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Vol. XXXIII No. 3



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by Andrew King

While Sam Roberts Band have been recording and performing together for years (the current incarnation since 2005), *Collider*, the band's fourth full-length release, is the first Roberts release to be credited to the collective band – and with good reason.

38 Classified A Self-Made Man

by Michael Raine

One of the most prolific hip-hop artists to come out of Canada, Classified is currently on the road supporting his latest album, *Handshakes and Middle Fingers*. As usual, the album was self-produced and recorded in his home studio in Enfield, NS.

42 Tara Oram

by Stephanie Deline

Sure, Tara Oram has the look required for most musical starlets in this day and age, but what sets her apart is true talent and a humble attitude to match – traits that helped propel her JUNO-nominated debut to success and will likely do the same for its follow-up.

44 'Til The Wheels Fall Off A Behind-The-Scenes Look At Life On The Road

by Mark Desloges

Whether you've just started schlepping your gear to local venues or are interested in hitting the road as a crew member, if touring is your calling, then it's a dream you will sink your blood, sweat, and tears into – and fortune favours the brave.

49 Axe, And Ye Shall Receive CM's 2011 Guitar Special

by Michael Raine

We're not opposed to name dropping, especially since we've got Robbie Robertson, Randy Bachman, Kim Mitchell, Deryck Whibley of Sum 41, Dave Martone, Adam Hogan of Hey Rosetta!, and Dan Saitua of Crash Parallel all onboard for our 2011 Guitar Special!

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WWW.DENISCARL.COM.

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Phil Demetro, Lacquer Channel Mastering. Harris Institute 1997

"What I loved most about Harris Institute is the knowledge and experience the teachers handed down to us. From marketing to law, theory to math, everything is related to music, so no course feels like a waste of time."

Chris Ramos, Producer/DJ. Harris Institute 2011

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Live Sound Love

I really like your magazine. Yesterday is the first time I'd seen it (I live near Nashville and found it in a Books-A-Million store), so I subscribed.

I've been coming to Canada off and on since I was 19 (I'm 59 now), but in the past five years I've been to Quebec three times (Montreal and eastern townships) and I really like the Franco-phone pop music as well as the local Jazz there. My wife and I are hoping to take an October vacation to Quebec City.

But the thing that made me buy your magazine (I have the Nov./Dec. 2010 issue) was the Live Sound column by Peter Janis of Radial Engineering about inputs/volumes – very useable, real-world information!

I look forward to reading your magazine.

Steve Ford
www.stevford.com



Kind Words For KoSA

I attended the KoSA 15 International Percussion Workshop in August 2010 in Castleton, VT, and just wanted to sincerely thank you for your support. It was an incredible week and the experience was invaluable.

Kind regards,
Arianna Fanning

Built By Suns

I'm a new subscriber and really enjoy your magazine! I am a junior high Principal and my school makes electric guitars. I was intrigued by your story on the guitar being auctioned for War Child. We are doing something similar for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. This is our web site that explains a lot of what the kids and staff do: www.builtbysuns.weebly.com.

The official title of our project is "Built by Suns – Signed by Stars Gala & Guitar Auction" and it will be held on May 26th. The money raised goes to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights with some staying back in the school to support performing arts.

Let me know what you think and keep up the great work on the magazine!

Wayne Davies
Ecole Selkirk Junior High
Selkirk, MB

Ed. Thanks for writing and telling us about this wonderful project, Wayne. For those wanting to read more about this initiative from Ecole Selkirk Junior High, check out our Changes section.

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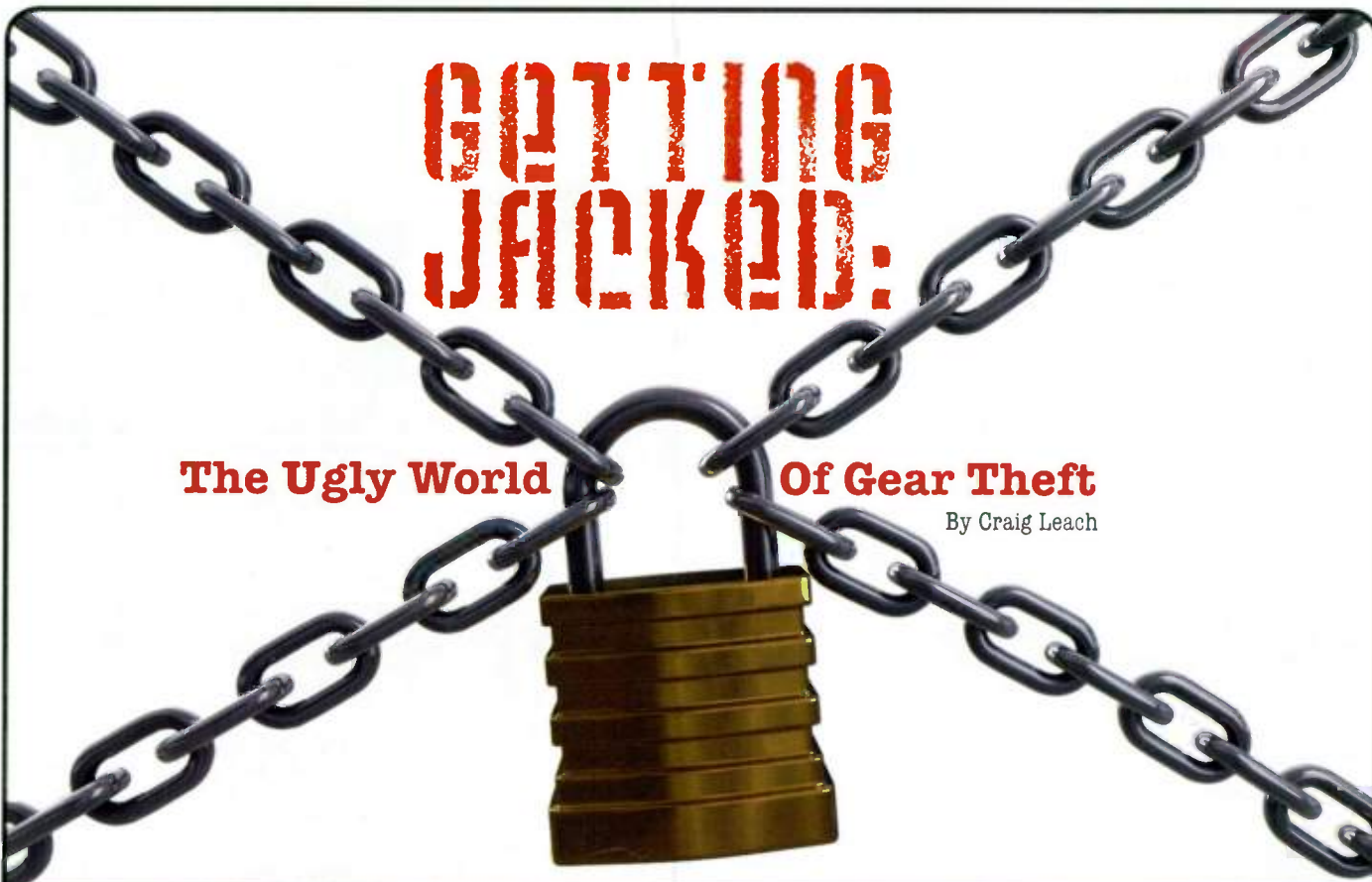
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GETTING JACKED:

The Ugly World Of Gear Theft

By Craig Leach



If you plan on making your livelihood in the music business, sooner or later, you're going to get ripped off. It could be the underpaying club owner, the overcharging hotel manager, contract loopholes, or sticky-fingered thieves looking to turn a quick buck.

Gear theft is a hard-luck lesson that's doled-out on a daily basis in the music biz. And although each case of theft has its own set of circumstances, there are lessons to be learned from those who've experienced it the hard way.

The Heist

Sought after for its value, most musical gear is difficult to trace, easy to transport, and can be quickly and easily sold – all attractive attributes to a perp. Add the environments within which most musicians operate – back-alley load-outs at greasy clubs to shadowy hotel parking lots – and opportunity is ripe for predatory scum.

For members of St. Alvia, not even a WWII-era bunker-turned-rehearsal spot in a north Hamilton, ON warehouse could deter thieves from striking in the early hours and pilfering \$30,000 worth of instruments and gear. "It's a bummer," says Ben Rispin, vocalist, only days after the rehearsal and demo room his band St. Alvia shares with fellow Golden Horseshoe rockers Eat Me (Suck City) and June & July was broken into. "It's a reality. It's not the first time it's happened to me in a band, and it's not the first time it's happened to me in life," he says knowingly.

Likewise, Sidney York, Kaley Bird, and Amy Thiessen, who toured collectively as The Ladies Who Like To Folk, had their vehicle ransacked in Montreal during a recent cross-Canada tour. "We went into a place for a bite to eat," recounts York, "and when we came out, the car window was

smashed and everything in the back seat was stolen." This left the independent artists, who had the rest of Canada to cover, missing instruments, personal documents, gig money, and for one member in particular, a clean change of clothes.

Ultimately, if somebody wants something of yours and is willing to do anything it takes to get it, they will. There are, however, certain precautions and actions to take to protect yourself and your gear.

Take Stock Of What You've Got

First things first – compile a gear list.

Whether you're on the road, have your gear set-up in a rehearsal spot, or you're storing it in a buddy's basement, have a record of every instrument and piece of equipment you have. That includes marking down serial numbers and taking photos. The more complete and thorough your list, the easier it is to send it out to pawn shops, friends, music stores, and police.

Having a complete gear list comes in especially handy when dealing with the police. "If you can show in advance that what you are saying is absolute truth because you have photos and a manifest," begins Peter Parkin, President of Shephard Ashmore, an insurance company that specializes in providing coverage for artists, promoters, and



ST. ALVIA

special events, "it skips a couple of steps with the police."

Rispin echoes the importance of a list, noting: "The only way I can see you are ever going to get your stuff back is if everybody knows what is missing and what to look for."

Get The Word Out

Once you have that list, it's important to get it out to as many people as you can.



