to serve musical goals, and that it isn’t an end in itself. By staying focused on the kind of sound you want to make and the musical impulse you wish to convey, your embouchure will function as an integrated part of your overall approach to brass playing and continue to evolve as your musical ideas grow.



By Doug Jones

Doug Jones (Jonesian) has been a busy DJ for over 15 years and a dedicated DJ/producer for the last five. Based in sunny Grand Cayman, Jonesian maintains weekly DJ residencies at three venues in addition to local and international bookings. He is also a performance DJ representative for Rane Canada and Contact Distribution, returning home often for various engagements. Expect big things from this young man in the time to come and visit www.soundcloud.com/jonesian for song edits, mixes, and free music downloads. For more information and booking inquiries, reach dj@jonesian.com or visit www.jonesian.com.

THE MODERN DJ

It's difficult to establish when DJing as a profession came to be, though it did occur sometime during the early- to mid-20th century. It began with the introduction of two turntables used simultaneously for overlapping, continuous song-play.

It meant the paid DJ was responsible for keeping the dance floor bopping by choosing the appropriate song in succession with others available to them. If a new "hit" record was released, there was pressure to play it first in order to remain a reliable source for music among listeners.

Although we've come a long way since then, it's not so different today as DJs are bombarded with new releases by the minute and face an even savvier listener. This can be attributed in part to the blossoming relationship that music and the Internet have shared with us for well over a decade, as well as the increased accessibility of today's music producer. As a result, more music of all kinds is available to more people than ever before.

This has created the need for web-based music sites or blogs, which aggregate, filter, and categorize the numerous songs released each day. Although they generally prove to be very helpful, the most popular sites often share links to many of the same songs and remixes. It begins to make sense why many DJ music crates become similar to those of others. That's not to say popular is bad, but limiting selections chosen from top chart-pools and a few well-known blogs somewhat inhibits discovering quality music elsewhere that may otherwise go unheard; moreover, by incorporating unique, contextually appropriate music into one's set, a DJ will become more distinguishable from the pack.

Subsequently, there are more working DJs now than ever before and this number is on the rise. The explosion can be attributed to both the increased prestige of touring DJs worldwide and

the recent wave of reasonably-priced computer DJ software and hardware interfaces. For example, by downloading a freeware program called Virtual DJ, not only can someone easily mix music from their laptop; with an included feature called auto-sync, a newbie can trigger the software to automatically beat-match songs with the click of a mouse. Nonetheless, at minimum, developing basic skills like crowd reading, EQing, beat matching, and blending, etc., is still a requisite at the professional level.

Consequently, with an unprecedented number of DJs now in the field, those with more experience have faced heavy competition as the influx of DJs coming up are often initially willing to play for less money. This upswing has brought the game to new heights as having more DJs vying for gigs has created pressure for all to innovate and augment their skillsets. Thus, modern DJs must incorporate newer methods in order to differentiate themselves from the rest and invariably raise the bar.

As a result, many DJs have also begun producing music by editing (bootlegging) songs or creating original tracks to be played during sets and for web release. Home studios and "lappy-labs" now offer the ability to produce music anywhere. Computer-based sequencers, otherwise known as digital audio workstations (DAWs) have been around for some time now. They have also come a long way to eradicate the barriers an individual once faced in getting started with production (i.e. price, reliability, quality, and features). They allow the DJ/producer to personalize their set by customizing the songs they



ABLETON LIVE ACCESSED DURING A SET FROM WITHIN SERATO SCRATCH LIVE.

choose to play in hopes of further connecting with the audience.

Ableton Live goes even further, allowing syncopation with Rane's Serato Scratch Live DJ interface. This means that while playing a DJ set within Serato, one can access and incorporate their saved Ableton projects and all production elements within. The options become limitless. A modern DJ should become familiar with a sequencer. This means that additional training is necessary as DAWs require a solid grasp of music theory, audio and MIDI, effect plug-ins, and mastering, etc.

Of course there are many other ways to shine as a DJ beyond those already mentioned. These include: video mixing, harmonic mixing, incorporating live instruments, drum machines, effects processors, MIDI controllers, or sporting oversized mouse heads.

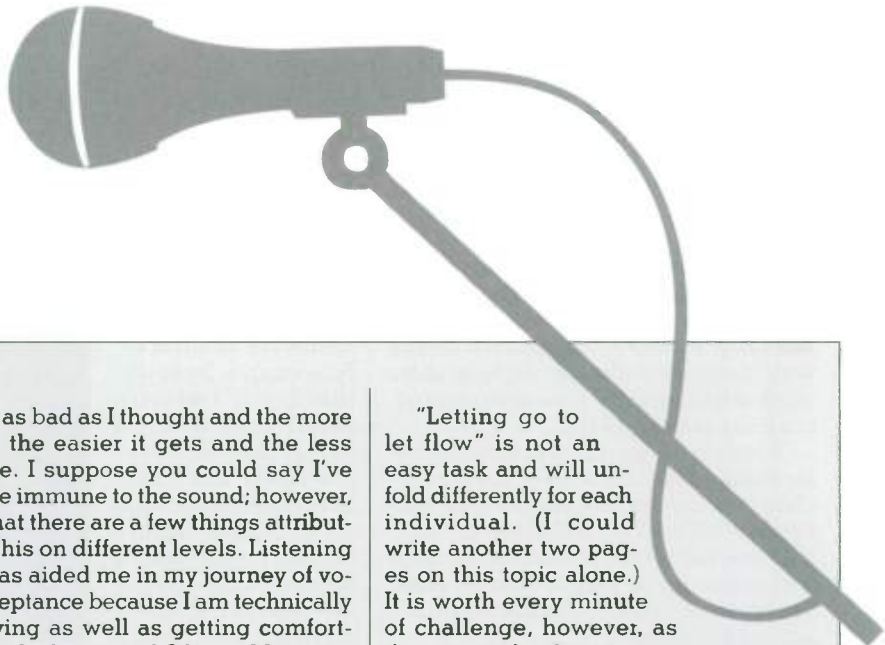
Overall, this is an exciting time to be a DJ as the profession has entered its own realm of legitimacy within the music industry. Regardless of the chosen route, a modern DJ must embrace recent changes and strive to be at the forefront of advancement, incorporating traditional elements of performance with production, artistic license, and of course, their wax to the grindstone.



By Ashley Condon

Whose Voice Is It Anyway?

CONNECTING TO YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE



Recently, I was recording my personal telephone greeting on my cell phone. I must have tried 25 times to get it “right.” Each time I’d listen back and cringe, thinking: “Is that really what my voice sounds like? Really?”

As I was getting closer to just giving up and resorting to the generic greeting, I took a breath and give it one last go. It was palatable. I kept it... and still wince a bit every time I hear it.

What is it that provokes the “cringe” when I hear my voice played back to me? I’ve talked to many people who have wondered the same and I have heard various opinions on the topic, the most popular being that people simply have one idea of what their voice sounds like and are shocked when they hear it played back to them. They don’t like what they hear. For a singer, like myself, I have had the pleasure of constantly hearing my voice reflected back at me and have often passed harsh judgments on what I was hearing. For most of my adult life, I would do everything in my power to avoid this situation. I would bury any old recordings of myself and/or avoid watching videos of myself singing onstage. Now, it’s not that my voice is horribly unpleasant to the ear – I often get very positive feedback about my singing and have sustained a professional singing career for the past three years. So what is it?

I’m happy to say that there is light at the end of this tunnel. In recent years, I have started to listen back to the recordings of my singing. To my surprise,

it’s not as bad as I thought and the more I do it, the easier it gets and the less I cringe. I suppose you could say I’ve become immune to the sound; however, I feel that there are a few things contributing to this on different levels. Listening back has aided me in my journey of vocal acceptance because I am technically improving as well as getting comfortable with the sound I hear. Most importantly, I am connecting, in a deeper way, with my authentic voice.

The term “authentic voice” is a broad term and can mean different things to different people. For me, my authentic voice is my honest, natural voice that sounds uniquely like me (i.e. I’m not trying to sound like anyone else). Cellular greetings are far from an accurate representation of the quality of one’s voice; however, they do reflect back to us what’s there, and if what’s there feels insincere, we will react to it just as we would to someone who is being dishonest with us. I think, as humans, we have an innate reaction to our own and others’ in-authenticity and this greatly affects what I’ve coined as our own personal “cringe” meter.

When I was recording my cellular greeting a few months back, I wasn’t responding so much to the quality of my voice than I was to the fakeness or insincerity I was hearing. What I’ve come to realize about authenticity after 15 years of singing in my own voice is that the more I can let go and let flow in my own life, the more I can do this while singing and thus I am satisfied with the sounds coming out.

“Letting go to let flow” is not an easy task and will unfold differently for each individual. (I could write another two pages on this topic alone.) It is worth every minute of challenge, however, as there is such a beauty in experiencing someone who sings or speaks from a place of honesty, even if just on their cell phone greeting.

You can feel it when you hear it – like when you hear someone singing gently to themselves while washing the dishes or folding clothes. It is in that spirit that we have the power to really touch lives as communicators, and it doesn’t mean you have to sing like Celine or Pavarotti, or even sing at all; you just have to connect with what’s real for you and that will become real for the listener, whether you’re speaking or singing.

My journey as an artist has been to express myself in the most authentic way possible and my voice has been the tool for that. For this endeavor, I have made two commitments. I have committed to listening back to my recorded voice as a way to improve technically and identify any little “in-authenticities” that have crept in, and I have committed to finding my authentic voice, because who in the heck wants to hear me use someone else’s?

“Sometimes you have to play for a long time to be able to play like yourself.”
-Miles Davis

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Gord Bamford

WORKING HARD,
FOR THE WEEKEND.

By Andrew King

"It should get pretty nutty in here tonight," predicts Gord Bamford with an audible hint of excitement in his voice. The multiple CCMA-winning country star hailing from Lacombe, AB has just rolled onto campus at the University of Guelph where he's set to rock a full room later in the evening as part of his *Is It Friday Yet? Tour*.

"We're three-and-a-half weeks in and I'm getting tired, but it's been so fantastic" Bamford says of his time on the road thus far. The tour is his biggest and best-selling cross-Canada trek to date, and the album of the same name it's supporting is similarly poised to reach a new pinnacle for the singer's 16-year career.

Already established as a staple of the spotlight in his home province, Bamford has been slowly but surely boosting his profile on the national level. That success is in part the byproduct of an ever-increasing level of attention from mainstream media outlets in Canada, but can first and foremost be attributed to the hard-working, grassroots approach he's applied to his craft and career since day one.

"We've obviously done more so far in the western market and get great support, but surprisingly, it's been much the same out east, right into the Maritimes," Bamford reports from the road. "You never know what's going to happen in new markets, but people have been going crazy."

The tour began at the foot of March with a slew of Maritime dates before heading west, first for a handful of stops across Ontario and then a few peppered across the Prairies en-route to Bamford's home province. Despite several of the stops being first-time headlining dates in their respective cities outside of the Prairies, elbow room was at a premium for a healthy portion of the performances.

As far as what's been contributing to the attendance, there's no question a lot of seats were scooped up by fans he's earned over the last decade plus. After all, over 20 of Bamford's singles have charted on the Canadian country charts, nine of those even doing so on the Canadian Hot 100 chart – including the title track and first single from *Is It Friday Yet?* He's also shared stages with the very elite of contemporary country music – Reba McEntire, Tim McGraw, Brooks and Dunn, and George Strait, to name only a few. Still, he attributes a significant portion of the attention to the efforts of his new label.

His four previous records having been distributed through Alberta-based imprint Royalty Records, *Is It Friday Yet?*, recorded in the fall of 2011 at Nashville's County Q Studios and officially released March 6, 2012, is Bamford's first with Sony Music Canada. It's a new deal that he describes as still being in the "first date" phase; however, it's already yielded some tangible results as proven by the success of his tour stops to-date. "Our social media presence has really been elevated since we started working with them," Bamford says. "They have a good reach and know what works. Back when, [the strong

sales] would've likely been more because of radio or CMT, but I think our online presence has been helping in a big way."

But social media was virtually nonexistent when Bamford began on his quest to build a career in country music in the second half of the '90s. Instead, it was nothing but a passion for the art and a blue-collar approach to building something from the ground up that earned him some deserved attention from earnest ears.

Bamford was born in Australia but, at age four, moved with his mother back to the farm in her hometown of Lacombe, located near Red Deer between Edmonton and Calgary. His mother had close ties with her family and her siblings were significant influences in his upbringing. "I had a really good childhood," Bamford says with unde-



niable sincerity. He grew up surrounded by music and says that while he always had a fondness for fiddling around with a guitar, he didn't seriously consider it as a career choice until he'd reached his late teens.

He was 19 when his debut single, 1996's "Forever Starts Today," received a positive response from Canadian country radio; however, it wasn't until 2001 that he began composing and compiling material for his debut full-length effort, *God's Green Earth*. His following release was 2004's *Life Is Good* and featured six Top 20 radio hits for the burgeoning artist. His next two records, 2007's *Honkytonks and Heartaches* and 2010's *Day Job*, would keep him on the same upward tangent, yielding a number of awards and accolades including a JUNO nod for Country Recording of the Year for both albums and CCMA wins for Top New Male Talent of the Year in 2008 and Male Artist of the Year, Album of the Year, and Video of the Year in 2010, among others.