SIDNEY YORK

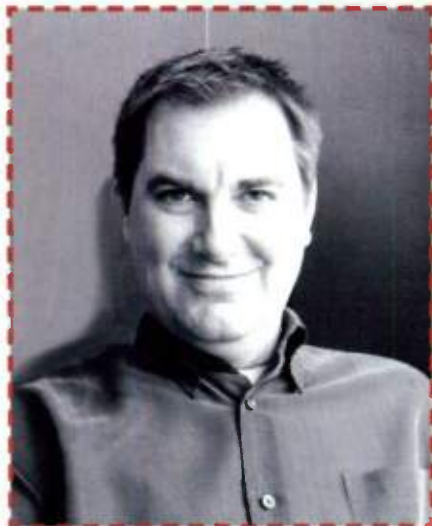
"Use your online network," says Rispin. "Make that shit work for you. Tweet it, share it, ask friends to share it, get it out to anyone who would read it, and get your allies in the media involved."

When the Ladies Who Like To Folk were robbed, Bird says they exhausted every method to let their fan base know. "We had a Facebook page, we were blogging every day, we were communicating," she recalls, noting that their publicist "really took the bull by the horns and rallied everyone she knew in the industry."

Although proliferating the information online is instrumental in raising awareness, the old-fashioned ear to the pavement approach should not be dismissed. "A lot of the guys were on the Facebook thing, but I went direct and called every place and faxed and e-mailed all the information to every shop I could," says Kyle Bishop, vocalist and guitarist for Eat Me (Suck City), whose '79 Tobacco Sunburst Gibson Les Paul was among the filched gear. "There wasn't a pawn shop or music store in the GTA, Brantford, Burlington, or Hamilton without that gear list."

Private Dicks

When time comes to warrant an arrest, the police are instrumental; however, until you reach that moment, don't expect much in



PETER PARKIN

terms of help from the S-O. "They were really nice," says Bishop on dealing with the cops, "but they are stuck within a bunch of bureaucracy." Rispin supports Bishop's sentiment by succinctly stating: "Don't rely on the police would be my advice."

Not to rag on the police, but the reality is, as Rispin puts it: "In a city like Hamilton, there are thousands of break and enters. It's pretty easy to get lost in the mix."

So if you are really set on getting your stuff back, be prepared to put in the legwork. "We set up our own Scooby-Doo detective agency," laughs Rispin. When somebody tried to sell a Gibson SG that was listed among the stolen items at Capsule Music in Toronto, an employee noticed the axe was on the gear list and was able to get the seller's license plate number. With this information, the guys back in Hamilton ran the number and discovered the address was just down the street from the rehearsal spot.

"We took things into our own hands," says Bishop, "and kept digging until we found everything we had to." Adds Rispin: "We pretty much out-performed the cops."

After collecting the evidence, the guys handed it over to the police who, based on the material collected, issued a search warrant. An arrest was made and "everything was recovered except six items," states Bishop.

Fortune did not bode so well for Bird, York, and Thiessen, who's stolen gear was never recovered. Fortunately, the music community came together in support of the indie artists. "Everyone helped so much," says York, highlighting music stores that donated and replaced guitars and pedals and a clothing store that replenished her empty suitcase. Because of the support, the trio was able to continue their tour, missing just one gig. To reciprocate the generosity, they launched the inaugural edition of S.O.S. Fest in Edmonton – a music festival prepping for its sophomore edition in 2011 that raises money for charitable causes.

Use Protection

"If you can, insure your gear," suggests Bishop. Insurance will not stop a theft; however, it does offer a certain amount of protection and recourse in the chance that you are hit. There are plans and coverage available specifically designed for working musicians.

"Make sure to research and find the right



KALEY BIRD

package," offers York, who suggests consulting SOCAN, which offers various policies to members.

"We write insurance for a few hundred Canadian bands," says Parkin, whose company offers policies with premiums ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 for bands just starting out to full coverage for international touring groups.

So what happens if you have insurance and wake up in an east-end Montreal hotel room and find your van's been picked over? "Every loss has its own circumstances," shares Parkin. "If an artist is making their money in music and they lose their gear, it can be catastrophic, and if they start to miss shows, it can have other impacts on their career." Depending on the circumstances, Parkin's company can release emergency funds to replace the gear, offer reimburse-



EAT ME (SUCK CITY)

ments, or work with local music stores and suppliers to get the band back on the road and playing gigs. "We're giving bands a method to get their stuff back quickly and keep the revenue stream rolling," he says.

Theft is an inevitable reality for the gigging musician, and a fact of life in general. In the unfortunate case that it happens to you, perhaps the best advice comes from Bishop: "As with everything in life, be prepared, stay level-headed, be smart with what you have, and don't let things be."

Craig Leach is the Assistant Editor of Canadian Musician.

10th Anniversary Broadcast Is Most-Watched JUNO Awards Ever



ARCADE FIRE

■ CTV's broadcast of the 2011 JUNO Awards was the most-watched JUNO Awards on record with 2.4 million viewers, up 48 per cent compared to last year.

Between the Awards Gala on Saturday, March 26 and the broadcast ceremony the following night, a total of 40 awards were presented. Arcade Fire fared best, netting four JUNOs for each of their four nominations. Neil Young, along with pop phenom Justin Bieber, followed closely behind with three. Drake, who did a fine job hosting Sunday night's ceremony, was shut out, missing on all six of his nominations.

The broadcast from Toronto's Air Canada Centre saw Neil Young honoured with the Allan Waters Humanitarian Award on top of taking home the prize for Artist of the Year, to which he comically responded, "What year is this?" Also of note, Bryan Adams officially welcomed Shania Twain into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame.

The energy that emerges days and hours before the awards has brought a new term to the music industry known as "The JUNO Effect." This wave of enthusiasm has increased album sales and



DRAKE



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CARAS/PHOTO

digital downloads for award show broadcast performers and winners by almost 485 per cent. Nielsen SoundScan has released data showing a major increase in album and digital sales of the performers

and winners of the 2011 JUNO Awards. Arcade Fire had a digital sale increase of over 500 per cent. Neil Young had an increase of 131 per cent, and New Artist of the Year Meaghan Smith's sales jumped by 219 per cent.

For a full list of winners, visit www.junoawards.ca/2011-juno-award-nominees/. For CM's coverage of JUNO Week, visit www.canadianmusician.com/blog.



SONGWRITING PANEL AT THE 2010 VIMBC.

VIMBC Set To Take Over Vancouver Island

■ The 4th annual Vancouver Island Music Business Conference (VIMBC), a four-day conference event being held June 22-26, 2011 in Courtenay, BC, offers a platform for anyone who wants to learn more about the inner workings of the music industry.

Over the course of the event, panel discussions will be held featuring industry heavyweights such as Jake Gold, Terry McBride, Tom Jackson, Dan Hill, and Chilliwack.

In addition to the educational seminars, VIMBC will feature entertainment from award-winning recording artists Jamie Warren, Patricia Conroy, Stef Lang, and Sue Medley, as well as showcase bands from across North America performing at five local venues. VIMBC is also offering an AMP Program (Artist Mentoring Packages) to delegates who want to get the most out of their conference experience. These packages include small group and one-on-one sessions for performance coaching, vocal techniques, guitar workshops, and more.

This year, VIMBC is hosting the Vancouver Island Music Awards at the Sid Williams Theatre on June 23.

For more information, visit www.vimbc.com.

Canadian Music Industry Report: Physical Album Sales Down, Digital Sales Up

■ Nielsen SoundScan Canada, the entertainment industry's data information system that tracks unit point-of-purchase sales of recorded music products and Nielsen BDS, a music performance monitoring service, have released their 2010 report on music sales in Canada.

No real surprises here: physical album sales are down 16 per cent from last year, while digital album and track sales have reached an all-time high, experiencing a 20 and 25 per cent increase from 2009 respectively. Overall, album sales are down 11 per cent compared to last year's report.

Additional trends reveal that half of all physical album sales were purchased at big box retailers, a trend that has been increasing since 2006, while chain and independent music stores saw a decrease of six per cent in patronage from 2009.

Here are some more year-end tables and figures:

2010 Record Company Market Share

Company	Market Share (%)
Universal Music Group	38.63
Sony Music Entertainment	18.57
Warner Music Group	12.92
EMI Music	10.26
Others	19.61

Top Ten Selling Albums

Artist/Title	Units Sold
1 Eminem - <i>Recovery</i>	435,000
2 Taylor Swift - <i>Speak Now</i>	215,000
3 Justin Bieber - <i>My World 2.0</i>	213,000
4 Lady Antebellum - <i>Need You Now</i>	194,000
5 Lady GaGa - <i>The Fame</i>	161,000
6 Johnny Reid - <i>Place Called Love</i>	156,000
7 Ke\$ha - <i>Animal</i>	149,000
8 Susan Boyle - <i>Gift</i>	143,000
9 Michael Buble - <i>Crazy Love</i>	133,000
10 Katy Perry - <i>Teenage Dream</i>	132,000

Top 10 Most Played Songs

Artist/Title	Detections
1 Lady Antebellum - "Need You Now"	63,000
2 Train - "Hey, Soul Sister"	55,000
3 Adam Lambert - "Whataya Want From Me"	55,000
4 Katy Perry - "California Gurls"	50,000
5 Taio Cruz - "Break Your Heart"	48,000
6 Lady GaGa - "Alejandro"	45,000
7 Jason Derulo - "In My Head"	44,000
8 Hedley - "Perfect"	44,000
9 Taio Cruz - "Dynamite"	44,000
10 Lady GaGa - "Bad Romance"	44,000

Best Selling Artists Of SoundScan Era

(Based on album sales from 1995 -2010)

Artist	Units Sold
1 Celine Dion	7,170,000
2 Shania Twain	4,270,000
3 Backstreet Boys	4,140,000
4 Eminem	3,710,000
5 U2	3,680,000
6 The Beatles	3,400,000
7 Sarah McLachlan	3,290,000
8 Andrea Bocelli	3,090,000
9 The Tragically Hip	3,090,000
10 Metallica	2,870,000

Memorial University To Host International Gathering Of Traditional Music

■ Memorial University's Research Centre for Music, Media, and Place along with the School of Music will welcome the world of traditional music makers and shakers this summer to various venues throughout St. John's, NL as part of the 2011 World Conference for the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM).

The weeklong conference, taking place July 13-19, 2011, will bring together singers, instrumentalists, dancers, and scholars for the presentation of new research in music and dance.

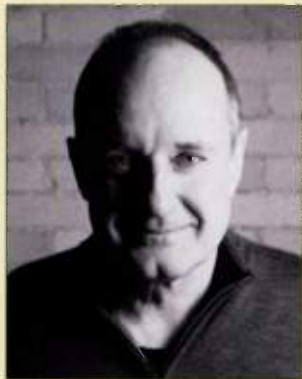
Music and movement researchers from across the globe will join Memorial's own resident faculty members and graduate students to discuss traditional music and dance. Members of the public are also welcome to register for daytime presentations and workshops.

Also taking place is SOUNDshift: A Time for International Music and Dance, which comprises three specially-themed concerts happening on three separate evenings throughout the week at the Arts and Culture Centre. "We are featuring everything from Arabic traditional music to Taiko drumming to the instrumental traditions of Québec," says Jean Hewson, Artistic Director of SOUNDshift.

For more information on the conference, visit www.mun.ca/ictm2011 and www.soundshift.ca regarding SOUNDshift.



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RALPH JAMES

The Agency Group's Canadian Office Celebrates 15 Years

■ The Agency Group (TAG) is celebrating the 15th anniversary of its Toronto office. In 1996, Canadian music industry veterans Ralph James and Jack Ross and international partner Neil Warnock opened the doors to the Toronto office.

TAG has since grown to include 24 staff members and a roster of talent including: Nickelback, Great Big Sea, Sam Roberts Band, Feist, Paul Brandt, Metric, Sarah Harmer, Bruce Cockburn, and City and Colour.

"We opened the Toronto office with the goal of discovering and developing great young talent while also providing our Canadian artists with the opportunity for international exposure through The Agency Group's worldwide platform," says James, President of The Agency Group Toronto.



JACK ROSS

For more information, contact The Agency Group: 416-368-5599, FAX 416-368-4655, www.theagencygroup.com.



STUDENTS IN THE BOSS PROGRAM WITH RANDY BACHMAN.

Junior High Students Raise Money One Electric Guitar At A Time

■ Students at Ecole Selkirk Junior High (ESJH) in Selkirk, MB, are building guitars to raise money for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The program, named Building On Student Success (BOSS), has "really taken off on us," says Wayne Davies, Principal of ESJH.

There are 18 students ranging from grade 7-9 dedicated to the BOSS pro-

gram, along with another 35 students making guitars in their spare time. Davies says it's not a scheduled class and students are working on their lunch breaks and after hours to build the guitars.

Over the last year-and-a-half, Davies has worked hard to get famous actors, musicians, athletes, and politicians to sign the guitars for the school's upcoming gala: the Built by Suns, Signed by Stars Gala and Guitar Auction, taking place on May 26, 2011. Most of the money raised will go to the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, and the remaining money will go to ESJH's performing arts program.

For more information about BOSS, please visit www.builtbysuns.weebly.com.

What Is This?



■ Download a free QR Reader to your smartphone and scan QR Codes on ads and editorial throughout our publications for additional information.

SOS Fest Returns To Old Strathcona

■ After debuting for the first time in 2010, The Sounds of Old Strathcona Festival (SOS Fest) will be returning in 2011 to Edmonton's historic Old Strathcona area to host three days of eclectic, multi-genre music performances.

"SOS Fest is exactly what the Edmonton arts scene needs," remarks members of Wool On Wolves, who performed at last year's inaugural event, adding: "It gives local, regional, and touring artists a chance to reach the broad Edmonton music community in a variety of unique settings, including historic Whyte Avenue. Between the shows we played and witnessed in the festival's inaugural year, we felt immense pride to be a part of such a great event, and hope that it becomes an annual tradition."

For more information, contact SOS Fest: 780-437-4182, info@sosfest.ca, www.sosfest.ca.



PHOTO: FISH GITKOWSKY

EDMONTON'S SHOUT OUT OUT OUT OUT CLOSING LAST YEAR'S SOS FEST.

ECMA Brings The Noise To Prince Edward Island

■ The East Coast Music Association (ECMA) wrapped up the 2011 edition of East Coast Music Week in Charlottetown, PE. From April 13-17, 2011, awards were handed out, seminars were attended, and showcases throughout the provincial capital honoured, informed, and entertained those in attendance.

The big winners this year included PEI's own The Idlers, who took home World Recording of the Year for their album *Keep Out*. Nova Scotian rockers The Stanfields walked away with the Rising Star of the Year award, along with Best Local Video, and Best Local Single for "The Dirtiest Drunk (In the History of Liquor)." Other artists bringing home hardware were: Matt Anderson, Chelsea Nesbitt, Dave Gunning, The Trews, Chris Colepaugh & The Crew, David Myles, and Rose Cousins, who all picked up multiple awards during the week.

Along with award ceremonies for east coast musicians and industry professionals, ECMA's music week offered conferences and showcases including the Canadian Music East Coast Style Export Buyers Showcase, RBC Discovery Stage, BreakOut West and OCFE "West Goes East" Showcase, and SOCAN's Songwriter's Circle.

This year's artist lineup for East Coast Music Week did not disappoint. Gigging around town were: Dan Hill, In Flight Safety, Jimmy Rankin, Paper Lions, The Stanfields, The Trews, Two Hours Traffic, and many more.

Check out *Canadian Musician's* highlight video as well as interviews with The Trews' John-Angus MacDonald and members of Slowcoaster at: www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia.

For more information and the full list of winners, visit www.ecma.com.



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RANDY BACHMAN & SAMMY HAGAR



SHAD ACCEPTING HIS INDIE AWARD.



NIKKI SIXX

Artists, Fans & Industry Talk Shop At Canadian Music Week

■ The 2011 edition of Canadian Music Week, the annual gathering of artists, fans, and industry pros, took place March 9-13 in Toronto. As always, CMW offered a smorgasbord of conferences, awards, and exhibitors during the day and tons of live entertainment and showcases during the evening hours.

Some of the highlights during the four-day event included celebrity interviews with heavyweights such as Melissa Ethridge, Sammy Hagar, and Nikki Sixx. Also on the table were conferences and panel discussions covering such topics as the new and emerging realm of digital music, international opportunities for musicians, new media and mobile marketing, the 360 record deal, a rundown of Bill C-32, and an overview of the Canadian market.

Once business was done during the day, the downtown streets and clubs became flooded with revelers taking in the action at the numerous venues that were showcasing a long list of performers. Just a sampling of shows included:

Big Sugar, Protest The Hero, Finger Eleven, Fefe Dobson, Molly Rankin, and a special performance featuring Randy Bachman, Sammy Hagar, and The Sadies.

Always a crowd favourite, The Indies took place the final night of CMW. Mariana's Trench was awarded the Favourite Single Of The Year for their song "Celebrity Status" as well as the award for Group Of The Year. Other winners included Sleigh Bells, Crash Karma, Karkwa, 3 Inches of Blood, and Hannah Georgas. The night also saw Janelle Monae, Shad, Hollerado, Bombay Bicycle Club, Hannah Georgas, and Desperate Union grace the stage.

Continuing its international outreach, CMW 2011 presented the Spotlight On South East Asia, which offered networking opportunities and market overviews including publishing and licensing. The 2012 edition of CMW runs March 21-25, again in Toronto.

For more information, visit www.cmw.net and www.canadianmusicfest.com.

KoSA Announces Annual Workshop, Drum Camp & Festival



PHOTO: BRUCE WILDER

■ KoSA Communications International has announced its 16th Annual KoSA International Percussion Workshop, Drum Camp, and Festival, which will be held July 26-31, 2011 at Castleton State College, Castleton, VT.

"Each year, our KoSA Team assembles to create one of the premier music education opportunities available," says KoSA Founder and Artistic Director Aldo Mazza. "We believe in our format very strongly, as do thousands of previous participants and hundreds of our Alumni Artist Faculty. This year, we are expanding our offerings, as well as thoroughly covering the bases in traditional tracks and styles."

Besides intimate classes, and the daily Master Class, KoSA 16 offers evening concerts given by Artist Faculty members, jam sessions, the option of one-on-one lessons, and the opportunity to participate in discussions with faculty members during meals and between events.

This year, KoSA 16 will feature the following faculty: Memo Acevedo, Dom Famularo, Mario DeCiutiis, Allan Molnar, Jim Royle, Jeff Salisbury, Marcus Glen, Sergio Bellotti, Dominick Cuccia, and more.

For more information, contact KoSA Music: 800-541-8401, info@kosamusic.com, www.kosamusic.com.

NXNE Announces More Performers For 2011

Now in its 17th year, the North by Northeast Music Festival and Conference (NXNE) has become the Canadian festival destination for unsigned bands, indie favorites, and major-label headlining artists alike. Taking place this year from June 13-19 at various venues throughout Toronto, NXNE is expected to draw over a quarter million attendees, showcase nearly 650 bands, and offer 50 panels.

Confirmed headliners for this year's festival include: Devo, Descendents, Stars, The Pharcyde, Men Without Hats, OFF!, Shad, Land of Talk, Chad VanGalen, and Cults.

"We're excited to have such legendary artists play the busiest hub in Toronto for the largest music festival in Canada," says Joshua Ostroff, Music Editor, AOL Canada. "It will be a great time, with amazing music and we're looking forward to being right in the centre of the party."

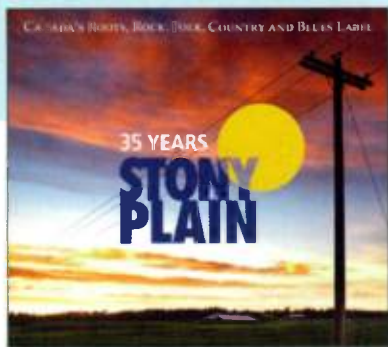


OFF!

Presenting the keynote address is young prodigy Adora Svitak. The 13-year-old Svitak is already a published author, prolific blogger, and speaker on the topics of writing, education, creativity in the classroom, and how to get inspired in life. She also teaches classes through online education programs, and has been a guest lecturer throughout the US and UK. She spoke at the February 2010 TED Conference, explaining how the world needs "Childish Ideas" to advance and move forward.

Scheduled panels and discussion groups include: Beyond MySpace: Musicians Connecting In New Ways; Music Marketing 2011; Seven Deadly Online Marketing Sins; Tablets and Music: iPads and Beyond; Design Makes Musical Creation More Touchable; The Changing Experience of Music; and a Level Up Your Social Media workshop, among a host of others.

Visit www.nxne.com for up-to-date information as it becomes available.



Stony Plain Records Celebrates 35th Anniversary

Stony Plain Records has released a special three-disc set to celebrate its 35th anniversary. Established in 1976 by Holger Petersen and Alvin Jahns, Stony Plain Records has released almost 400 albums of blues, classic R&B, folk, country, bluegrass, and rock and roll.