"We've come through the trenches," Bamford says with a chuckle, as if recalling every broken string and beaten-down honkytonk he's encountered since his start. There've been some trying times over the years – times where Bamford found himself

questioning his commitment to the business; however, he's continued to push through and make things happen for himself. "It's not easy to do that today," he says, referring to the more recent years. "You've got these reality TV shows building stars now; I've been doing this grassroots, from the bottom to the top."

But it hasn't been a solitary pursuit. "I think the key was meeting the right people at the right times and putting together a great team that we had well before the Sony deal came into play." That said, Bamford feels that, after *Day Job*'s success, he and his team had nearly hit critical mass as far as where they could take this project on their own, and calls the union with Sony "another big part of the puzzle coming together." He adds: "To get to the next level, I think we need that and we're excited about the partnership."

The first part of that partnership has been the release of and subsequent push behind *Is It Friday Yet?* The album is full of tunes that would be right at home in the top spot on a mainstream country countdown – roadhouse-ready rhythms driving twangy, trebly guitar licks and accented by some tasty country and western staples from dobro, banjo, and lapsteel to organ and upright piano.

And though tunes like "Must Be A Woman," "Farm Girl Strong," and the title track seem like they were written for radio (even their titles seemingly allude to this), there are a few numbers that stray from the norm to round out the record. "Disappearing Tail Lights" sounds like it could've come from the Ryman stage during the '70s, which Bamford aptly describes in the liner notes as having "a Merle Haggard feel to it." In addition, "You Make It Better" and "Nothing Hurts As Bad As A Broken Heart" take the pace down a notch, letting Bamford's vocals and lyrics come further to the forefront and showcasing his keen sense of dynamics and subtlety.

A good chunk of his catalogue is co-written with well-known Nashville-based producer and songwriter Byron Hill, who co-produced *Life Is Good* with Bamford and has

reprised his role on every record since. "Byron actually wrote the first song that I ever recorded on an album," Bamford says of the origins of this productive partnership.

He continues the story: "He wrote the title track to *God's Green Earth*, and shortly after the record was done, I was surfing the Internet and made my way to his website. He'd done this blurb on a Canadian kid that had sent him this song and how great he thought this kid was and how he'd like to meet with him. It took me a bit to realize who he was talking about." He ends with a good laugh.

After making contact, Hill invited Bamford down to Nashville and their friendship was born. Nearly 10 years strong, it's only been strengthened with each new release – much like the material they've written for each. Hill currently handles the day-to-day for Bamford's music publishing company, Quinford Music. "He's been a great mentor to me," Bamford says. "He discovered Gary Allen and Kathy Mattea and wrote the first number one hit for George Strait. It'd blow your mind to see the list of what he's written because you'd know so many of [the songs]."

Hill's Rolodex has also provided quite the boon for Bamford's music over the years as his albums have benefitted from some of country music's most in-demand session players. "When he brings his friends in, I'm surrounded by the best," Bamford says. "These guys have played on some of the best records to come out of Nashville," he adds of his supporting cast on *Is It Friday Yet?* "I've been lucky to have them on the last four records and we've developed a mutual respect. We cut our records on a much lower budget than, say, Alan Jackson or George Strait, but they've never canceled one of my sessions to take another, and I think that's a testament to what we share."

Another strong suit of Hill and Bamford's partnership is their ability to pen easily-relatable



Bamford (in hat) & his band sidestage.

lyrics that make listeners feel more in-tune with the tracks and the man singing them. "I've always been of the thinking that songs need to connect with people," the singer muses. "You really want to tell a personal story, but I think it has to be universal. Everyone's got to be able to find something to relate to."

Is It Friday Yet?, much like *Day Job* before it, showcases that trait as much in its moniker as the music it contains. The chorus to the latter's title track, for example, contains the line: "My old day job/is ruining my night life." Explains Bamford: "I had that song in my head when I was driving a concrete truck. How many people don't think like that sometimes, you know? It's blue-collar at its base. It doesn't matter if you're sitting in an office building in Toronto or driving a tractor out on the farm. Everybody knows that feeling."

That everyman mentality has seeped into every aspect of Bamford's career and ultimately contributed to his array of achievements. "It's really been about getting in front of people, meeting people,



letting them know who you are, and letting them know you're one of them," Bamford states, almost sounding like a self-help guru dictating guaranteed steps to success. "That's who I am, and I've never strayed from that approach. It's as clear as day in the music," he adds. "Whether it's about kids or partying or driving trucks, we write about everything that's close to us, and it reaches out to every demographic of country fan."

The connections he shares with his fans and, more generally, the communities of which he's a part are obviously very close to Bamford's heart. He knows the support of his audience is the foundation atop which he's built his career and is keen on reciprocating that support and devotion.

The Gord Bamford Charitable Foundation supports under-privileged youth and single-parent Canadian families through funding for education, health care, and music. Additionally, the foundation aims to improve communities for Canadian youth through the construction and improvement of multiuse facilities. Its primary fundraiser is

the annual Gord Bamford Charity Classic Golf Tournament, which has been contributing proceeds to charities like the Central Alberta Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization since its inaugural edition in 2008. To date, the foundation has distributed close to \$1 million to the various causes it supports.

Recently, Bamford teamed up with the Canadian 4-H Council to give its members the opportunity to sell Gord Bamford albums as a fundraising initiative for its clubs across the country. The discs are sold for \$20, with half going directly back to the club.

"The charitable work we do is the most gratifying thing I'm a part of," Bamford says with a note of warranted pride in his voice. "It's great watching people sing and dance to your songs, but there's nothing like seeing a child's face light up when you do something really special."

The organizations Bamford supports are ones that have impacted his life in some manner. After his mother's return to Alberta from Australia, he himself was a participant in the Big Brothers and Big Sisters

program. Decades later, he and his wife spent time at a Ronald McDonald House due to complications with the birth of their third child. "And obviously, 4-H is a big one," the singer adds. "I spent a number of years in beef cattle 4-H. It's a great organization as far as teaching life skills and sharing things about what it takes to go out and work for a living," and that latter lesson is one that's obviously stayed with him over the years.

Bamford, his band, and his crew are getting set for a stack of dates in BC throughout May followed by the first of many stops on the 2012 summer festival circuit. It's a tight-knit team that's spent a lot of time together over the years, and each shares a stake in the success of this project. "I'm a big believer in building a team," Bamford says. "I'd way rather take money out of my pocket and invest it in building a great group that's always with you," and that rings true especially when it comes to selecting the musicians that join him onstage.

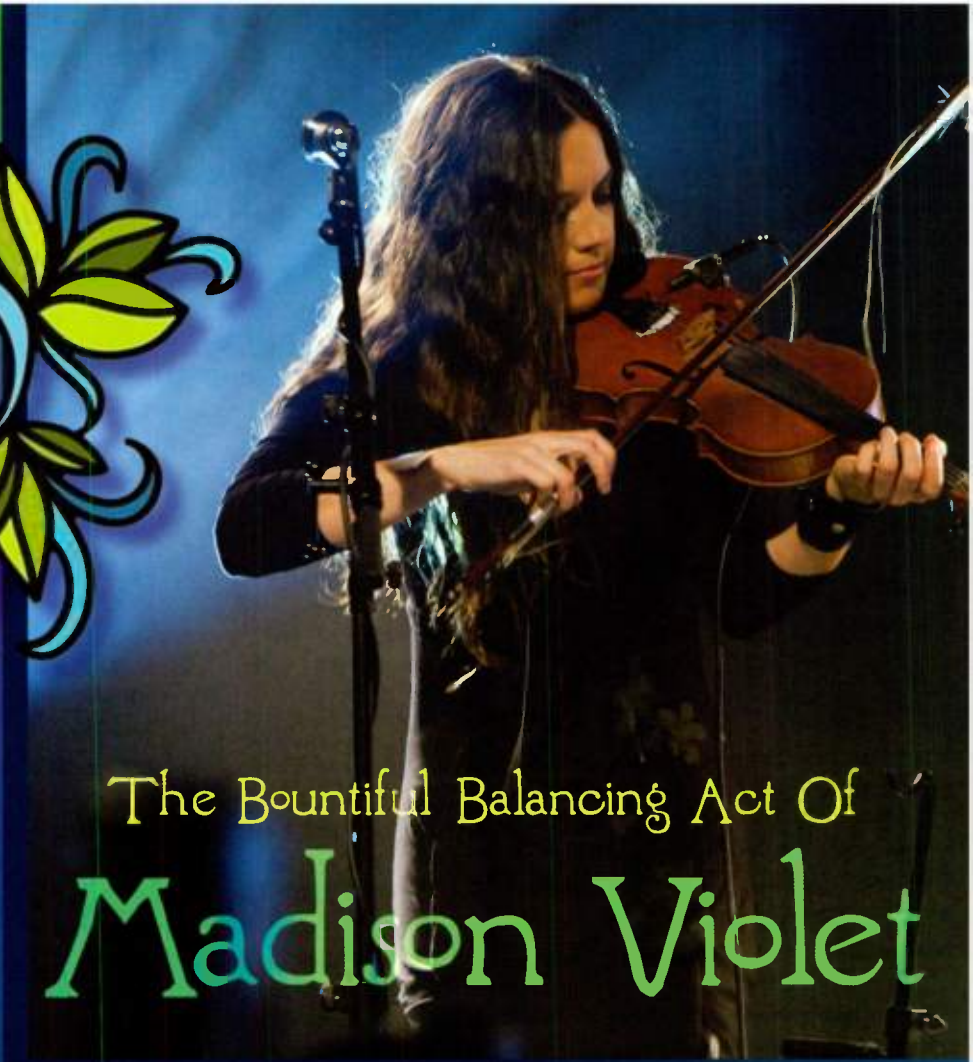
While his recorded work has showcased the talents of some of Nashville's finest players, when on the road, Bamford travels with a group of fellow Albertans who've logged a lot of mileage on their instruments. Those players are lead guitarist Ryan Davidson, guitar and mandolin player Robin Pelletier, bassist and vocalist Lisa Dodd, acoustic guitarist Mark Puffer, and drummer and bandleader Chad Melchert. "You want people up there beside you that love your music and can relate to what you're doing. I think that makes a huge difference in the live show," Bamford says about his band, and there's little evidence to refute his claim.

It's a good thing, too, because despite how well *Is It Friday Yet?* has fared to date – achieving nearly a 20 per cent jump in first-month sales compared to *Day Job* – there's still plenty of work to be done pushing and promoting it out on the road. In line with his frequently-trumpeted gratitude for his supporters, Bamford has a number of in-person Q&As and meet-and-greets slotted surrounding his upcoming dates.

"I want to show people who I am outside of the voice they hear on the radio," Bamford says. "I have the chance to be in this spotlight and share my music, but this is something for everybody. I love being able to answer questions and create closer relationships with people." So whether it's a music video for one of his hits airing on *CMT* or a recommendation from a friend that leads a listener Gord Bamford's way, it's his charismatic but caring character and embodiment of the everyman attitude that will ultimately affirm that individual as a true fan.



Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.



The Bountiful Balancing Act Of Madison Violet

By Andrew King

With each record they've released in sequence since their debut, it seems that every strummed chord, dreamy harmony, and subtle stroke of the bow brings Madison Violet a new fan.

It's been a steady climb for the singing and songwriting duo of Brenley MacEachern and Lisa MacIsaac, who made their first mark on the wall of Canadian folk as Madviolet with *Worry The Jury* in 2004. With each subsequent album since – 2006's *Caravan*, 2009's *No Fool For Trying* (the first under the Madison Violet moniker), and their latest, 2011's *The Good In Goodbye* – not only has their capacity for crafting rich, memorable arrangements expanded, but so too has their following, as though their sound sits in a niche just left of today's mainstream, it's a niche they've wholeheartedly embraced.

MacIsaac and MacEachern's musical union dates back to the late '90s, when the former joined the latter in Zoeblyss for a short stint prior to the band's demise. The pair continued their musical collaboration into the new millennium and, like a fresh scion sprouting from a severed bough, it manifested itself in the form of 2002's *Madviolet* EP. The fruits of their artistic relationship have been plentiful over their 12-odd years together, as has their personal relationship as friends and business partners. Though the different facets of their partnership have never been mutually exclusive, nowhere have they intersected as much on record than with *The Good In Goodbye*.

Released in Canada at the end of 2011 on True North Records and having just dropped in the US late March 2012, the album showcases the many signature elements for which Madison Violet has been heralded over their last decade-plus together. The songs are simple and succinct, laced with tasteful and very carefully curated layers of rootsy instrumentation – savory percussion, harmonica, banjo, and MacIsaac's fiddle atop the ever-familiar acoustic. Of course, these elements only serve to heighten the impact of the pair's honest and heartfelt lyrics. On the ladies' latest, those lyrics often delve into the relationships they share and the growth they've each undergone both inside and outside of them.

"We're continually pushing and challenging each other, which I think is at the root of why this works so well," MacIsaac muses, and that was indeed the case with the creation of their latest record. In fact, during the process, the pair engaged in an open discourse with producer Les Cooper, who also worked on *No Fool For Trying*, about how frustrations can often arise during the creative process. "He had a really

unique perspective having seen as at work," MacIsaac says, "and actually said he sees an Eno and Lanois kind of chemistry."

It's not an unfounded assertion as, like the revered production partners, it's a harmonious foiling of MacIsaac and MacEachern's individual strengths that elevates a lot of their work to something greater than the sum of its parts.

Having grown up surrounded by the Atlantic on Cape Breton Island, MacIsaac's musical upbringing was rooted in the traditional sounds of the Maritimes (she just happens to be the sister of well-known fiddle virtuoso Ashley MacIsaac), and hints of those roots make their way into her writing.

Though her family is also from Cape Breton, MacEachern was born in southwestern Ontario, and notices a subtle difference in their writing. "Lisa's style of storytelling often is very rootsy, which I think can be attributed to where she comes from," MacEachern states, whereas she says her output carries a slightly more contemporary tinge.

"Lisa is very much a perfectionist," MacEachern continues, "whereas I tend to be more loosey-goosey. If we're listening back to tracks and hear a little slip, if it



Lisa MacIsaac (left) & Brenley MacEachern

open arms by audiences in Australia, the UK, and their best foreign market, Germany. "Folk isn't really that big there," MacEachern says, "but if you find yourself earning attention from that niche, it spreads like wild fire." An October 2011 performance in Cologne was recorded for an upcoming live CD and DVD expected sometime in the fall.

As for how Madison Violet will spend the rest of the year, after the US trek comes the summer festival season where the duo has long thrived. "We're literally on the road until December," MacEachern says. "Our summer and fall are jammed with Canadian festivals, a UK tour, we're going to Germany three more times this year... It's chalk full." As much as they love sharing their songs from the stage, the two are looking forward for some downtime at the end of the year to put the pen to paper for album number five. Says MacIsaac: "We want to get back to writing, hashing out some new material."

But their latest has plenty of life left in its cycle, and it'll be exciting to see where it takes them. They've already amassed JUNO and ECMA nods, won the John Lennon Songwriting Contest for "The Ransom" from *No Fool For Trying*, and took home a Canadian Folk Music Award for Vocal Group of the Year in 2009. With *The Good In Goodbye* being the pinnacle of their creative partnership to date, there could be more these two can add to their list of accomplishments before 2012 is done. ■

sounds interesting, I'll say, 'Let's leave it and let it happen.'" Before her last word is out, MacIsaac mutters: "Not a freakin' chance!"

Picking up where she left off, MacEachern adds: "Maybe if I were doing a record on my own, it'd be a bit too sloppy; if it was Lisa, maybe it'd be too sterile? We're opposite in the way we approach a lot of things, but we're working towards the same end."

MacIsaac says that when they do write individually, a song can only survive if it's something both can relate to. "We've written songs independently that we can both appreciate and be a part of when we perform them, but if Brenley can't put herself into a song I've written or vice-versa, it's not going to work. It just won't come across as authentic."

MacIsaac adds that their complementing characteristics work not only in their musical relationship, but also outside of it in their business affairs. "We've just got a knack for balancing each other out," she says. "We've had that for a lot of years. Of course, if we're pissed off at each other, then it's a bit harder." And with that, the ladies share a quick chuckle.

At the end of March 2012, *The Good In Goodbye* received the deluxe treatment

from True North and was also released in the United States, where the ladies are currently on a headlining run that began in early April and will continue through early June. The duo was left with a poor impression after plans for a US tour went awry back in 2006 due to some issues acquiring their work permits, and this is actually their first full American jaunt since.

"There's a huge country and folk community in the States," MacEachern says emphatically about an opportunity on which Madison Violet is looking to capitalize. "It's a foundation that's been there a long time. There's no denying that if our music takes off in the US, it could really move quickly. It's a huge market, and there are so many AAA radio platforms that welcome what we do."

Outside of their home and native land where *The Good In Goodbye*, like its predecessors, has been very well received, the ladies have also been welcomed with



Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.





KID KOALA

Space Cadet's Subtle Approach

By Craig Leach

It's been 16 years since Kid Koala first peddled the original 500 copies of his debut mix tape *Scratchcratchratch* to fellow students while attending Montreal's McGill University. That cassette, which has since become a piece of DJ lore, was followed by a consistently strong, prolifically diverse string of albums, projects, tours, and collaborations spanning multiple genres and mediums. On *Space Cadet*, turntablist and multimedia artist Eric San has produced a piece of work that marries antiquitous etched visuals with a complementing silent-film inspired soundtrack, meant to be experienced in an immersive and isolating, yet communal, environment.

When speaking with San, his affable attitude is contagious and it requires an insignificant stretch of the imagination to guess that this outlook, along with the Midas touch he brings to projects and recordings, can account for the storied list of collaborations of which he's been a part over the years. The sultry R&B grooves generated with Bullfrog, the straight hip-hop scratching found on Deltron 3030, and the heavy mix of turntables and rock laid down with The Slew, among other notable solo records, projects, and appearances, provide a sample of work that reaffirms his versatility and non-discriminate approach to music and art.

Shhhh...

On the atmospheric *Space Cadet*, San's latest release available as a stand-

alone recording or bundled with the accompanying 132-page graphic novel and still picture score featuring etchings done by San himself, the artist's approach to the project was one that found him taking a somewhat softer aural touch in its conception, recording, and subsequent live performances due in part to the recent birth of his second daughter. In fact, during the writing of *Space Cadet*, which took place in part at San's home studio in Montreal, the newborn would be in the recording space with her dad, either in a nearby crib or being held. "So a lot of the pieces were written, not necessarily with her in mind, but with her around. Her influence is very much there," reveals San, noting that the one-handed piano chord cycle found on "Remembrance" came out of his attempt at lulling the little one to sleep in his arm. He adds with a laugh: "At no point was I like, 'Let's crank this up with some crazy beats, because that's exactly what this newborn infant needs!'"

Although, as San notes, *Space Cadet* is being heard on its own, contextually, he reveals, "what inspired it was the fact that it was going to be married with the visuals – specific pages as far as each musical feat is concerned." As such, the creative process had San first illustrating the project before producing the accompanying music. "Once the visualizations happen, because of the way I am wired, I start hearing music," says San. "Basically, once I had the first draft of the boards down, I already

had a pacing and a tone for what I felt musically could sit within those pages."

A Subtle Approach

Musically, *Space Cadet* sees San taking a much more minimalist approach to the instrument synonymous with his craft. "There's turntables on every track, but whether you would recognize them as such... It's not the most obvious hip-hop-style turntable work I've done," he shares. "It's quite stealth and subtle." The reason for this more restrained approach, divulges San, is basically that it's what the project called for. "It's different than scratching over a drum break," he explains, noting that there was "a different kind of intensity to it" and that the level of taste involved shifts when playing over cycling piano chords. "All of a sudden, half of the scratch repertoire I've been practicing all my life is unnecessary," he adds. "I think a lot of it was to strike that balance, so you don't overshadow what is happening visually with the music. It's just there to provide a nice audio bed for the action to happen."

Presenting *Space Cadet*

Perhaps the best way to realize *Space Cadet* is live. Billed as a "live concert and gallery," the touring *Space Cadet Headphone Experience* provides an immersive experience that plays out more like a theatrical production than a DJ show.

THE SHORT END

Kid Koala on the inspiration for the *Space Cadet Headphone Experience* tour:

"I guess part of what inspired it, as far as the shows, was I just personally got tired of going to shows where I had to stand for four hours. I am, like, 5'5"—and in concert-going terms, I am at the lowest 30 percentile, which means that even if I am close to the stage, rarely do I ever get an optimum view of what's happening (laughs). I've played a lot of sweaty clubs and loud music festivals and as much as I enjoy party rocking and that type of experience, I just didn't feel like it'd make sense to present *Space Cadet* in that way. So basically, my wife and I just came up with a concept that sort of leaves all of that behind and does something that we would want to go see instead of paying, waiting, standing, you know, for three hours, not see anything, barely hear it, and, just stand behind tall people (laughs). The idea of that as a concert didn't sit with the whole vibe of *Space Cadet*."

Developed with help from San's wife Corrine Merrell, a Montreal-based set designer, *Space Cadet* is being presented in non-traditional venues, often occupying gallery spaces in lieu of clubs. "We're doing afternoon events that are dry and in a way it's almost a more theatrical situation," remarks San. "It's like you're going to see a movie or play. It's a different kind of concept and it's great because we're actually meeting a lot of different types of presenters and we're seeing a broader audience in both age and interest. It's fun."

Audience members experience the set through provided wireless headphones in lieu of projecting over a PA system – again, a decision based on the requirements of the project. "It was a sound quality thing," shares San. "There is a lot of nuance, a lot of turntable work in quite... subtle layers that, unless you are wearing headphones, you wouldn't be able to hear over a PA."

In addition to the headphones, audience members are asked to sit on inflatable space pods situated throughout the performance space, which features projection screens upon which stills from the graphic novel are displayed, among various other themed set pieces. Again, this concept was birthed out of the essence of the *Space Cadet* story. As San explains: "The pace of the book, the theme, and the tone of the story didn't lend themselves to a standing room experience; it's very much a cozy, sit-down type of experience."

The actual space cadet character (from the book) is in a one-person space pod for the most part. We wanted the audience to be comfortable, and isolated. It's communal, but actually quite anti-social in the way everyone has their own personal headphones; meanwhile everyone is hearing the same thing, so there is a connectivity. Without getting too precious about it, it does seem to be a nice kind of lineage with the feeling of the characters in the story."

If, on the surface, this latest project from one of the world's premier turntablists appears to be delving into the abstract or high-art, immediately forget that notion. After all, at the core of *Space Cadet*, and any other Kid Koala release, is the sense of humour synonymous with San. "For me, doing music is telling stories that I find entertaining or sweet or funny or sad. I never try to soar over people's heads. If you understand my humour, you understand the story. No matter how esoteric you think my records are, at their root, they're not really that hard to grasp as far as an art concept." ■



Craig Leach
is the Assistant Editor
of Canadian Musician.

Photo: Paolo Kapurhan



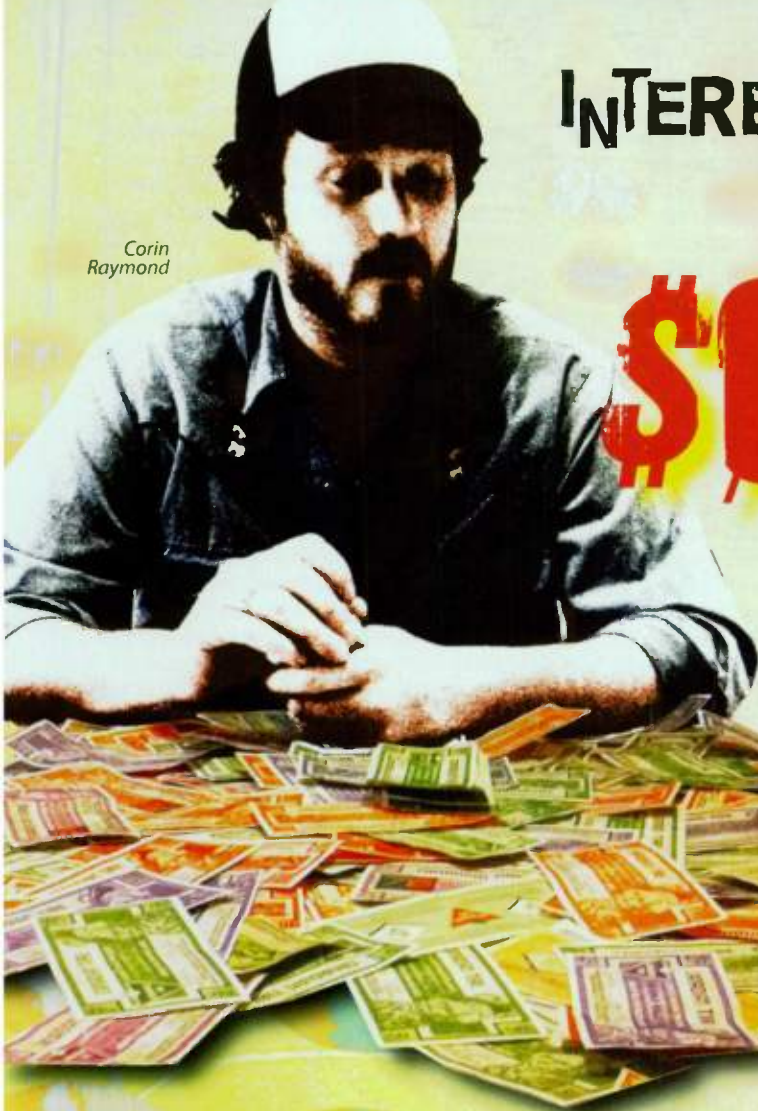
Kid Koala performing *Space Cadet*.

INTERESTING + INNOVATIVE MEANS TO

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By David McPherson

Corin
Raymond



Walk Off The Earth



Ever imagine what \$3,500 in Canadian Tire money looks like? Just ask Corin Raymond. The Toronto folk singer has collected this amount over the past nine months, having set a lofty goal of \$10,000 to help fund his upcoming record. What began with fans tossing the money with the “smiling Scot on it” into the air at his weekly gigs at The Cameron House turned into a major crowdfunding campaign driven by social media.

Flash back to the summer of 2011. Raymond co-wrote “Don’t Spend It Honey (The Canadian Tire Song)” with Winnipeg musician Rob Vaarmeyer. The song, with its catchy chorus, “Don’t Spend It Honey/Not that Canadian Tire money/You’ve saved it so long ...” was an instant hit. After a few times of him playing the tune during weekly Cameron gigs, Raymond’s regulars started to spontaneously shower the songwriter with the funny money. Even then, Raymond didn’t know where this “caper,” as he calls it, would take him.

It wasn’t until he came back from a short tour of Alberta and the Yukon near the end of the year, having collected an additional \$25 in Canadian Tire money, when James Paul, who owns The Rogue Studios in Toronto, told Raymond that he accepted bills with the Sandy McTire portrait at par. “I didn’t plan a single part of it,” Raymond recalls. “It all just happened ... a perfect storm (of Canadian Tire money). I just happened to be the guy who could enjoy it more than anyone else might have.”