Titled *35 Years of Stony Plain*, the set includes 41 tracks on two CDs, plus a bonus DVD of 11 videos featuring such artists as Jeff Healey, Jay McShann and Johnnie Johnson, Ronnie Earl & the Broadcasters, Duke Robillard, Corb Lund, Ian Tyson, Downchild, and Long John Baldry. The DVD also includes a tour of Stony Plain's offices in Edmonton, AB.

For more information, contact Stony Plain Records: 780-468-6423, FAX 780-465-8941, info@stonyplainrecords.com, www.stonyplainrecords.com.



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www.marceric.com

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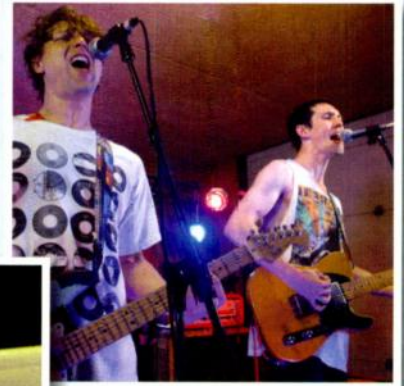
SXSW Cranked It Up For 2011

■ The 25th Annual South By Southwest (SXSW) Music Conference and Festival proved to be the biggest edition of the annual festival to date. With activities centred in the Austin Convention Center and spread out over 90 music venues throughout central Austin, the nine-day festival showcased more panels, exhibition spaces, performances, demonstrations, trade show days, and bands than any previous year.

Over 13,000 music industry professionals from 22 countries attended the festival which highlighted a keynote speech by Bob Geldof and talks from Crystal Bowersox and Andrew WK, among other notables.

The Great White North was well represented at this year's SXSW with performances by: Great Lake Swimmers, In-Flight Safety, Cadence Weapon, PS I Love You, Buck 65, Ron Sexsmith, The Sheepdogs, and many others.

Next year's edition of SXSW will take place March 9-19, 2012 in Austin, TX. For more information, visit www.sxsw.com.



HOLLERADO



DINOSAUR BONES



DEATH FROM ABOVE (1979)



BILLY TALENT

New Music West Festival Returns, Heads to Edmonton

■ After a short hiatus, the New Music West Conference and Festival (NMW) is returning to Western Canada, but has announced it will be moving from Vancouver to Edmonton for 2011. The three-day event will run from July 21-23, 2011, marking the first time it has taken place outside of Vancouver. For 20 years, the NMW event has showcased emerging artists and has been a prominent festival for the Western Canadian music scene.

Jory Groberman, 29 Productions President, says: "New Music West will showcase approximately 30 of the most promising emerging live music artists, and will feature an industry development day for people seeking insight into a career in music."

Past NMW performers have included: The Trews, Sam Roberts, Billy Talent, Hot Hot Heat, Metric, and many more. The conference has featured sessions with top industry pros and major artists such as Gene Simmons, Marilyn Manson, and Chad Kroeger of Nickelback.

For up-to-date information on performers and the conference schedule, visit www.newmusicwest.com.

NSAI Toronto Presents Tin Pan North

■ Tin Pan North is hosting its 12th annual festival from May 26-28, 2011, which celebrates the craft of songwriting with writer rounds in four clubs across Toronto. The music festival, organized by the Toronto Chapter of the Nashville Songwriters Association International, recreates 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 be headlined by accomplished songwriters including: Andy Kim, Frank Myers, Danny Wells, Kerry and Lynn Chater, and Lisa McCallum.

Events will be taking place at Trane Studio, C'est What, and Moonshine Café from May 26-27, and at the Eton House on May 28.

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



CHRIS WHITELEY AT LAST YEAR'S TIN PAN NORTH



■ Y108 Rocks Spring Music Festival 9

Hamilton, ON
May 12-14, 2011
www.springmusicfestival.com

■ PianoTexas 2011

Fort Worth, TX
May 18-June 28, 2011
817-257-7456, FAX 817-257-0178
info-pianotexas@tcu.edu,
www.pianotexas.org

■ Montreal International Musical Competition: Piano 2011

Montreal, QC
May 23-June 3, 2011
514-845-4108, FAX 514-845-8241
info@concoursmontreal.ca,
www.concoursmontreal.ca

■ NXNE 2011

Toronto, ON
June 13-19, 2011
416-863-6963, FAX 416-863-0828
info@nxne.com, www.nxne.com

■ 2011 COCA National Conference

Whistler, BC
June 20-24, 2011
519-690-0207, FAX 519-681-4328
www.coca.org

■ Vancouver Island Music Business Conference

Comox Valley, BC
June 22-26, 2011
www.vimbc.com

■ Ottawa Jazz Festival

Ottawa, ON
June 23-July 3, 2011
613-241-2633
info@ottawajazzfestival.com,
www.ottawajazzfestival.com

■ MENC Music Education Week

Washington, DC
June 24-28, 2011
703-860-4000, FAX 703-860-1531
mbserv@menc.org, www.menc.org

■ Montreal Jazz Festival

Montreal, QC
June 25-July 4, 2011
514-871-1881
commentaires_jazz@equipespectra.ca,
www.montrealjazzfest.com

■ S.C.E.N.E. Music Festival 2011

St. Catharines, ON
June 26, 2011
905-327-2115
jennifer@scenemusicfestival.com,
www.scenemusicfestival.com

■ Summerfest 2011

Milwaukee, WI
Week 1: June 29-July 3, 2011
Week 2: July 5-10, 2011
414-273-2680
summerfestinfo@summerfest.com,
www.summerfest.com

■ Charlottetown Summerfest

Charlottetown, PE
June 30-July 2, 2011
www.charlottetownsummerfest.ca

■ Montreal Guitar Show

Montreal, QC
July 1-3, 2011
514 525-7732, FAX 514 525-8033
info_sgm@equipespectra.ca,
www.montrealguitarshow.com

■ Halifax Jazz Festival

Halifax, NS
July 8-16, 2011
www.halifaxjazzfestival.com

■ Vancouver Folk Music Festival

Vancouver, BC
July 15-17, 2011
604-602-9798, FAX 604-602-9790
info@thefestival.bc.ca,
www.thefestival.bc.ca

■ 23rd Beaches International Jazz Festival

Toronto, ON
July 15-24, 2011
416-698-2152, FAX 416-698-2064
infobeachesjazz@rogers.com,
www.beachesjazz.com

■ Guitar Workshop Plus Toronto

Toronto, ON
Session 1: July 17-22, 2011
Session 2: July 24-29, 2011
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ New Music West Conference & Festival

Edmonton, AB
July 21-23, 2011
info@newmusicwest.ca,
www.newmusicwest.ca

■ New Music West 2011

Edmonton, AB
July 21-23, 2011
info@newmusicwest.com,
www.newmusicwest.com

■ Hillside Festival 2011

Guelph, ON
July 22-24, 2011
519-763-6396, FAX 519-763-9514
info@hillsidefestival.ca,
www.hillsidefestival.ca

■ GMA Immerse 2011

Nashville, TN
July 28-31, 2011
info@gospelmusic.org,
www.experienceimmerse.com

■ The Canadian Guitar Festival

Kingston, ON
July 29-31, 2011
888-506-1418
llhpark@gmail.com,
www.canadianguitarfestival.com

■ 2011 Canmore Folk Music Festival

Canmore, AB
July 30-August 1, 2011
403-678-2524, FAX 403-678-2524
info@canmorefolkfestival.com,
www.canmorefolkfestival.com

■ Guitar Workshop Plus Vancouver

Vancouver, BC
August 7-12, 2011
905-567-8000
info@guitarworkshopplus.com,
www.guitarworkshopplus.com

■ National Flute Association Convention 2011

Charlotte, NC
August 11-14, 2011
661-299-6680, FAX 661-299-6681
conventionservices@nfaonline.org,
www.nfaonline.org

■ Ottawa Folk Festival

Ottawa, ON
August 12-14, 2011
613-230-8234, FAX 613-230-1113
festival@ottawafolk.org,
www.ottawafolk.org

■ CCMA Country Music Week 2011

Hamilton, ON
September 11-15, 2011
416-947-1331, FAX 416-947-5924
country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

■ 25th Ontario Council of Folk Festivals (OCFF)

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

■ PASIC 2011

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

■ Midwest Clinic 2011

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

Blue Microphones Spark Condenser

By James Moore

Blue Microphones has released a FET condenser mic by the name of Spark. Built into a classic Blue lollipop bottle body, Spark is class A and fully discrete using a cardioid pattern. It ships in a sizeable wooden box complete with a shock mount and pop screen that screws directly into the back of the mic. The manual is straightforward with tips on using Spark as a multi-purpose mic for every recording situation and instrument.

I compared the mic alongside four other affordable options to see how it measured up: the Studio Projects C1, Apex 415, and the dynamic Shure SM7 and SM57. Why would I use a dynamic mic when reviewing a condenser mic? When it's dubbed a "Swiss Army Knife" of a mic, I had to test it against the industry standard guitar mics.

Signal Chain

My signal chain consisted of Monster Cable XLRs into either an API 512c or Universal Audio 610 into Lavry Blue converters straight into a MOTU 828mkII via S/PDIF interfacing with Pro Tools 9.01 on a 2.4 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo MacBook Pro running OS X 10.6.6 with 4 GB of RAM. Everything was monitored on Adam A7s that were then A/B'd with Yamaha HS50Ms. All sounds were A/B'd with the built-in pres of the mkII and an Mbox Pro 2.

My Blueridge BR160 acoustic guitar sounds great on its own, so I wanted to capture it as close as possible for a solo acoustic track. After running through my usual mics, Spark was up next. Positioned a foot away at the 15th fret at 45 degrees facing the body, it was the sound I heard in the room. It didn't overcompensate on the high end and the mids were really smooth. I did wonder why it sounded like everything was rolled off from 100 Hz, so I checked the

body of the mic and found a button I hadn't noticed at the base. (Read manual first!) I popped the button out and there was the low end I was missing. Blue calls this the Focus button (and it rolls off from 100 Hz).

For male vocals, I tried the C1, then the SM7 – good enough for Bruce Swedien, good enough for me. With Spark, the vocal sat similar to the SM7, but being a condenser, it had a little more clarity in the high end – not the high-end bite you can get from other condenser mics in the same price range. It sat well in my mix with the Focus button in. Next up, some female backups. Spark gave us smooth mids and really captured an almost spoken word, breathy performance.

For upright bass there was no one better than bassist Rich Moore of JUNO-nominated Gospel band newworldson (and my brother – shameless plug). After some moving around to find the best mic position, we put Spark about a foot-and-a-half from the f hole where it really seemed to shine (with Focus button off – need that 100 Hz). It really captured the roundness and the low-mid punch.