In early January 2012, Raymond made a video of himself playing the Canadian Tire song in his living room, posted it on Facebook, and started asking for donations to help him fund his next record. The next thing he knew, every major TV outlet in

Canada, all the daily newspapers in Hogtown, and *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* all wanted a piece of this story; *The Wall Street Journal* was even intrigued by the tale. After all this publicity, hundreds of packages from all across Canada started to arrive in the mail daily filled with donations and personal, inspirational notes. Forty-five cents at a time, his Canadian Tire stash grew and grew.

“My mailbox is a Christmas stocking and every night has been Christmas Eve,” he comments. At the time of publication, Raymond was closing in on \$3,500. If it wasn’t for Facebook or YouTube, he would have been lucky to collect anywhere near this large amount.

Crowdsourcing, as it's dubbed, is one of the best ways for indie musicians today to fund their records. As Raymond says, "You can get so many people involved for so little." For fans, the cool part is that you can invest in a musician's career like never

unique ways musicians are using social media to connect with fans and raise money for projects. At its core, music is about making a connection with your audience, and social media certainly helps to foster this connection.

continue to discover the Burlingtonians' music; again, all thanks to the power of social media.

Walk Off The Earth is the perfect example of how rapidly social media can lead to opportunities for musicians that

CD1A \$UCCESSES

before and feel like you've played a part in helping them achieve their goals. Consider these Facebook stats as of December 2011: the social media network had 483 million daily active users, and 845 million monthly active users – approximately 80 per cent of which are outside Canada and the US. As a songwriter, tapping into this medium alone is one sure way to get your tunes into the hands and hearts of a wider audience.

STREAMING TO SUCCESS

Every second, an hour of video is uploaded to YouTube. With its user-friendly interface, it is no wonder the video-sharing site attracts over 800 million users each month. Burlington, ON's Walk Off The Earth has witnessed the power of this online marketing channel. By now you've surely heard the story of the indie band's viral success. This past January, they posted a video of five people playing one acoustic guitar covering Gotye's "Somebody That I Used to Know."

"Because of the volume, the counter froze," recalls keyboardist Mike Taylor. "It's estimated we had somewhere between 1.5 and 2 million (views) by the end of the day!" Walk Off The Earth had no idea that this innovative video would go so viral. How viral? Well, it earned Tweets from the likes of celebrities Russell Crowe and Jason Alexander and landed the band an appearance on *Ellen*. Four months since posting the video, it's closing in on 100 million views. While the band did not make any real revenue directly from this popular posting, they did sign a major-label deal with Columbia in the US, home to the likes of Adele, who pocketed six Grammy Awards in 2012, and Canadian songwriting legend Leonard Cohen. Thanks to this success, most of the band members have been able to quit their day jobs.

"We've been doing videos on YouTube for about two years," says Marshall, who plays guitar, bass, harmonica, and sings in the band. "We never looked at [YouTube] as a form of revenue, but more as an avenue to get Walk Off The Earth noticed by more people. Obviously, when you get noticed by more people, there are options to make revenue in other ways."

The economic payout as a result of the YouTube success is huge: the aforementioned major-label deal with Columbia, a steep increase in the band's iTunes sales, and new fans around the globe that

were never possible before the invention and evolution of the World Wide Web. As one musician I spoke with put it, social media lets songwriters "kick down that door" that in the past prevented them from getting their music into the hands of a wider audience. Beginning with MySpace (founded in 2003), which was followed by other sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, the number of online outlets at an artist's fingertips is infinite. Every day, there's a new site launched that helps them market themselves. The best part is most of them are free. A couple of these newer players include Google+, Kickstarter, and Pinterest. Whether it's funding your record, marketing your music, or booking gigs, leveraging these online tools is crucial to an artist's success.



Photo: Erin Blackwood & Shawn Van Daele

Raymond feels like there are still a lot of legs left to this story. Fans wishing to help him reach his goal can send their Canadian Tire money that's probably collecting dust in their car's glove compartment or a sock drawer his way.

Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest allow musicians to break down the walls. Raymond's Canadian Tire story is just one of many



eOne Music's Eric Alper

SOCIAL MEDIA-MINDED

Keeping up with and maintaining your social media presence in itself is a full-time job. That's why several of the musicians interviewed here said they've hired an expert to manage this side of the business. It's an investment, they all say, worth making. Eric Alper, a music industry veteran, advises

musicians to invest their time and energy into the sites where they can get the most bang for their buck. "The important thing for artists to remember is not to do it all," advises Alper, Director of Media Relations and Label Acquisitions at eOne Music. "Nobody can keep up with all the new tools coming out daily."

Alper says the key one is your website's homepage, where your audience can see your Twitter and Facebook stream and sign up to follow you and become a fan. Then, there's Twitter, Facebook, Bandcamp, and Soundcloud to host music, and of course, the now ubiquitous YouTube. "If you work these well, you'll be busy enough posting content and engaging with your fans," he adds.

Retweets are the new autographs, according to Alper. "You'll blow a fan's mind by replying to them, choosing them as a follow (and give a reason, don't just list their Twitter handle), or wishing them a happy birthday. One artist I worked with Tweeted to a fan: "Good luck on your exam!" after the fan told her she was stressed out during an after-show autograph session. Not only did the fan pass the test, she's now a fan for life!"

Other innovative ways Alper suggests musicians can use social media to engage their fans are: holding a Twitter or Facebook hunt or online "party" to get rid of unsold merchandise. "Leave a pair of tickets somewhere near the venue, and post hints to where fans can find it," he explains. "Or, have a Facebook or Twitter party to get rid of any cool items from video shoots, old instruments, slow-moving swag, etc. Those items are worth more as an authentic piece of the band in the fan's hands than they are under your bed."

Facebook is also a great tool to get immediate feedback from fans such as posting a poll asking for help to choose your next single, or what cover song you should play at your gig that night. "Tweets are awesome to post info about arriving into a city, asking where the best place is to eat, last-minute meet and greet opportunities, and free ticket giveaways in case you want to have more people there," Alper comments.

Jaimie Milburn, National Publicist at Audio Blood Inc., a PR company that also does social media consulting for major events and artists, is also a big fan of social media, especially Twitter. Audio Blood has worked hard to get all of its bands up to speed with the latest social tools and most of the artists they bring on board already have the basic, fundamental sites covered.

"It's not enough to just have them though," Milburn says. "The key is to use them effectively by connecting with fans, the media, and industry and creating a real voice for themselves. We can't tweet for them, but we can help point them in the right direction. I'm a total supporter

of Twitter when it comes down to it. It allows you to share everything from Facebook links to YouTube videos right on your dashboard, and you can even sync FourSquare, Instagram, WhoSay, and more on it. In my mind, it's the main hub."

LOOKING FOR A DATE?

In the net age, the opportunities for musicians to connect with fans are unprecedented. With the "record industry" in sharp decline and very few major label deals available (despite Walk Off The Earth bagging one), musicians are seeking new ways to finance their projects. Traditional sources to help fund records such as applying for government grants and not-for-profit arts councils are still available, but the do-it-yourself mentality and inherent creativity of musicians allows for many additional means of raising money.

Take Toronto songwriter Jadea Kelly, whose 2010 disc *Eastbound Platform* was nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award. She held an auction at a local bar where she frequently plays to help offset the \$7,000 it was going to cost to record and produce her upcoming CD *Clover*. The roots artist gathered 30 of her friends, along with well-known local musicians, songwriters, bar owners, and other artists, and auctioned them off for "dates," music lessons, and business consultations, along with CDs, concert tickets, and other prizes. To promote this fundraising campaign, Kelly used Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook.

"Any emerging artist should expect to fundraise a portion or majority of their recording projects during the beginning years," says Kelly. "Until you gain momentum and exposure, you are your

own record label and your own financial backer. Creativity in your fundraising approach will ensure your success and longevity in the music business. A fundraising technique I have found most useful for my musical projects is celebrity musician auctions.

"I am humbled to have a handful of songwriters, music publicists, managers and musicians willing to auction themselves to aid my aspirations," she continues. "Friends have lovingly auctioned concert tickets, guitar lessons, business consultations, and even romantic dates to help me raise funds. In 2011, I raised more than \$1,000 for my first European tour through a celebrity musician auction and this past year another \$1,300 to help fund my new record."

Other crowdfunding options include offering pre-orders of your next record, T-shirt prize packs, and intimate house concerts. A quick search online by musicians will result in an endless list of fundraising platforms such as Kapipal.com (which Kelly used), Indiegogo.com, and Kickstarter.com. Do your research so you can find the one that best matches your fundraising goals.

"Kickstarter requires an American bank account, so Canadians beware," says Kelly. "They also take a percentage of your goal; plus, if you are unable to reach the goal you set, you don't receive any money."

That's the main reason Charlottetown-based indie band Paper Lions chose Indiegogo to raise funds to help record their next record. "To start it up, we made a fun, introductory video to explain to potential contributors what we were doing and why we needed \$10,000," explains singer/guitarist John MacPhee. "As well, we created perks that people could purchase and, in turn, support the making of our new record. We had perks ranging in price from \$5 for a digital copy of the record to a \$75 B-sides package to a \$50,000 Instant Band package where people could buy our van with all of our gear in it and be the executive producer on our album."

A PROFITABLE PRE-ORDER CAMPAIGN

In late April, Paper Lions reached their \$10,000 goal. This is just a continuation of their social media success story, which began when they released their last EP, 2010's *Trophies*, for free online, after some record label difficulties.

"We posted an open letter on our website to our fans who had previously purchased *Trophies* online," MacPhee explains. "The letter was an explanation that although those fans had purchased the EP, we had not received any money from those sales. Because of this, we had decided to give *Trophies* away in exchange



Jaimie Milburn of Audio Blood



Photo: Dorothy Dahn

Paper Lions

for an e-mail address. To our complete surprise, the morning after posting the letter with a link to download the EP on our website, while taking a break from band practice, we noticed that the EP had been downloaded a few hundred times.

"We had also received e-mails telling us the story had made the front page of Reddit.com," MacPhee adds. "Over the next 24 hours, we received more than 8,000 downloads of *Trophies* and 130,000 visits to our website. On top of that, through PayPal, we received about \$450 in cash contributions from supporters. While \$450 may not seem like a lot, it meant a little more flexibility while in the studio working on our new record."

Paper Lions moved all these records via their own webstore, using Topspin's store platform. MacPhee says it was pretty simple to set up — taking about three to four hours total to get it to go live.

"One of the ways we have found social media to work well is by using Topspin's widget," he comments. "We have *Trophies* for free download in exchange for an e-mail address on our website, Facebook, YouTube, and more. One of the great things we are able to do with the widget is to allow everyone to embed it on their own websites, Tumblr pages, and more. In essence, this allows anyone who is excited about our EP to share it with their peers in their own online community."

Getting back to Milburn, for a few more final words from the industry side, she says social media has definitely changed the music business, and while she's still not 100 per cent convinced that it's all for the better, the online universe certainly

has no boundaries. "That's what makes it so unique and powerful," she concludes. "From an industry perspective, it's never been easier to tap into bands, media, and other industry folk worldwide. This new lack of structure for communication flow is really driving the industry on all fronts."

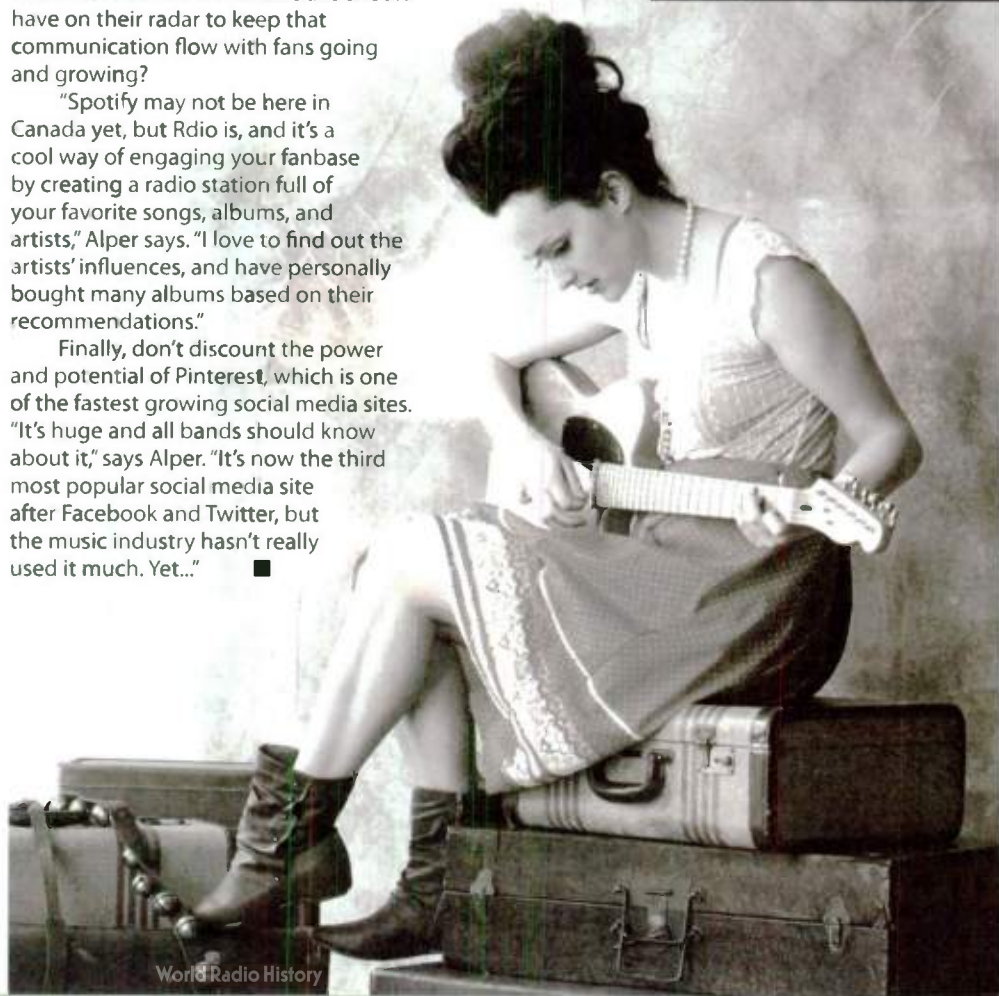
So, what are some of the newest social media tools that musicians should have on their radar to keep that communication flow with fans going and growing?

"Spotify may not be here in Canada yet, but Rdio is, and it's a cool way of engaging your fanbase by creating a radio station full of your favorite songs, albums, and artists," Alper says. "I love to find out the artists' influences, and have personally bought many albums based on their recommendations."

Finally, don't discount the power and potential of Pinterest, which is one of the fastest growing social media sites. "It's huge and all bands should know about it," says Alper. "It's now the third most popular social media site after Facebook and Twitter, but the music industry hasn't really used it much. Yet..." ■

David McPherson is a Toronto-based professional writer and corporate communicator; McPherson lives by his self-penned motto, "Music is the elixir of life." With 14,780 songs on his iPod and counting and a growing vintage vinyl collection, he's always discovering new music. Follow him on Twitter @aspen73.

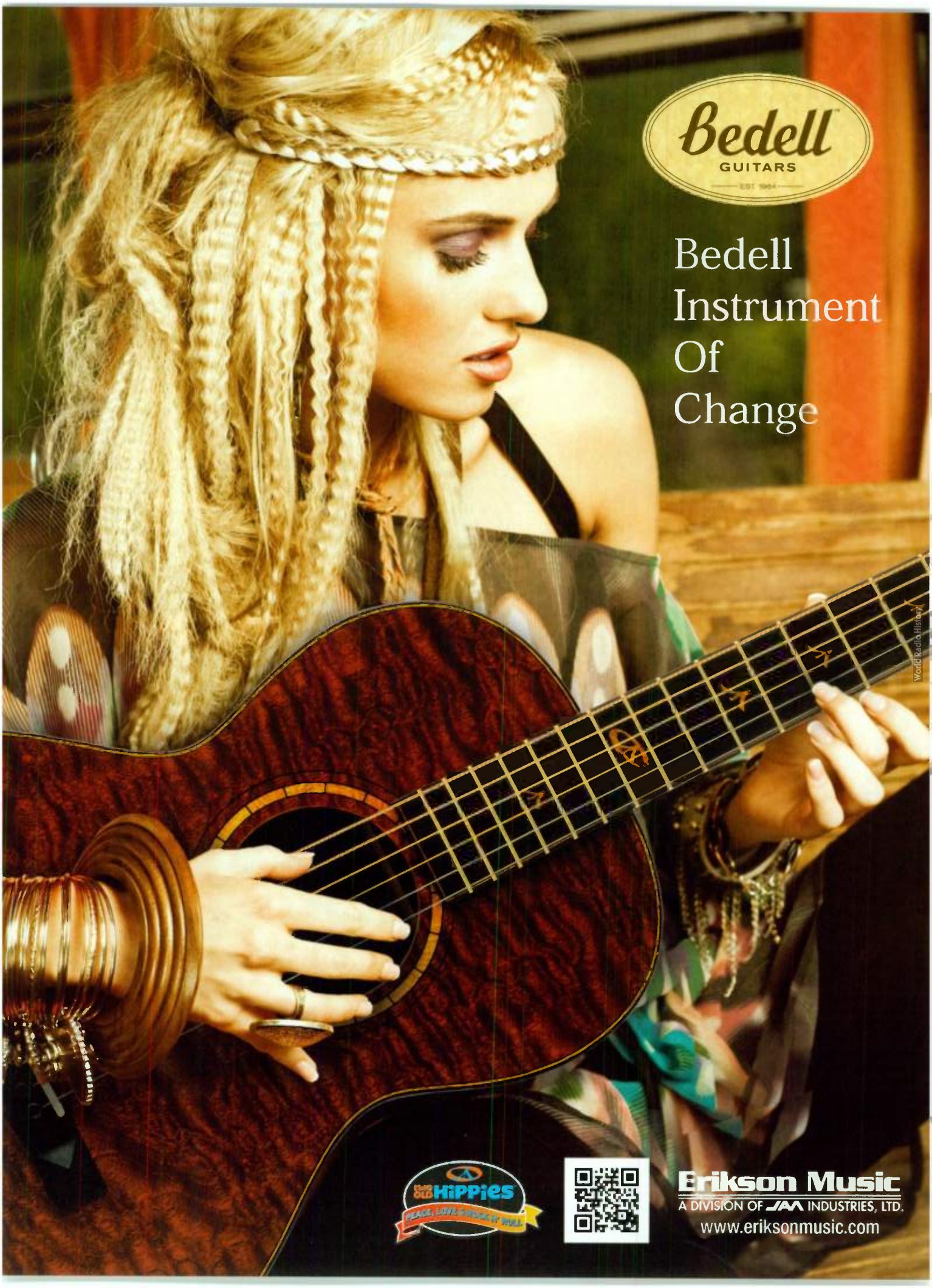
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Play Something!

BY ANDREW KING

CM's 2012 Guitar Special

Welcome to *Canadian Musician's* 2012 look at all-things axe! We've got one hell of a lineup this year, including the massive double-header of Ian Thornley discussing Big Wreck's boss of an album *Albatross* and the almighty Slash sitting down for a Q&A on his soon-to-be-released *Apocalyptic Love*.

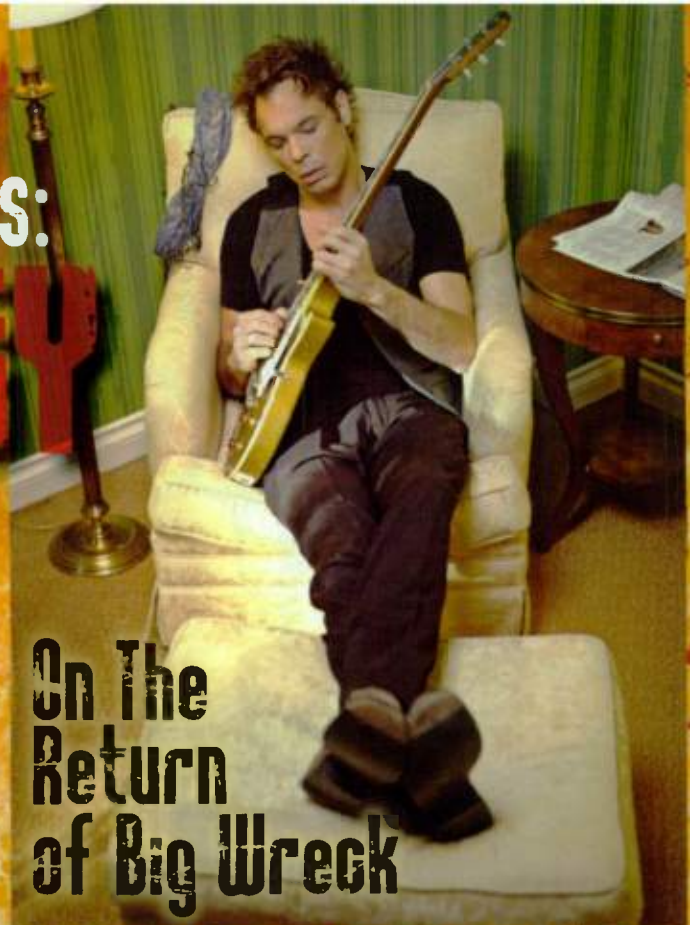
Beyond that, we've gone guitar-gaga with spots on Canadian jazz powerhouse Michael Occhipinti; Scott Middleton, guitarist of the crushing hard-core/metal/stoner-rocking Cancer Bats; folk/rock/country chameleon and producer Dale Murray; dreamy-pop maker and The Dears guitarist Krief; and the old-style R&B, rock, and soul-sensible Dan Silljer.

These guitarists delve into everything from their gear and technique through to their never-ending quests to refine their crafts and continually one-up themselves with each new song, album, or show. Enjoy the read; hopefully it inspires you to plug your favourite axe into your favourite amp and just ... play something!

Play Some **Thing!**

Flying High with Albatross:

IAN THORNLEY



On The Return of Big Wreck

While Ian Thornley's voice and guitar playing have been staples of Canadian rock radio since Big Wreck first made an impact with their 1997 debut *In Loving Memory Of...*, savoring the track "Albatross" after tuning the dial has to be extra sweet for fans of the singer's signature style of melodic hard rock.

The song is the first single from Big Wreck's album of the same name, released March 6, 2012, and the first from the band to hit radio since "Knee Deep" from 2001's *The Pleasure and the Greed*. Though his output as Thornley appeared fans thanks to many shared elements – soaring rhythm guitars, driving rhythms, and killer choruses sewn together by some slick production – the legacy of Big Wreck is a sacred institution to swarms of Can-rock enthusiasts.

"When we were in the studio, I hadn't even given any thought to the name we'd put on it," Thornley says of *Albatross*. Big Wreck disbanded in 2002 after a falling-out between Thornley and guitarist Brian Doherty; however, after rekindling their friendship in 2010, the pair began performing together and writing what would eventually become *Albatross*, leading to a four-week recording session at Toronto's Vespa Studios midway through 2011. "(Producer) Nick Raskulinecz first suggested calling it a Big Wreck album. At first, I didn't know how to feel about that, but I tried it on. I figured it might just be a great way to move in a new direction – or an old direction, as the case may be, but a new direction for me."

The 11 tracks comprising the effort are undeniably Big Wreck and undeniably Thornley in prime form, largely owing to the freedom he had in the studio. "I wanted to let the songs guide our approach as opposed

to some bullshit reasoning from a record label or A&R rep," he says frankly. In that sense, *Albatross* is much like Big Wreck's breakout debut in that the latter was what Thornley calls essentially a "collection of demos" that benefitted from little outside influence. He continues: "That would lend itself to calling *Albatross* a Big Wreck album. It's steeped in the blues and there are things there that probably aren't very hip or don't fit on modern rock radio – not enough auto-tune or the guitar sound everyone's using these days (laughs)."

The mission statement he and engineer Eric Ratz established early on was to use small amplifiers whenever possible. "I'm sick of that giant-stack, scooped thump," he says with a slight air of annoyance. "Sometimes it's necessary if you want to give your chorus a lift – pull out the Bogners and Soldanos and turn 'em up. But in miking a smaller amp, I find you have more options. You can mic the back, front, mess with the phase, use room mics... It's a lost art. I like hearing the room in a guitar sound. It gives it some personality."

For solos, he'd shred through a single amp that offered the specific sound he was after, though most of the rhythm and bed tracking was done using two or three smaller combos at once. The idea during the *Albatross* sessions was to capture as much off-the-floor as possible.

When asked if fans would find any noticeably new elements in his guitar playing this time out, Thornley says that, first and foremost, he was more selective as to where his solos would go. Beyond that, it was actually the approach to the drums on

the album that most significantly impacted the guitar parts.

"My knee-jerk reaction is to always go for the big, roomy sort of bombastic drum sounds," he states, and those familiar with Big Wreck know exactly what he's referencing; however, while assembling the track "Glass Room," Thornley couldn't help but notice its similarity to early Tom Petty output. "There was a particular drum sound that records from that period had – really dampened and muted, tight with no room sound. Fleetwood Mac. Supertramp. Maybe a bit of 'verb on the snare and that's it."

The song had already been cut with the big, airy drums, though Ratz did another pass looking to emulate the sound of decades past. "He's done his research and knew exactly how to get that sound," Thornley says of his collaborator. He explains of the results: "The guitars just opened up. I didn't have to layer any big, massive guitars; even the simple Strat through an AC30 sounded just massive because the drums weren't eating up so much room. It brought a different personality to the song."

With that, they began going

through the material they'd already tracked to see where else that approach could be employed. They re-cut "Control" in the same way, itself carrying a vibe akin to that of Dire Straits or Fleetwood Mac, resulting in one of the strongest and most memorable numbers on the record.

Since its release, *Albatross* has elevated the band to several new plateaus. It debuted at number five on the Canadian Albums Chart, the highest peak position for any Big Wreck or Thornley release, with its lead single holding the number one position on the *Billboard* Canadian Rock Chart for six straight weeks – another first. Now, the goal is to get the material ready for the road. Along with Thornley and Doherty, guitarist Paulo Neta rounds out Big Wreck's trio of six-stringers.

"Brian and Paulo are killer guitar players," Thornley says. "So we have a very open forum and our ideas are usually all aligned." Once ready, the goal is to "just tour the hell out of the release, and bring a taste of Big Wreck – both new and old – to the band's faithful – who are undoubtedly salivating at the thought."



CM & The Almighty

He's one of the most celebrated guitarists in rock history, seemingly inseparable from his iconic Les Paul and frequently framed by a wall of Marshall stacks. His silhouette is unmistakable, and at the end of May 2012, the mighty Slash will return with *Apocalyptic Love*, his latest solo effort. CM caught up with the musical icon during Canadian Music Week 2012 to chat about the record and his approach to his instrument.