When recording electric guitars, I'll sometimes use a condenser for a room blend or as a close mic a few inches from the grill. I find condenser mics can actually fuzz up the sound, but Spark sounded fat and a little more like a dynamic on my Budda Superdrive 80, and smooth on my Fender Twin. For close miking of loud sources, an external pad was needed.

Next I needed a trashy drum loop. We usually just bash away on a kit we have in the corner of the studio. Using a 57 or the Apex 415 usually gets me there, but I wanted more clarity. The Spark sounded clean yet not overbearing on the cymbals and produced a clean take I could manipulate in the box.

I've been asked many times by musician friends to recommend a really good-sounding inexpensive vo-

cal mic they can use on a variety of instruments. Without plagiarizing the manual, Spark is it. For multiple sound source recording and a street price of

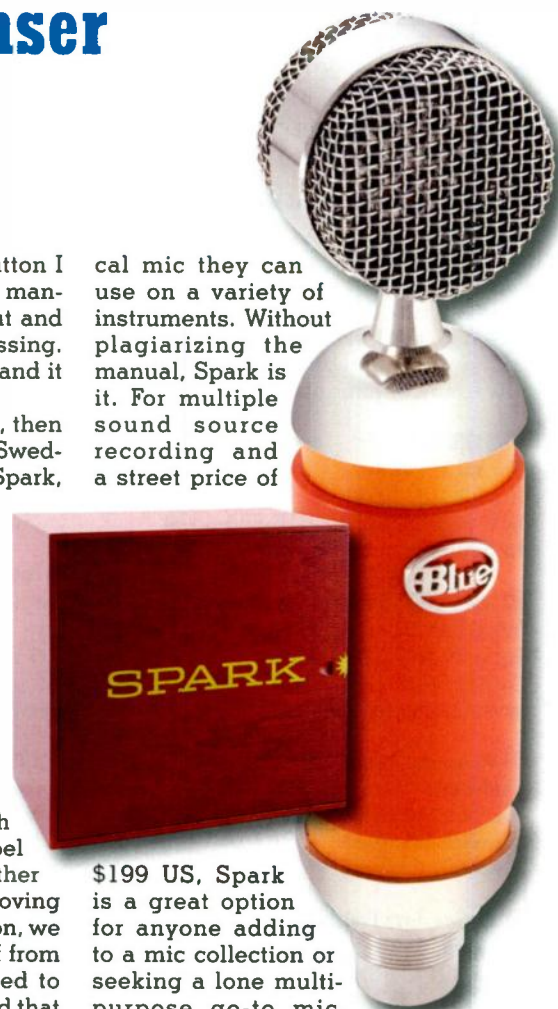
\$199 US, Spark is a great option for anyone adding to a mic collection or seeking a lone multi-purpose go-to mic. There are some features that don't quite measure up to its sound, such as the pop screen and the locking pin on the shock mount. Regardless, I'm keeping it. This microphone is a beauty.

*James Moore is a singer/songwriter/producer/guitarist based in Southern Ontario and Ireland.
www.jamesmoore.net.*

Manufacturer's Comment

More than a high-pass filter, the Focus Control alters the input voltage driving the capsule, rather than the output signal, to achieve an additional sonic signature without any degradation to the signal path.

John Maier
CEO, Blue Microphones



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Steinberg Cubase 6

By Eric Price

In the extremely competitive DAW-eat-DAW world, no one can accuse Steinberg of resting on its laurels. With the release of Cubase 6, we see why, once again, the company is leading the pack in both design and innovation.

I was working on a live band project in Cubase 5.5 when I was given the new Cubase 6 for review. As Cubase 6 had some new features I could make use of immediately, I decided to take the plunge and install it straightaway.

I was pleasantly surprised with the new look of Cubase. I found the interface much cleaner and therefore easier to work with, the look being akin to that of Nuendo. Included on the disc are 32- and 64-bit installers, both of which can be installed in tandem. I was also able to leave 5.5 installed in case things didn't go well, though I had nothing to worry about. The install was flawless and my project ran without a hitch. For Mac users, there is now a native 64-bit version supporting up to 1 TB of RAM!

I was eagerly anticipating multi-track drum editing and drum replacement. The ability to easily edit an entire drum performance recorded on separate tracks or to replace various drum sounds was something I had been waiting

to be incorporated into Cubase for some time. Let me explain how they work and why I am excited about them.

The drum editing uses several new features at once. For the multi-track editing, I used the new Group Folder Edit command, whereby all the tracks placed into a single Group Folder can be edited identically and simultaneously. Combine the enhanced transient detection, a much-improved tempo detection algorithm along with the new phase-stable audio

quantization, and I was able to correct timing problems within an entire drum performance in only a few minutes instead of the usual hours.

Alternately, with the improved tempo detection, I could have quickly made a tempo map of the song and worked from that approach. Most importantly, though, I was able to quantize the performance without the phasing artifacts that commonly occur when trying to time-shift individual drum tracks, especially when overheads are used. Besides that, I now had the ability to turn individual hits into MIDI notes. Finally I could replace or augment drum sounds without using a third-party program.

The next big change I was looking forward to was related to recording lanes. I've used lanes before while doing multi-take recordings but it was always a pain to comp together the final track. Cubase 6 now lets you cherry-pick the best performances from each take (lane), instantly making a single master take.

Next stop was the new VST Amp Rack. The plug-in features a wide array of amp heads, stomp boxes, speaker cabinets, and microphone models you can mix and match.



With plenty of useful tones, you may not need a third party plug-in here either.

Continuing on my whirlwind tour, I took a look at the updated VST 3.5 protocol along with the upgraded VST Expression 2. The most amazing new function of both VST 3.5 and VST Expression 2 is the fact that all the MIDI data for a single note – volume, sustain, the new Dynamics Mapping, etc. – is attached directly to that note. Move the note and the data moves with it. Just when you thought MIDI couldn't get any better...

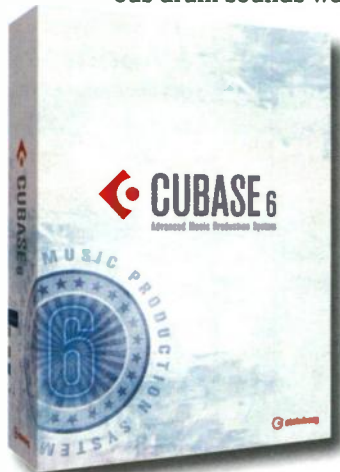
Our last major stop is the retooled MediaBay with its new mini-browser, which now allows for more useful sound information to be displayed. The coolest part of the new MediaBay is that, with a flash or external drive, you can take your loops and sounds with you to another studio and use them right away.

Final notes: you are finally able to match your editors grid lines with the quantize rate. You can also export your Notepad data as a single text file. Several original VST 2 plug-ins have been brought up to the VST 3 standard, and lastly, you have the ability to move your projects between Cubase 6 versions without any issues.

All that and I didn't even touch on the new HALionSonic SE, the revamped Loopmash 2, or peek into the updates to Groove Agent One – nevermind the two hours of included video tutorials!

I was thrilled to see what Steinberg has done for Cubase 6, clearly listening to their users and putting a lot of effort into this upgrade. Consider this review a ringing endorsement.

Eric Price is a veteran writer for Canadian Musician. He can be reached at eric@gepconsulting.ca. As always, he looks forward to your questions and your feedback.



Distributor's Comment

VST Expression 2 also includes Note Expression, which overcomes the traditional limitations of channel-based MIDI controls, such as pitch bend, modulation, or volume. Historically, notes requiring their own volume swell or pitch bend would require their own MIDI channel. An instrument supporting Note Expression could achieve this on a single track, resulting in a simpler but more flexible and powerful workflow.

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

Pearl e-Pro Live Electronic Drum Kit

By Liam Epps

When Pearl first released its e-Pro Live kit, an acoustic/electric hybrid of sorts, they presented it as a triple threat, boasting a “Real Look, Real Feel, and Real Sound.” Designed to accurately replicate the experience of playing on an acoustic kit, the company succeeded in many aspects, and despite a few drawbacks, the kit offers a lot of unparalleled benefits.

Real Look

The e-Pro Live looks like a real acoustic kit because, apart from the heads, it is a real acoustic kit. This is a huge selling point for those who play an electronic kit live and don’t want the practice pad aesthetic associated with them (or for those of us who rely on the bulk of a drum kit to hide our shame); however, the electronic pads are quite heavy, and lugging around an acoustic kit is grim enough without the added sorrow of several extra pounds per drum. The weight of the drums also takes its toll on the hardware, speeding up the process of gradual “tom sag” during extended sessions.

Unlike most other e-kits, the pads on the e-Pro are the same diameter as acoustic skins, facilitating the freedom to explore the entire physical range of the drum head to experiment with different tones and dynamics. The head size, combined with the shell depth, also allows for natural spacing of your toms, making it easy to maintain your spatial flow and technique.

The most striking advantage of the genuine look, and possibly the key feature of this entire kit, is the fact that you can replace the electronic heads with acoustic skins and play a real, decent-quality Pearl kit. This is an obvious advantage for drummers who want the dual benefit of an acoustic kit for gigs and an electronic kit to play at home without the price tag associated with two expensive set-ups, not to mention the real estate required for storage.

Real Feel

The technology of the pads attempts to create the most accurate feel a solid pad has ever offered. Despite having succeeded, as far as pads go, with the



help of a decent bounce-back, a coating with a similar feel to skins, and the dual-zone true time and space response, I find there’s still an overall practice pad-like feel to the heads.

The included cymbals are made of brass in an effort to champion the rubber cymbals of e-kits past. They include a good range of dynamics and a very responsive choke feature. Although the metallic feel does add an element of reality, the sensor on the bottom dampens the cymbal enough that the response is a bit clunky and the “real feel” of the cymbal is compromised. Additionally, being made of brass, the cymbals are clearly quite loud, potentially negating the possibility of a nice quiet apartment set-up and, without noise-canceling headphones, negatively affecting the sampled sounds; however, to avoid these issues, rubber cymbals are also an option.