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CM: As you've stated, the material from *Apocalyptic Love* we've heard so far is notably heavy stuff, even considering your catalog. What informed that "harder" direction?

S: It's a very driving record. Even the slower songs are delivered with some kind of impact. Having the right guys to work with awarded me the ability to do what I do best. I loved the last record and because of all the different people it was a little more eclectic, whereas this is more of a straight ahead kind of rock.

CM: You've got a long-established tone that a lot of guitarists drool over. Speaking specifically to your parts and performances, are there any new tricks, techniques, or tones that found their way onto *Apocalyptic Love* that we haven't heard on a Slash recording to date?

S: I'd love to make myself more interesting from a technical and technological point of view, but what I really do is just get more fluid, and just better on a guitar in general. That comes from touring. Any ideas that I got on this record came from just playing every single night, you know? Technique for me is not something I'm tangibly applying; I just sort of do what I do and it evolves however it evolves.

CM: How about the set-up you used to write and record the album? Were you experimenting with any new or different pieces?

S: I used a very simple set-up. I had the same Les Paul that I've been using since 1987. It's actually aged a lot and become sort of

temperamental; we're like an old married couple. Then I had my '80's Marshall JCM 800 I used on the last record and my new (Marshall) AFD100 signature head. I ran those together with a mic for each cabinet. For different songs, I'd adjust the EQ on each head, and that was mostly it.

Effects wise, I had an effect I'd never used before that I developed with Dunlop — an octave up, octave down fuzz pedal. There's a song called "Carolina" that uses that fuzz and the voice box for the solo, and on "No More Heroes," I used it on the solo. Otherwise, lots of wah.

CM: What informed the choice to work with (producer) Eric Valentine again, and where are his fingerprints most present on this album?

S: He's a genius. He's one of the few people I know that not only has technical ability but is a great musician and understands music. It's really a combustible combination. He's one of the few guys I know that could have done the last record and made it work. A lot of producers I've worked with, some good and some not so good, have to make everything sound the way that they want it sound. With Eric, it's about capturing what's there, you know?

CM: Speaking of the last record, you've collaborated with such a diverse number of artists over the years. What are the benefits you personally yield through those collaborations?

S: That's a great question, because I really appreciate the opportunity to play on other peoples' albums or collaborate with other artists. I learn to adapt to different environments and see how other people work — different producers, different set-ups. I learn how to communicate in a toe-to-toe kind of way with different people. It's very humbling, and we can all learn a lot from each other.

CM: You've had one of the most storied careers of any rock guitarist in history and are still going strong. How do you keep the new and fresh ideas continually flowing?

S: I just wholeheartedly love what it is I do, and I have this ongoing desire to just make up cool shit (laughs). I love every aspect of being a musician and playing in a band, from working in the studio to touring. That's really my driving force.



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Line 6 M13 Effects Unit	Vox Tonebender
TC Electronic MOJO Overdrive Pedal	Roland V-Wah
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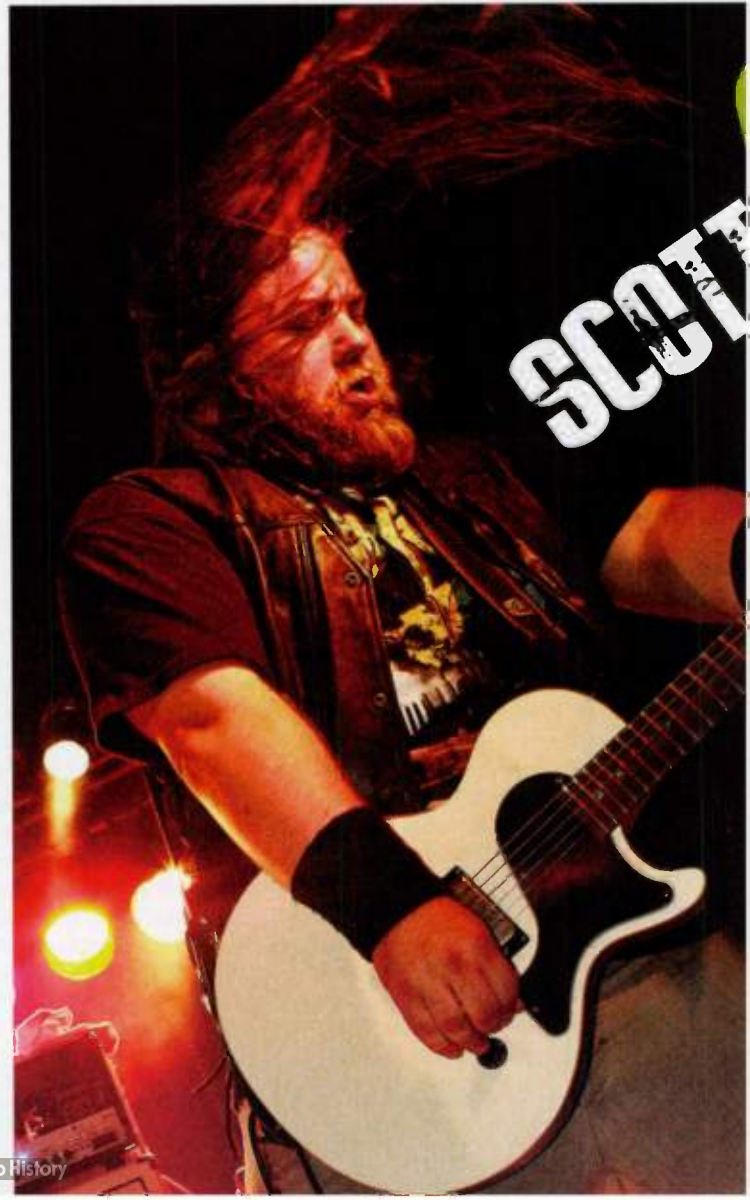
Since first making his mark in 1994 with the Neufeld-Occhipinti Jazz Orchestra (NOJO), Michael Occhipinti has been a staple of the Toronto, Canadian, and international jazz scenes. His always innovative approach to modern jazz has earned him eight JUNO nods already, atop accolades from some of the top musicians and media outlets on the planet.

His newest recording is *Shine On: The Universe of John Lennon*, featuring crafty and interesting takes on numbers from Lennon and his band's catalogue. "I really wanted to honour the spirit of Lennon and The Beatles by making sure there are a lot of different guitar sounds," he muses, "as that's one of the things I love about recordings like *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*."

When composing and arranging his parts for any project, context is everything for Occhipinti. He shares that while he's always experimented with tones and techniques from a myriad of styles, on previous recordings, he's at times had to sacrifice his ideal guitar sound to capture the best overall group performance. This time out, Occhipinti turned the amps up and tried out a slew of different guitars and sonic ideas. "I've also done more layering on this record to create some soundscapes where you can't really hear what's causing a certain sound; it's just an interesting wash of backwards and forwards guitars with different loops, delay times, and reverbs."

While the studio offers an environment for such experimentation, when it comes to delivering his material in a live setting, Occhipinti says his three-pickup Music Man enables him to recreate much of his sonic diversity. "I go all the way from a clean, dark tone to a very bright tone with clear distortion – sometimes in the same song," he says. "Over the years, many people have asked why I don't play a hollow body, but as great as that would be in one context, having a variety of sounds in a guitar is really important to me." A versatile delay and a reverse-enabled looper have also significantly contributed to his sound over the last decade-plus and will be especially crucial to recreating *Shine On* from the stage.

Well-known and celebrated for constantly pushing into new musical territories, Occhipinti says that a lot of what he's hearing today sits between two extremes. It's either "all about virtuosity or is completely anti-virtuosic." He's longing for a middle ground where the musicianship of a band is evident, but so is the passion for expanding on the perceived limitations of the guitar and, subsequently, popular music in general, and he's nothing if not a poster boy for that movement.



Cranking it To New Extremes With Cancer Bats

With each new record since 2006's *Birthing The Giant*, Toronto's Cancer Bats have built upon their foundation of frenzied hardcore punk with fragments of classic, stoner, and southern rock and an increasingly sizable influence from the masters of metal. That development culminates on the Bats' most recent release, 2012's *Dead Set On Living*.

The sole guitarist in a guitar-heavy group, Scott Middleton explains how his playing on *DSOL* expands on what he delivered with 2010's *Bears, Mayors, Scraps & Bones*. "On *BMSB*, I feel like my playing was somewhat more chaotic and technical," he explains. "To me, *DSOL* is more expressive, more creative, and has a lot more groove." That groove is often the result of Middleton's bare-bones but beastly riffs locked-in with his rhythm section and his keen awareness of dynamics. Adds the axe-slinger: "I really found strength in letting certain notes hang or by holding back and letting the

Herbert head. "Give me one of those and you'll have the sound that is quintessential Cancer Bats," he says, though he adds that since recording 2008's *Hail Destroyer*, his recorded sound is the product of the Diezel working in tandem with his Morris XSIII head, hand-built in Welland, ON. And that's not the only hand-built weapon in his arsenal.

The most recent additions to Middleton's rig are a pair of Nik Huber guitars, crafted in Germany. "My favourite thing to do is let a new guitar inspire me to write a record," he says, adding that he's noticing the smaller boutique builders are bringing a level of quality, innovation, and consistency back to the market. "[Companies] like Morris Amps, Krych Cabs, Diezel Amps, Empress Effects, and Nik Huber Guitars – they all nod to their influences and what's come before them, but show that there are different

and better ways to approach building gear," and that's an ethos not unlike his own when it comes to writing the dominating riffs that drive *DSOL* and each Bats disc before it.

INSTRUMENTS

Nik Huber Krautster Guitar
Nik Huber Orca Guitar
1987 Gibson Les Paul Custom Lite Guitar

AMPS/CABS

Diezel Herbert Amp
Morris Amps XSIII Amp
Krych Custom 6x12 Cabinet
Diezel 4x12 Cabinet

PROCESSING

Providence PEC-2 Effects Router/Controller
Morley Bad Horsie Wah Pedal
Empress Multidrive Pedal
Cusack Music Scruzz Pedal
Providence Chrono Delay Pedal
Catalinbread Semaphore Tremolo Pedal
Earthquaker Devices Bit Commander

PEDAL

Electro Harmonix POG 2
Neunaber Technology Wet Reverb Pedal
Black Arts Toneworks Pharaoh Fuzz Pedal
Rocktron Guitar Silencer
Planet Waves Chromatic Tuner

listener take a breath before I punch them in the ear with the biggest riffs I've ever come up with."

Middleton explains that he's long been striving for a "happy medium" between paying homage to the classic guitar sounds he loves and straying "as far as possible" from the now-stale scooped sounds of many of his band's heavy contemporaries. "*DSOL* is definitely the closest I've ever come to achieving that goal," he states, "and I really believe this record could only have been made by Cancer Bats." That belief stems from another – that tone goes beyond just sonics and is as much a product of approach and style. He explains of all guitarists: "Tone lives within the intricacies of our playing. Using what we've learned from playing and studying our instruments and realizing that our shortcomings and inabilities are just as important as our talents in creating our style."

Of course, the equipment he chooses does indeed contribute to Cancer Bats' now-signature guitar sound and is thus selected with care. The constant over the years has been Middleton's Diezel



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INSTRUMENTS

- Gretsch '60s Nashville Guitar
- Rickenbacker 12-String Guitar
- MSA Universal 12-String Pedal Steel

AMPS/CABS

- Fender Deluxe Vintage Amplifier

dale MURRAY

From Stage Right to Spotlight

Dale Murray has produced and performed alongside a fairly lengthy list of respected artists. From his longer stints with The Guthries and Cuff the Duke to supporting roles alongside Hayden, Buck 65, and Blue Rodeo, Murray has earned a reputation as an adaptable musician that can add depth to many a project. With *Dream Mountain Dream*, his second solo release, however, Murray's own art takes centre stage.

The album's dreamy pop sound sparkles and shines with simple, stripped-down string parts that let the nuances of his playing shine through. "I find that if you have a really

nice guitar going through a really nice amp, that's all you need," he explains of his approach on *Dream Mountain Dream*. "Just crank up the amp, make a few tweaks, put the right mic on it, and you're ready to go. There's a lot less you can get away with in terms of being sloppy, but there are more subtleties that come through in your playing."

Murray credits much of his ongoing development as a player to the opportunities he's had to make music with such a myriad of performers, saying: "Being put into different musical situations is the best way to break playing habits and learn new tricks because it

forces you to perform in a way that fits someone else's style." That informs his overall approach to keeping things fresh — pushing to think of alternate ways to enhance a song that's outside of your comfort zone. "The real trick," he says, "is to realize that ... you have to find a balance between advancing stylistically, yet keeping intact the overall vibe of what you do as a musician."

And whether he's adding a haunting pedal steel line to someone's alt-country record or performing his songs alone on stage, there's no question Dale Murray has developed his own style — and it's one worth hearing.

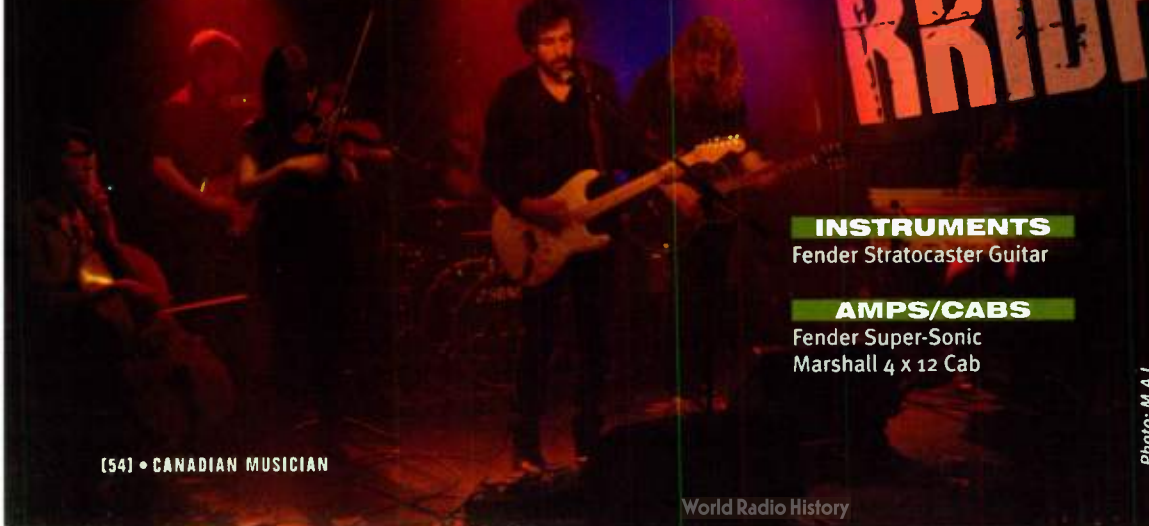
"Most sounds happen in my head first," begins Patrick Krief, longtime guitarist for Montreal pop act The Dears and a celebrated solo artist in his own right. "I hear something, and I spend hours trying to learn how to play it and make it sound like what I'm hearing."

Krief has been crafting very personal, emotional music for years, taking great care to ensure his guitar parts elevate any given song's intention. That's more than evident on his latest solo disk, 2012's *Hundred Thousand Pieces*. Recording the majority of the album in his apartment meant he was able to heavily scrutinize his output at his own pace, admitting to spending up to three days tweaking a single sound. That attention to detail is inherently audible in songs like "Forever Good-night" and "Simple Lives."

In fact, the guitarist attributes the sonic signature of his output not to any specific piece of gear, but rather the emotion with which it's relayed. "The feeling of angst, rage, or isolation needs to be dialed in," he says of his writing. "Then I can hopefully make it happen with any piece of gear." Illustrating his point, he notes that *Hundred Thousand Pieces* was entirely written on "a crappy \$50 classical guitar" he purchased to kill time in New York City and he hasn't added any new equipment to his guitar rig since picking up his Fender head four years ago. "I'm a creature of habit, I guess."

Never one to follow fads, musical or otherwise, Krief is hard-pressed to come up with a current or emerging technological or stylistic trend that's caught his intention, instead saying: "When someone plays with assertion, emotion, and passion, I don't even care if they hit the right notes; I love it," and not one of those components is lacking on his latest.

Assertion, Emotion & Passion



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Photo: Jen Shaw

Play Something!

Dan

SILLJER

INSTRUMENTS

"Angie" – '95 Franken-Strat Guitar

AMPS/CABS

Fender Hot Rod Deluxe 112

The Blues & Beyond

Long-known in and around Regina as a musician's musician, left-handed guitar player Dan Silljer's *Foolish Heart* is notably mature and well-round-

ed considering it's his debut solo disc. Though the record is rooted in R&B, bits of jazz, pop, and modern rock emerge throughout its 12 tracks and add a notable amount of depth.

A member of Jason Plumb's backing band The Willing and having occupied a similar role for artists including Serena Ryder and Jeff Healey, Silljer's chops have been well showcased; however, *Foolish Heart*, his first collection to feature his own songs, brought the guitarist away from his usual form in many ways. "My approach was more uninhibited with this project," he says of the release. "As this was my own, I felt a little less subdued – which can be good and bad! Sometimes I just wanted to 'light it up,' but would try to force myself to exercise some restraint and play for the song."

Silljer says his songwriting greatly benefited from Plumb's influence, with whom he worked on *Foolish Heart*'s composition. "He taught me how to get the songs out, stop editing myself, trust what I'm doing, and listen from different angles. I had all of the puzzle pieces, but no clue how to put it together." As the album attests, Silljer must be a fast learner.

Boasting a foundation in the blues, he says that's not where he's ended up as a player. "You want to thank the people who've come before you, but you don't want to completely emulate them," he says of his style.

Asked to name the component of his current rig that most significantly contributes to his sound, Silljer pauses, contemplating, before answering: "If I had to choose, I would say it's my Strat, simply because it's been with me for so long; it's like an old friend you tell all your worries and troubles to." He pauses again. "Okay. That said, I don't think I could live without my Strat." ■



Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.

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World Radio History



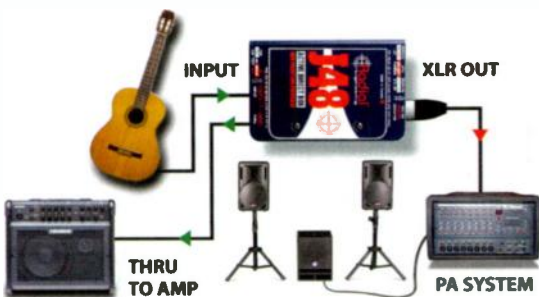
By Peter Janis

SELECTING THE RIGHT DIRECT BOX FOR GUITARS

When selecting a DI box for guitars, the choice is very different when dealing with acoustic guitars versus electric guitars. This article looks at both and how to get the best results on stage.

Acoustic Guitars

When amplifying an acoustic guitar on stage, microphones are rarely used due to concerns with feedback. Instead, most acoustic guitars are either equipped with a built-in piezo pickup with an on-board active preamp or outfitted with an after-market magnetic pickup that fits inside the sound hole. The high impedance output from the instrument is then sent to a direct box where the signal is balanced and the impedance is lowered



to enable it to be sent a long distance without noise. A typical direct box is equipped with a thru connector that is used to feed the artist's stage amp while the balanced low-impedance XLR output feeds the PA system.

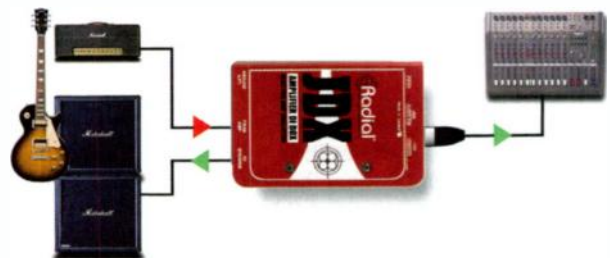
The traditional approach to using a direct box is to capture the signal right from the instrument before it is processed on-stage. The thru output going to the stage amp allows the artist to adjust the EQ or add echo to suit his/her personal needs on stage. At the same time, this set-up enables the sound engineer to add reverb or colouration to suit the room without having to try to compensate for the effects added by the musician.

Eliminating feedback onstage is a primary concern. For instance, some DI boxes are equipped with a built-in high-pass filter that can reduce unwanted low frequency resonance which often leads to feedback. This also reduces the energy content, resulting in greater headroom. More headroom means less distortion – another common cause of feedback. Reversing the polarity at the DI output can also be very helpful as this changes the phase relationship between the sound coming from the PA system and the sound coming from the onstage monitoring system. By electronically “moving” the acoustic peak so that it becomes a valley, you can eliminate hotspots which can cause resonant feedback. Best of all, because these fixes do not involve using the EQ to fight feedback, you are not negatively affecting the instrument's tone.

Electric Guitar

For the past 50 years, tradition has been to put a microphone in front of the electric guitar amp to capture the sound of the cabinet and distortion from the amp. But since the advent of in-ear monitors, guitarists have

become much more aware of the sound from their amps. Before in-ears, when they played guitar on stage, they were listening to their amps. Today, they hear what the mic is picking up and more often than not, they are realizing that the sound is not as good versus what they hear coming from their amp. This makes sense. When a microphone is placed right in front of a loudspeaker, a tremendous amount of effort is required by the sound engineer to make it sound good. Move the mic by 1 cm and the sound changes, and as you change venues, the sound once again is subject to change



do to a variety of variables. These include different room acoustics, proximity and bleed from other instruments, and the effect of stage resonance and mic placement.

Using a traditional direct box in front of the amp does not work. You need to capture the guitar sound after it has been processed by the amp. As any sound engineer can attest, simply placing a regular DI box with a pad at the output tends to sound like a swarm of bees. You need to replicate the sound of both the amp and the cabinet. Recent advances have allowed engineers to develop new direct boxes that employ advanced filtering to better replicate the sound, and by employing the loudspeaker as a reactive load, the sound coming from the DI box tends to be much more realistic.

The benefits to using a guitar amp direct box are significant. For the artist using in-ear monitors, the audio engineer can program the mixer and effects for tremendous consistency night after night. This means faster sound checks, and when the artist is comfortable and

happy, it generally results a better performance. For the FOH engineer, the starting point is immediately familiar which means he/she is not fighting the mix for the first few songs, and delivering a better mix improves the show for the audience.

Today, some engineers combine the sound of a direct feed with a mic while others have now migrated to only using a direct box. There are no rules...

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The heart of the PSA1 design is the high frequency Para-Line lens. This innovative technology transforms a point source into a uni-phase plane wave, allowing multiple high frequency drivers to sum coherently in the vertical plane without self-interference.

Ideal for mobile PA applications where complex trussing or roof rigging isn't practical, Yorkville PSA1 cabinets mount quickly and securely on a typical high quality speaker stand. Up to two cabinets per stand can be arrayed when required. When rigging is available, innovative optional external bolt-on flyware allows up to four PSA1 cabinets to be configured easily in a 60°(v) x 110° (h) array for touring system or permanent install.

Rugged injection molded ABS cabinet design, Class-D amplification, and Neodymium woofers minimize overall cabinet weight, ensures system transport and set-up can easily be handled by a single operator. Highly efficient amplifier design means each PSA1 draws less than 3 amps in typical operation allowing up to four cabinets to operate safely on a standard 15 amp service.



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By Terra Noble

RECORDING AGREEMENTS

Part 1

Introduction

New norms have emerged in major label recording agreements as record companies have responded to declining record sales over the last decade. Rather than focus primarily on selling records, many labels now get involved in what have become their artists' more lucrative activities such as touring, songwriting, merchandise, and sponsorships. This two-part article reviews the standard terms of current recording agreements with major labels.

Term

The term of a recording agreement refers to the length of time an artist is under exclusive contract with the record label. Generally, the term is broken down into an initial contract period and several "options periods," each structured around an album cycle. During each period, the artist must deliver one new, full-length, studio album to the label. Each period expires between six and nine months after the artist fulfills that commitment and delivers an album that the label deems satisfactory.

Rather than commit to the artist for the long term, the label will acquire several options to either extend the term or terminate the agreement after the previous period expires. Major labels usually request between three and five options to renew the term for additional albums. It is important to understand that each option is exercisable at the label's sole discretion. The artist is not similarly entitled to extend or terminate the contract and should subsequently always try to limit the number of options granted under the agreement.

Advance

The advance is the up-front sum paid to the artist as a pre-payment of projected record royalties. The size of the advance varies from artist to artist and can range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 and sometimes more. For every option the label exercises, it should pay an additional advance, and each one should be larger than the last. All recording advances are non-returnable but fully recoupable against royalties earned by the artist from record sales. In other words, the artist will not begin receiving royalties until he/she has earned sufficient royalties to cover the

advance (and other recoupable costs). Since it can take quite a while for the artist to be in a recouped position, he/she should bear in mind that the advance may be the only money seen from the label for some time.

In addition to providing an advance against future royalties, the label also covers the recording costs for each required album. Often the advance and the recording budget are rolled into one "recording fund" which can range from \$100,000 to \$200,000 for a new artist. When the label provides this type of fund, the size of the artist's advance depends on the size of the recording budget. This is because the artist takes home the surplus money that remains after the recording costs are paid. This approach incentivizes the artist to record economically, although the label retains the right to approve recording costs and ensure the resulting album meets its standards. It is standard for the label to recoup recording costs from the artist's royalties; however, the label should absorb most of its costs from manufacturing, distribution, marketing, and promotion.

Royalties

As payment under the recording agreement, the artist receives a percentage of revenue from each album sold by the label. For new artists, the "basic royalty rate" generally ranges from 13 to 17 per cent of the "price published to dealers" (PPD) or the wholesale unit price. This basic rate should escalate by 0.5 to 1 per cent for each subsequent album, with additional sales-based escalations of 0.5 to 1 per cent for every 500,000 units sold in the United States.

There are, however, deductions applied to these rates and prices before the artist's royalty is calculated. For instance, the label typically deducts 10 to 15 per cent from its record revenue for so-called "free goods." This deduction accounts for the promotional copies of records that the label sends to radio and media as well as the free goods given to retailers. It is standard practice to provide free product to retailers to encourage larger purchases by offering what amounts to a discounted rate. In addition, the label makes standard deductions from the basic royalty rate, which usually only applies to records sold at full price through

traditional retail channels in North America. For sales in foreign territories and sales at mid and budget price points, the rate will be between 50 and 85 per cent of the basic royalty rate.

Finally, the artist's royalty rate is almost always an "all-in" rate, meaning that it is inclusive of any royalties payable to producers or other third parties. Producers are paid between 3 and 4 per cent of PPD and mixers often receive a 1 per cent royalty.