Real Sound

The r.e.d. box, the brain of the e-Pro Live, boasts 100 sampled kits compiled from recordings of all sorts of drum sets, percussion instruments, and electronic sounds. These samples are paired with very dynamic sensors, which together reasonably recreate the sonic experience of playing an acoustic

kit. It also includes lots of options for user-designed kits, individual drum volume mixing, audio inputs, a powered USB port, and the ability to download even more and higher-quality kit recording samples. It’s a high-end brain with loads of capabilities and a seemingly infinite set of tweaking options, giving it tall legs to stand on when compared to any of its contemporaries.

Overall

The look is impressive. The feel of the pads is more desirable than that of most other pad options, but as far as I’m concerned, falls slightly short of the feel of mesh pads and doesn’t offer the ability of changing head tension. The sound, though, is as good as it gets for sampled kits.

While those looking for a compact, noiseless electronic kit to play in volume-sensitive situations may want to look elsewhere, this kit is perfect for many types of players – especially someone looking to reap the benefits of both an acoustic kit and an electronic kit without the budget or space for the pair, or for someone who gigs electronically and is willing to sacrifice some cartage convenience for looks and flow on stage.

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By Hal Rodriguez

Diminished Duplicates

Part 1

The diminished 7 arpeggio can be a useful tool for blues, rock, and funk guitarists looking for new soloing ideas. Those styles of music often require improvising over dominant 7 chords, sometimes for long periods of time, so it's helpful to have more than one approach to improvisation to avoid getting stuck in a rut.

Consider the common situation of soloing over an E7 chord. A popular choice for improvising over it would be the E blues scale, often played in the position depicted in bar one of Ex. 1. Compare this scale to an E diminished 7 arpeggio, which is made up of the intervals 1, b3, b5, and bb7 in bar two. Although it introduces only one new note, the 6th (C#) over E7, the dim7 arpeggio creates a distinct sound characterized by consecutive minor intervals.

Ex. 1

The diagram shows four measures of music on a treble clef staff. Above the staff are labels: 'E Blues Scale', 'Edim7', 'Fdim7', and 'D#dim7'. Below the staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The notes in the staff are: Bar 1: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C#4; Bar 2: E4, G4, Bb4, C#4; Bar 3: E4, G#4, Bb4, C#4; Bar 4: E4, G#4, A4, B4, C#4.

You can take this idea further and introduce even more interesting notes to your improvised lines by using another dim7 arpeggio built a half-step above and below the root. The Fdim7 arpeggio in bar three of Ex. 1 will give you the b9 (F) and 3 (G#), and the D#dim7 arpeggio in bar four will give you the 7 (D#), 9 (F#), and b6 (C). With these duplicate dim7 arpeggios, you can play every possible interval over E7 while staying close to the familiar blues box at the 12th fret.

Ex. 2 and Ex. 3 are licks I improvised that demonstrate some of the brave new sounds you can create with these arpeggios. In Ex. 2, I start with a typical phrase using the E blues scale, but then play an Edim7 that slides into an ascending Fdim7 in bar two. Notice how this creates an exotic mood over E7, which adds an unexpected twist to a phrase that started out as blues. The wider intervals of the arpeggios also provide a striking contrast to the more linear playing in bar one.

Ex. 2

The diagram shows a single measure of music on a treble clef staff. Above the staff is the label 'E7'. The notes are: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C#4, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C#5. Below the staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The notes are: Bar 1: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C#4; Bar 2: E4, G4, Bb4, C#4; Bar 3: E4, G#4, Bb4, C#4.

Ex. 3

The diagram shows a single measure of music on a treble clef staff. Above the staff is the label 'E7'. The notes are: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C#4, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C#5. Below the staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The notes are: Bar 1: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C#4; Bar 2: E4, G4, Bb4, C#4; Bar 3: E4, G#4, Bb4, C#4.

In Ex. 3, I follow up a common blues lick with an Edim7 and descend on a D#dim7, which evokes a particularly sinister feeling over E7. Notice that in both Ex. 2 and 3, I resolve any tension created by the arpeggios by eventually returning to some familiar blues bends at the end of the lick. By weaving between the blues scale and these dim7 arpeggios, you'll keep finding new licks to explore that will intrigue listeners and help you stand out from other guitarists.



By Nancy Walker

Shapes:

An Approach To Modal Chord Voicings

If you've ever wondered how you can create interesting chord voicings in a modal context, the "shape" approach should help. Most piano players who've studied jazz are familiar with the "So What" voicing, from Miles Davis' recording of the same name (Ex. 1). The piano voicings Bill Evans played on the tune have become classic. The tune is written in the Dorian mode, and the voicings Evans plays are diatonic to that mode (the voicings fall within the key signature). In the case of the "So What" voicing, the voicing "shape" is a series of perfect 4th intervals, with a major 3rd on top.

Ex. 1

We can experiment with this idea using a variety of shapes, both for two-handed voicings, and for left-hand voicings to accompany your own right-hand melody or solo lines. With the first four bars of the jazz standard "Invitation," I've illustrated how you can use a shape (in this case, a three-note voicing consisting of a major 2nd and a perfect 5th) as left-hand accompaniment for the melody (Ex. 2). This section of the tune is in the Dorian mode, in this case "C" Dorian. You'll notice there's an "A natural" in the melody (the more appropriate key signature for "C" Dorian would be two flats, since "A" is natural), and the shapes I'm using in the left hand are diatonic to the mode.

Ex. 2

Once you've found a modal voicing "shape" you like, you can move the shape around in the mode. Notice, though, that if you build your shape on every degree of the mode diatonically (keeping within the key signature), the quality of some of the intervals in your shape will change.

Take a look at this shape, moving by step through the C Dorian mode (Ex. 3). Since we're sticking to the notes in the mode, the 5ths in the left hand are all perfect 5ths, except for the voicing that's built on the sixth degree of the mode, where that interval is a diminished 5th. Likewise, some of the shapes in the right hand contain major 2nds, and some have minor 2nds. In these right-hand shapes, the 5ths in the top portion of the voicing are all perfect 5ths except for the diminished 5th in the voicing built on the fourth degree of the mode. You don't get exactly parallel intervals moving diatonically up the degrees of the scale, because of the configuration of tones and semitones found in the scale itself. You'll find that some of the diatonic "shapes" aren't as pleasing to the ear in certain modes, and are therefore not optimal for practical use (as in the voicings built on the second and sixth degrees of the mode in Ex. 3).

Ex. 3

Of course, you can always work outside the mode (non-diatonically) to create tension, and incorporate more of an "outside" sound. Let's go back to the tune "Invitation." This time, in Ex. 4, I've used a shape that consists of a perfect fourth and a major second, and I move it in a parallel fashion (where the intervallic relationships within the shape stay the same), but the shape moves in and out of the mode for a sense of tension and release. (Ex. 4)

Ex. 4

You can use any practical shape you want to try – a combination of intervals that you like, triads in any inversions, and so on. This approach can open up a whole new world of voicing possibilities in virtually any jazz piano context, through the modes and beyond.



By Matt Campbell

Matt Campbell plays bass in east coast favourites Alert the Medic. Alert the Medic's impressive resume includes several East Coast Music Award and Nova Scotia Music Award nominations, climbing to #1 on east coast radio charts, and touring alongside IllScarlett, Our Lady Peace, Arkells, and others.

Small But Mighty

I'd almost describe myself as an oxymoron in terms of being a typical bassist. While I appreciate falling into a nice, deep rhythmic pocket just as much as the next guy, it's these freakishly tiny hands of mine that seem to set me apart from the rest. With an index finger measuring a mere 2 ¾ inches long and a finger span that struggles to cover three frets, I'm forced to earn each and every one of my notes. I've had to customize my technique as a bass player by being a little innovative in a big-hands world to ensure that I can play without limitations. Here are a few tips for those of you with smaller hands and a love for the bass guitar.

Warming Up

It's always a good idea to warm up before playing, especially if you're planning on playing for a solid amount of time. Having smaller hands can cause extra strain on your wrists and fingers, so it's important to stretch both.

Lightly rolling your wrists both clockwise and counter-clockwise is a good exercise to help warm up the muscles and get the blood flowing. My wrists get a pretty good work out while I play as my fret hand covers a lot of area since my fingers can't, forcing me to overcompensate on hand positioning. After warming up your wrists, focus on your fingers by making fists, slowly releasing them a few times and stretching your fingers straight out. This is a perfect way to loosen your finger muscles up.

Finally, another exercise that I usually do before a gig is to place my left and right-hand fingertips together so that the fingers on both hands are arched away from the other, and then slowly push them together holding the position for a few seconds and then repeating. This is great way to stretch your fretting and picking fingers and to enhance flexibility, but be sure you're not too hard on the little guys.

Warming up properly by taking the time to stretch is important in avoiding cramping, maintaining stamina, strengthening your hand muscles, and preventing tendon and muscle damage.

Creative Hand Positioning

I learned how to play the bass by joining rock bands throughout middle and high school that thrived on upbeat, riff-driven music with a lot of quick pushes and dynamics. In my mind, I thought I was Geddy Lee, but my fingers weren't buying it. It took awhile for me to adapt some creative hand position techniques that allowed me to play without restrictions. One technique that has helped me out is the use of open notes.

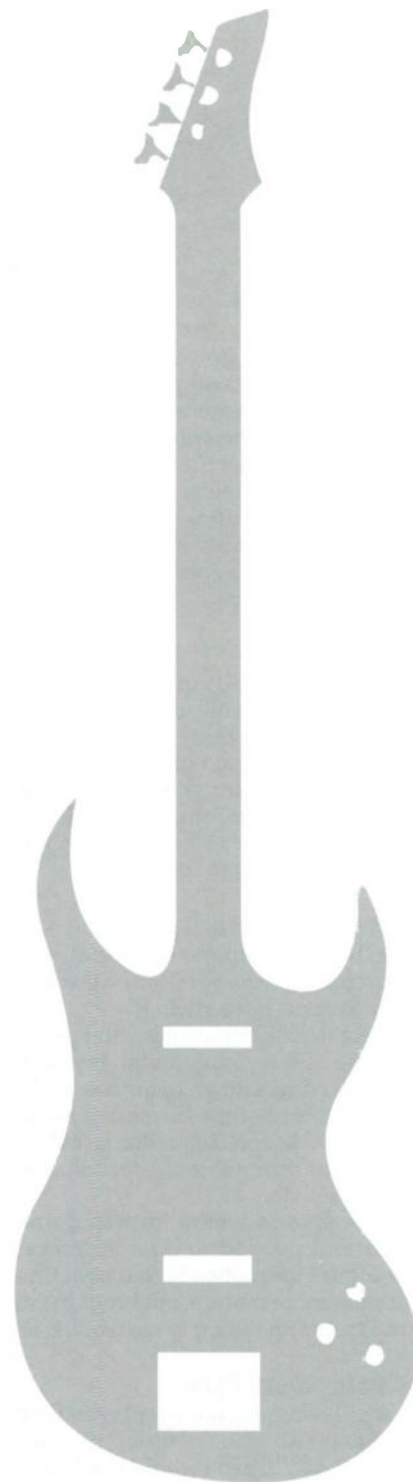
Open Notes

I use open notes a lot when writing bass riffs – whether it's simply to hold the root notes down in a song or only a quick hammer-on and pull-off. This has always bailed me out with hand positioning by allowing me to re-position my fret hand. For example, when playing F# octaves on the E and D strings, if I was to successfully play F# on the D string, it would lift my index finger off of the E string. Hammering-on an open E to the F# on the E string allows me enough time to hit the note with precision.