Mechanical Royalties

In addition to paying "artist royalties" for the sale of recorded music, the label pays "songwriter royalties" for the right to reproduce each song embodied on the recordings it sells. These are called mechanical royalties or mechanicals. The standard royalty rate in Canada is set by the Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency (CMRRA). Currently the rate is 8.3 cents per song, per copy. In the US, the rate is set by federal statute, and is currently 9.1 cents per song, per copy; however, these rates can be varied by contract.

Because the label begins paying mechanical royalties before it recoups its recording expenses, it often tries to limit these royalties to less than the full standard rate. Two types of reductions are common: a reduction to the standard royalty rate and a cap on the number of times it is payable in respect of each album. For a new artist, the label will try to limit the royalty rate to 75 per cent of the standard rate at the time of release. There are additional reductions for mid- and budget-priced records, and royalties are not typically paid on free goods. The label usually caps the total royalties at 10 or 11 times the reduced rate for each album. If the artist has co-written their music with outside writers or recorded cover songs, he/she will find royalties further reduced. Writers who are not party to the artist's recording agreement can demand 100 per cent of the standard rate. In this case, the label usually deducts any excess royalties it pays to outside writers from the artist's mechanical payments.

The next issue will review merchandise, touring, sponsorships, and publishing in the context of recording agreements.



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Pro Audio Review July 2010

"The AT4080 yielded great results on just about everything I tested it on."

Gearwire.com May 2010

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Premier Guitar November 2010

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Pro Sound News August 2010

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Nektar Panorama P4 USB Controller

■ Nektar has begun shipping its Panorama P4 USB controller. Panorama P4 comes with default MIDI mapping, which provides seamless integration with Propellerhead Reason 6. Developments are currently underway to include integration with other DAWs.

Main features of Panorama P4 include: 49-note velocity-sensitive weighted keys with aftertouch; 12 velocity- and pressure-sensitive pads with selectable velocity curves; 28 assignable buttons and 10 assignable LED buttons; a touch-sensitive 100 mm motorized fader and nine 45 mm faders; pitch bend and modulation wheels; and a high-resolution 3.5" full graphic touch screen display.

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



FANE Studio 12L 200-Watt Guitar Speaker

■ Penn Elcom has introduced the FANE Studio 12L, a 12" 200-watt speaker for electric guitar. The FANE Studio 12L has been designed to offer a neutral sounding and uncoloured tone across the spectrum. It features a sensitivity of 102dB, providing a solution for all styles of playing.

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Stanton DJC.4 Virtual DJ Digital Workstation

■ Stanton has introduced the DJC.4 Virtual DJ digital workstation, a solution for digital DJs providing control of four decks of audio while offering multiple integration options.

The DJC.4 comes bundled with a four-deck version of Virtual DJ LE, which allows users to scratch and mix four decks of audio as well as control video. Its built-in audio interface allows users to integrate turntables or CD decks into their performance. The control surface of the DJC 4 features touch-sensitive jog wheels.

For more information, contact Erikson Audio: 514-457-2555, FAX 514-457-0055, www.eriksonaudio.com.





CPM Q2-VT Chromatic Clip-On Violin/ Viola Tuner

■ CPM has begun shipping its Q2-VT chromatic clip-on tuner designed specifically for the violin/viola. The clip firmly attaches to the scroll of the instrument and the angle is adjustable for easy viewing. The colour display is easily visible in both dark and light environments.

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Samson CS Series Microphone

■ Samson has announced the release of its CS Series microphone, featuring interchangeable vocal and instrument microphone capsules.

The CS Series mic ships with both the CS1 (vocal) and CS2 (instrument) selectable mic elements, as well as a handheld base. Both neodymium capsules offer a supercardioid pickup pattern, but are further designed to support completely different miking applications. The base also features a gold-plated XLR jack.

The CS1 vocal microphone capsule is optimized for live performance applications with a 60 Hz-18 kHz frequency response and high SPL handling. Specifically tuned for drums, guitar cabinets, brass, and other instruments, the CS2 instrument microphone capsule features a wide frequency response on the low end (50 Hz-18 kHz) and a tighter polar pattern for greater isolation from the sound source.

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The American Standard Precision Bass, five-string American Standard Precision Bass V, Jazz Bass, and the Jazz Bass V now all feature a Fender Custom Shop '60s Precision Bass split single-coil pickup and are available in a jade pearl metallic finish option.

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Levy's Leathers Ltd. Appliqué & Embroidery Guitar Straps

Levy's Leathers Ltd. has unveiled its new Appliqué and Embroidery guitar straps. These straps are 3" tapering to 2" garment leather with leather appliqués and complementary embroidery. Pictured is model M12AE available in five original designs.

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



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Planet Waves American Stage Cables

Planet Waves has added its custom-designed American Stage cables to its line of cabling. These cables feature the company's In=Out technology designed to provide optimum signal transparency, in-line solder joints for increased conductivity and strength, and the Geo-Tip design for improved fit in all jacks.

Planet Waves American Stage instrument cables are outfitted with a 22 AWG oxygen-free copper centre, shielded cover with 95 per cent tinned copper braid, and conductive PVC under jacket.

The connectors, built by Neutrik, feature the Geo-Tip, which helps provide a secure connection. The American Stage cables are available in 10-30 ft. lengths.

For more information, contact D'Addario Canada: 905-947-9595, FAX 905-947-4336, info@daddariocanada.com, www.daddariocanada.com.



Corrado Music Stands Performance Series Microphone Stand

■ Corrado Stands has unveiled its Performance Series microphone stand. Manufactured out of steel, the Performance Series stand features Automatic Liftspring Technology, which allows the stand to be extended from 18" to 80" with a locking system. The stand can be folded down for storage or transport.

For more information, contact Corrado Music Stands: info@corradostands.com, www.corradostands.com.

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Paul Reed Smith 2 Channel "H" Amplifier

■ Paul Reed Smith Guitars has released its 2 Channel "H" amplifier, featuring independent master volume, treble, mid, bass, and gain controls with global reverb. The lead channel has been developed to offer smooth distortion with liquid sustain while the clean channel provides clean highs and extensive headroom but can be overdriven at maximum settings.

An effects loop with adjustable send and return is also featured on this fixed bias amp. The H incorporates two 6L6 power tubes to produce a fast, articulate amp suited to the alternate tunings of modern music.

For more information, contact Paul Reed Smith Guitars: 410-643-9970, FAX 410-643-9980, custserv@prsguitars.com, www.prsguitars.com.



Sonor Mikkey Dee Signature Snare

■ Sonor Drums has unveiled its Mikkey Dee Signature snare drum, constructed of a six-layer, 7.2 mm birch shell and featuring a 45-degree bearing edge.

With a diameter of 14" and a depth of 7.25", this drum has been designed to provide the punch and power for which Dee has been known throughout his career. The snare is outfitted with 2.3 mm power hoops and chrome hardware. The Mikkey Dee Signature snare drum features a wide tuning range providing powerful mids and highs, plus a well balanced low-end.

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



Rotosound Signature Electric Guitar Strings

■ Rotosound has developed, together with a selection of the company's metal guitarist endorsees, a new range of signature strings. Launched are signature string sets for guitarists Michael Amott (Arch Enemy/Carcass), Paul Allender (Cradle of Filth), and Mikey Demus (Skindred).

The Michael Amott signature strings, influenced by Amott's style, have been developed to achieve wide vibrato, melodic lead lines, and furious sledgehammer riffs. Paul Allender's signature series strings were developed out of his need for strings that help him maintain sharp lead riffs while still allowing him to produce melodic statements and counter harmonies. Mikey Demus, known for his heavy guitar playing, helped develop his signature series strings to hold up against his aggressive playing and live shows.

For more information, contact Yorkville Sound: 905-837-8481, FAX 905-839-5776, canada@yorkville.com, www.yorkville.com.



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To view the online digital version of *Canadian Musician*, please go to www.canadianmusician.com.





FloatPoint Media SoundNebula Application

■ SoundNebula, in association with its development partners FloatPoint Media Inc., have made available the SoundNebula mobile application for BlackBerry.

The SoundNebula application enables users to record and share their music with their networks through the SoundCloud service. The app also allows users to listen to, follow, and search for music on SoundCloud.

For more information on SoundNebula, visit: www.soundnebula.com.

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Warwick RockBass Alien Deluxe Acoustic Bass

■ Warwick has begun shipping its RockBass Alien Deluxe Acoustic bass, available in 4-, 5-, and 6-string configurations.

The body features a laminated spruce top while the back and sides are made of laminated bubinga. The Alien Deluxe has a mahogany neck with a satin finish and a rosewood fingerboard. The 4-string model has a 32" medium scale while the 5- and 6-string versions come in a 34" long scale.

This bass is outfitted with a Fishman Presys preamp with Piezo pick-up on the 4- and 5-string versions while a Prefix PlusT with Piezo pick-up is included on the 6-string model. Additional features include natural high polish, Warwick tuners, a rosewood bridge with bone saddle and slotted bridge pins, chrome hardware, and Warwick security locks.

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



VE8000PB-12

Vintage Paul Brett Signature Series Acoustic Guitars

■ The VE8000PB 6-string and VE-80000PB-12 12-string Paul Brett Signature Series acoustics from Vintage are currently available.

The 25.55" scale guitars feature a solid spruce top, rosewood back and sides, maple and wood purfling binding, and a mahogany neck with a rosewood fingerboard. The instruments' bridges are also crafted of rosewood and they additionally feature TUSQ nuts and saddles from Graph Tech.

Electronics on both models include a Fishman Acoustic Matrix VT preamp with volume and tone control and a Fishman MAT pickup. A Vintage Zero-Gravity case is also included with both models.

For more information, contact ADI: 450-449-8177, info@adi-online.net, www.adi-online.net.

WWW.CANADIANMUSICIAN.COM

Shure SRH1440 & SRH1840 Open Back Headphones

■ Shure has expanded its headphone line with its first open-back models: the SRH1440 and SRH1840, designed for engineers requiring a reference sound comparable to near-field monitors.

The SRH1840 model features: individually-matched 40 mm neodymium drivers; an aircraft-grade aluminum alloy yoke and stainless steel grilles; steel driver frame with a vented centre pole piece to improve linearity and eliminate internal resonance; and an ergonomic dual-frame and fully-adjustable padded headband.

The SRH1440 model features: 40 mm neodymium drivers; optimized impedance for a direct connection to a wide range of portable audio devices; and a padded headband with a steel frame.

Both models feature a dual-side detachable cable with a Kevlar-reinforced jacket and gold-plated MMCX connectors, a storage case, replacement set of velour earpads, and an extra cable.

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



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World Radio History





by Ben Conoley



The Worst Pop Band Ever

What: Jazz/Jam
Where: Toronto
Visit: www.myspace.com/wpbe

The Worst Pop Band Ever might not have a name that screams confidence, but their blend of improvisational jazz and indie pop makes them stand-outs in a scene that gets little attention in popular music circles. While they're often compared to acts such as Medeski Martin Wood and Bad Plus, they say that they prefer to think of themselves as "the ugly love child of Radiohead and Miles Davis."

Sexy, right?

WPBE have released five albums, most recently the *Sometimes Things Go Wrong* EP (recorded live at The Cellar). Prior to that they released *PPF Neighbourhood*, a benefit for victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

Of course, the band can most often be found on the road, playing festivals such as the TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival, NXNE, the Wreckhouse Jazz Festival, and the Ottawa Jazz Festival. They have also played in clubs and on stages across the country on their own.

While jazz might not be the most popular type of music on playlists these days, if anyone can make the genre break through to a pop-loving mainstream crowd, it could just be The Worst Pop Band Ever. Ironic, no?



Secondhand Habit

What: Alternative Rock
Where: Victoria, BC
Visit: www.facebook.com/secondhandhabit

Victoria's Secondhand Habit are nothing if not rookies in the Canadian music scene. Formed in 2010, the quartet looks young enough to still be stuck in high school and, while still a little rough around the edges, shows the kind of promise that might make listeners believe they're going to be Canada's next great indie band. The songs found on their 2011 debut effort *Badass* are a throwback to mid-'90s alt rock, a genre that's getting renewed credit via recent throwbacks and irony-free tributes.

Badass' title-track is equal parts Tripping Daisy and Everclear with a heavy focus on narrative lyrics. The theme continues throughout the album with the band showing a lot of potential for becoming a Treble Charger-like presence, but for now they're trading closer to Simple Plan waters with a PG-13 attitude. If they can focus on being a little less geared towards middle schoolers and a little more realistic and bitter, they could earn a very rewarding place on the Canadian alternative music landscape.



Shawna Caspi

What: Folk Singer/Songwriter
Where: Toronto
Visit: www.facebook.com/shawnacaspimusic

Despite the success of artists like Leslie Feist, Tegan and Sara, and Emily Haines – or perhaps because of it – it's not easy to carve a presence for one's self as a female folk artist in Canada. That said, if anyone deserves a shot, it's Toronto's Shawna Caspi.

Caspi has been releasing music steadily since dropping her 2005 effort *Trip The Light*, but it's clear that she's devoted a lifetime to her craft. The songs off her third effort, 2012's *Skyline*, are beautifully crafted tales backed with rich and layered music, incorporating classical sounds played on violins with finger-picking folks, creating fascinating final products. She's been known to play on VIA Rail's Skyline Car, which travels from Halifax to Toronto, a gig that comes as no surprise as her music is perfectly suited to a trip along Canada's landscape with scenes passing by in a blur and plenty of time to spend with one's thoughts.

The best thing about Caspi's music is that there's never just one thing to focus on. One moment demands attention to her lyrics, which play poetically with life's everyday moments, while another moment demands the listener's attention turn to her impressive musicianship.

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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