Sliding

Another technique that helps players with smaller hands is sliding. For a drastic change in hand positioning, sliding into a note can get you anywhere on the fret board without missing a beat. This technique can be used lightly for flavour or you can dig in for a nice raw sound. Sliding into open notes is also a great-sounding way to incorporate these two hand position techniques.

For more information on tasteful bass sliding, listen to Tom Hamilton on pretty much any release in Aerosmith's back catalogue.





By Jayson Brinkworth

Introducing Les Ismore

Part 1

This is a story about a great friend of mine, Lester Ismore. Lester (or Les, as we'll call him), is a fantastic drummer and musician. He works all of the time and always delivers just what the music needs. I have always confided in Les for advice, helping me make the best musical choices in my own playing.

The following article is dedicated to my friend Les Ismore, for all of the valuable lessons he's taught me. Read on and I'm sure you will agree that Les is exact in his approach to playing the drums.

Drums For Les

The first thing you'll notice about Les is that his kit is not very large. He says: "I only use the drums necessary for the music I am playing – no more, no less." His usual set-up would be a bass drum, snare, rack tom, floor tom, hi-hats, a ride, and two crashes. This could vary depending on the style and textures needed for the gig. Les has a minimalist approach to his playing. I love hearing him play, always such clarity and he never gets in the way.

A Les-son In Maturity

When Les was younger, he was all about speed; it seemed to be a gauge of how good you were as a drummer – and don't forget to spin those sticks!

There is nothing wrong with speed and technique – check out some of the young metal guys today; they are killer! But music all comes down to groove and this is where Les' playing started to change. He started listening to a lot of different drummers – Levon Helm, Bernard Purdie, Charlie Watts, Earl Palmer, and Ringo Starr – focusing on how they interacted with the music.

I wasn't sure where he was going with this; I was still young and needed to do a lot more listening of my own. One thing I did notice is that over time, Les' playing started sounding more mature, but I couldn't pin down why. His drum parts started speaking to me like those of AC/DC's Phil Rudd.

Les Notes More Space

Les was becoming quite a player. He was getting hired all of the time for all kinds of different gigs. It seemed like he had it figured out. When I would ask him about his gigs and why he didn't show off all of his technique, his answers would be

simple: "Play less notes, get more work," or "Pay attention to the space between your notes."

I thought Les had lost his marbles! Pay attention to the space? Did he forget I was a drummer and not an astronaut? Although thinking Les was losing it, I couldn't deny the fact that he was landing some great gigs. Maybe he had a point. Maybe I should take the theory of using less notes and paying more attention to space seriously. How does one practice these techniques? How many fewer notes should I play? Should I visit the space station at NASA?

While I might play a beat like this:



...I hear Les play this beat and it feels way better.



Or where my fill might be:



...Les would play fewer notes, speaking much clearer.



Stay tuned next month for more from Les Ismore.



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

By Daniel Schnee

Preliminary Exercises For Circular Breathing

Many woodwind players are interested in learning circular breathing. Thanks to the high level of backpressure created by the physical structure of the oboe, it is the easiest instrument on which to learn this technique. For those of us who play saxophone or clarinet, this technique is a little more difficult, but I believe that much of this difficulty is actually the result of improper preparation, and with a certain amount of preliminary study, circular breathing can be much more easily adopted.

Having taught circular breathing for a number of years, I have found that most people can grasp the basic ideas and techniques, but tend to struggle with transferring the practice to actual woodwind playing. The reason behind this struggle is that they have not learned or practiced the fundamental parts of the technique that are brought together in the process of circular breathing. So rather than describing actual woodwind circular breathing, I would like to introduce you to a set of preliminary exercises that, when practiced sequentially over time, can greatly improve your chance of mastering and using circular breathing in your music.

First of all, don't practice while suffering from chest congestion or a cold. Circular breathing is a safe practice, but you don't want to exacerbate any respiratory conditions you may have. Always play it safe by maintaining a healthy diet and exercise regimen, stretching your back, arms, and shoulders, and maintaining correct posture while practicing. Talk to your family doctor beforehand if you have any health concerns that you think might be affected by breath work.

An easy way to start becoming comfortable with circular breathing is puff up your cheeks like a frog, and hold the air in your mouth while breathing normally through your nose. Also make sure to keep the air toward the front of your mouth with a medium amount of pressure so your lips are not touching your teeth. You can do this while watching TV or surfing the Internet, and soon you will become used to the action. Do this a few minutes a day for a couple of days before moving on to the next exercise. The idea is not to master circular breathing in a week, but master each step so that when you do eventually circular breathe, your technique will be comfortable and correct.

The next step is a little more fun. Fill your mouth with water and do the same thing a few minutes each day. Then, when you feel ready, practice squirting out the wa-

ter slowly through your lips while continuing to breathe normally. A good exercise is to try and squirt out the water over the course of three (in and out) breaths. Like all the other exercises, don't rush through this process. Once you have become used to the breathing and squirting, move on to squirting out the water only as you are breathing in. This step is vital, as it is the basic action you will be using when you are circular breathing. Do this exercise for at least a week.

Having done the previous exercise, you are now ready to begin using the cup/straw method for training. Personally, I use a large mineral water bottle and one of those long "crazy straws" with multiple twists and loops in it (which creates backpressure), but pretty much any small cup and a small straw is fine. Fill the cup or bottle with water, place the straw in it, and practice blowing air out of your cheeks while breathing it. Don't try and circular breathe yet. Taking the process in steps will help you master the essential techniques and reduce the chance of frustration.

Once you are comfortable with this, you are ready to begin attempting to circular breathe. Once you have expelled the air out of your cheeks while simultaneously filling your lungs with air, replace the air in your cheeks with air from your lungs and breathe out through the straw normally. Easier said than done. This is the hard part of circular breathing, as you try and maintain a continuous flow of bubbles in the cup. There will be a break in the flow of bubbles in your cup, and you will often splash water on yourself. So make sure you are wearing clothes that can get wet, or are not standing near anything that could be damaged by water.

Having reached this point, you will now begin the long process of learning to effectively control the rate of air, creating a smooth transition from mouth to lung air, and finding the right speed of mouth/breath exchange to keep a note going on your instrument. There are many videos online and for sale that describe the process, and many of them will be helpful to you, but having done the preliminary exercises with discipline and daily study, you will be able to nearly halve the amount of time it would normally take you to master circular breathing. Good luck!



By Tony Carlucci

The Modern Trumpet Player

Most of my work is in the R&B/rock/jazz idiom. Many of my gigs are between five and six hours long and some sets can be as long as two hours. My most challenging gig is a Chicago tribute band called Brass Transit where, in a 90 minute show, the horn is on your face 95 per cent of the time.

Thus, the main concern I have when I go to work is my endurance. When one is not in good shape, it is easy to slip into bad playing habits such as too much mouthpiece pressure, which can result in several problems. It also makes it much harder to express yourself musically when you're battling fatigue. It's akin to a hockey player with great playing skills who can't keep up with the other players on the ice due to being out of shape. The skills, no matter how polished, are rendered virtually useless, and injury usually follows.

Because of this reality, I approach the trumpet two ways: physical and musical. Let's discuss the former.

Physical

Here, I approach the horn like an athlete. I start out with this harmonic exercise below (Ex. 1) and cycle through all of the valve positions down and up. Then I add the next upper partial and do the same thing. I keep adding partials until I reach the top of my range. This is also my quick warm up for days where I have a long gig ahead of me.

This example also brings you down to the pedal tones; I am a firm believer in them. Nothing relaxes the chops better, and when I can go from the pedals to the upper register smoothly and comfortably, I know the reeds are working. Of course, after a six-hour pounding gig the night before, it can take awhile before it starts to work, but, it never fails me!

Ex. 1



1, 1-2, 2-3, 1-3, 1, ETC.

On days where I don't have a gig, I continue with Clark's 2nd (Ex. 2). I play each key six different ways, in this order, starting from low G:

- Slurred, very slow
- Slurred, fast
- Tongue, slow
- Tongue, fast
- Double tongue, slow
- Double tongue, fast.

When I get to G on the top of the staff, I slur one and tongue one only and at a medium tempo, up to the top of my range. This exercise builds endurance and gets your basic tonguing and slurring together quite quickly.

Ex. 2



Next, I move on to Clark's 3rd (Ex. 3). I play each one two ways, starting from low A:

- Slurred slow
- Slurred fast

Once again, to the top of my range.

Ex. 3



These last two exercises might seem a bit old-school to some, but they really do encompass the whole gambit of trumpet basics and their development.

Inserting proper rest in the above workout is extremely important. I rest enough to make sure I always play each two keys/exercises in a row on fresh chops. The secret here is to practice often, not a lot.

Off-Horn Exercises

In the last few years, I have incorporated three off-horn exercises into my routine. Each one strengthens the support muscles of the embouchure as well as the inner muscles that don't get a work out by playing the horn.

1. Isometric exercises using the P.E.T.E. (Personal Embouchure Training Exerciser) from Warburton.
2. Mouthpiece buzzing. I keep an extra piece in my car and buzz at stop lights.
3. Free buzzing. This is buzzing without the mouthpiece – just the lips alone.

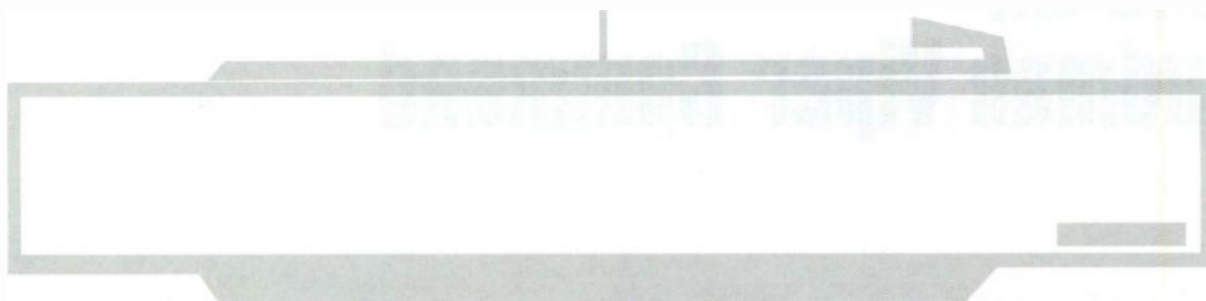
The trumpet is a high-maintenance instrument and you have to love playing the horn in order to keep it up to a professional level. It is very challenging, but very rewarding in the end.



Sara Simms is an innovative electronic music producer, turntablist, and DJ. Her new musical enterprise, *Future Prophecies*, is a collective of the next generation of Toronto's electronic music producers and DJs. Companies including Analogue Solutions, Genelec, Lacquer Channel Mastering, Moog Audio, Rane, Serato, and Pioneer DJ sponsor the project. She recently launched a new blog, "I Dream of Music," that focuses on her love for new music technology, her productions, and *Future Prophecies*. She fully supports Red Dot Relief, a call to action from the global electronic music community to help rebuild Japan. www.sarasimms.com.

By Sara Simms

Control Your Future



DJing in 2011 is an exciting adventure! Whether you're just starting out or a seasoned professional, there's a new world of futuristic options available for the modern digital DJ. I believe the most revolutionary change to recently hit the DJ world is the transition into controllerism. According to Wikipedia, Controllerism is the art and practice of using musical software controllers to build upon, mix, scratch, remix, modify, or otherwise create music, usually with a digital mixer.

Controllers To The Rescue: Solving The Dilemmas Of The Digital DJ

Digital DJing has been prominent for years, and by now, most DJs are familiar with software like Serato and Traktor Scratch Pro. There are many advantages to using a software program for DJing, including being able to import a large music collection, utilize digital effects, and loop, sample, and beat sync your tracks; however, the shift towards utilizing software for performance has created a new set of problems for the modern DJ. Digital DJs now have to direct too much attention towards their computer screens during their sets. Who wants to watch a DJ whose fingers are moving at the speed of light across the keyboard? I feel a DJ's hands are better off on the mixer, attending to the art of the mix.

In clubs and other venues, the designated space for a DJ's laptop is often a less-than-ideal place (like in the corner

of the DJ booth), which forces them to hover over their laptops at the side of the booth instead of standing tall front and centre with the mixer. Both of these factors create situations where DJs are unable to perform to their full potential. We need to be able to focus on the important aspects of our craft: mixing the tracks, rocking the crowd, and creating an unforgettable performance!

So what's a modern DJ to do? How about making a change in your rig and trying out a new way of playing? I'd like to invite you to journey into the world of controllerism, the movement that has the ability to save the digital DJ's show. The music products industry has been busy creating a new breed of integrated systems and hardware that allow you to easily control your digital DJing platform directly from specialized hardware.

The first question is: which controller is right for you? In this two-part article, I will introduce you to some of the available options so you can make an informed decision about your new set-up.

Level One: Dipping Your Toes Into The Musical Waters

If you are just starting out, you may want to look into the wide range of integrated software and hardware systems available. These systems are all-in-one mixing control surfaces that are designed as "plug and play" solutions, with minimum set-up time. Generally, the hardware consists of two small plat-

ters (that resemble a CD player) with all the controls you would normally find on a CD deck and a DJ mixer in the centre. All of the buttons and knobs have been assigned to DJ software functions and are laid out intuitively.

Serato ITCH is an example of an integrated system – a good choice for DJs who like the look and feel of Serato. There are wide ranges of compatible controllers for these systems available on the market. If you prefer to DJ with Traktor Scratch, there are also a number of new controller units available for this software. Recently, I had the pleasure of test-driving the Pioneer DDJ-T1 controller for Traktor and found it to be reliable and easy to use. Before you decide which piece to buy, I recommend you take the time to try out and play on the equipment first.

These types of all-in-one portable controllers are perfect for the DJ who wants to "rock the home scene" or perform in smaller venues. They are also very useful for mobile DJs, as these one-piece units can be easily transported.

Thanks to the new breed of controllers, getting into DJing couldn't be easier. Now it's up to you to find the big tunes, a buddy to show you the ropes, and you'll be flying on the wheels of steel (pardon me – the controllers of steel) in no time!

In next issue's column, I will present advanced and futuristic controller options for professional DJs.

Rob Janson is the lead singer and guitarist of indie garage rock band Sandman Viper Command. Their unique and compelling sound has landed Janson on stages alongside Japandroids, Wavves, Arkells, Holy Fuck, and others. This year, they will play Edgefest and release the *Rough Love 7*, recorded with produced Jon Drew (Tokyo Police Club, Fucked Up).



By Rob Janson

This Is Your Voice On Sandman Viper Command

At first, I was a bit hesitant about taking on the challenge of writing an article about vocal technique. Let's face it – while technique is integral to any style of music you play, the rough-around-the-edges aesthetic of garage rock doesn't immediately conjure up images of classically-trained vocalists and diaphragmatic breathing. Unfortunately for me, this is where my voice finds its home.

That being said, here I am two days before embarking on a national tour, sitting behind my laptop and stewing over the myriad of possible ways to tackle such a topic. I'm waiting for the fresh dose of Azithromycin I just downed to work its magic and cure the chest infection that's wreaking havoc on my system. This is when it hits me – though my garage rock degree didn't give me much knowledge about vocal technique, it has taught me a thing or two about not feeling 100 per cent before a performance. This is where even the roughest can shine.

How Did I Get Here?

There are many potential dangers for a lead singer in the rock and roll landscape. If you plan on chalking these up to occupational hazards and are set on enjoying all the lifestyle has to offer, know this: there will be times when you overdo it and those times will make for less-than-perfect performance parameters the next night. If it's enjoyable,

it'll probably getcha. Conversing loudly, smoking, drinking, and any general hooting and hollering all fall into this category. I learned this first-hand last fall while SVC was on tour with our friends in Dinosaur Bones. As the tour progressed, my voice began to lack the range and power it once had. Finally, on our last show of the tour while watching our friends play, I continuously found myself leaning over to our guitarist, Dan, discussing and appreciating what was happening in front of us. It was here that I realized it wasn't sickness or moonshine running my vocal cords raw; it was the fact that I was consistently trying to converse over the other band. From that day forward, I understood that if I'm going to enjoy the show as a fan, I certainly can't scream like one. It's somewhat unfortunate, but it's a fact: singers have to make certain sacrifices when it comes to preserving their voice.

What Do I Do Now?

If your voice is on the outs, be sure to use it as seldom as possible and take every opportunity you can to sleep. This means naps in the van, backstage, or wherever else it might be possible. The body is most effective at repairing itself while asleep, and this holds true for the vocal cords. An hour-long nap in between load in and sound check can do wonders.

As Mr. Dylan once said, "Get born, keep warm." Just as it is to a baby, warmth is a hoarse voice's best friend.

This means plenty of tea (I prefer honey lemon). The warmth relaxes and loosens, sometimes giving you that extra 20 per cent that could very well carry your performance. Be wary of caffeine as it has abrasive effects on the throat. (Acids do as well, including that in lemon juice, but I prefer my rock and roll with a touch of rebellion.)

Finally, don't push! Not only does this inflict more damage, leaving you even worse the next night, but there's nothing worse than hearing the equivalent of a dolphin with a crushed larynx over the mic when you try to hit a note that's simply not there. I personally find that falsettos, like the ones in our song "Rough Love," go first. So if you have to, alter the lines slightly – different notes here and there are always better than no notes at all.

The world of rock and roll is a dangerous place for a singer. Partaking in too many of the extra-curriculars out there will surely lead to decreased performance, a complete blow out requiring months of rest, or even surgery; however, if you approach the nightlife with a vocalist first, rockstar second mentality, you'll discover that there is more than enough fun to go around and it may just keep you out of trouble on more than one occasion.

Remember, if your voice suddenly disappears, it's likely that the party will as well – and there's nothing rock and roll about that.

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 ~ John Jorgensen
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It's a "Hard Road" to travel on indeed – the artistic career path that near-perfectly straddles the border between mainstream success and critical appreciation; however, it's one Sam Roberts Band have been navigating for over a decade, and without robbing them of any credit, it's a journey they've made seem rather simple.

Roberts himself has been a bright beacon on Canada's musical landscape since his introductory single, "Brother Down," took national radio by storm at the foot of the new millennium, and over the course of three subsequent full-length releases, he and his band have seen that brightness swell on a consistent basis. Now, almost three years to the date after the release of his last offering, 2008's *Love At The End Of The World*, Roberts & Co. are set to drop *Collider*, their most recent trove of tracks, recorded at Engine Music Studios in Chicago with producer Brian Deck.

And while Sam Roberts Band – Roberts (vocals, guitar), Dave Nugent (lead guitar), Eric Fares (keyboard, guitar), Josh Trager (drums), and James Hall (bass) – have been recording and performing together for years (this incarnation since 2005), *Collider* is the first Roberts release to be credited to the collective band – and with good reason.

CONSTRUCTING COLLIDER

Roberts began writing for his fourth full-length in late 2009, right on the heels of the extensive touring cycle in support of *Love At The End Of The World*. Explains the songwriter: "Normally, I take a couple of months off between the end of a tour and when I begin writing, for no other reason than I just can't really think about music for awhile. I feel like I have to take a break and clear my mind before seeing what kind of musical ideas are stewing in there."

It was a "sense of urgency" that prompted Roberts to forgo his usual hiatus, bury himself in the basement of his Montreal home, and start mapping out musical ideas. Closeted away for hours each day, Roberts was composing and demoing new material through to the spring of 2010. When it was ready to enter the more communal forum of the band's rehearsal space, the collection of tracks that would become *Collider* entered a new phase in its development.

The band spent several months over the summer of 2010 in pre-production, re-demoing the songs as part of a step that Roberts admits the band has never taken before. "This is the first time we inserted a prolonged pre-production phase into the process," he shares, "and I think it was important in that we really wanted to make a statement as to what we thought the record should sound like before sharing it with a producer."

The live, full-band setting really opened up the material and, as a result, invited more input from the other members. While that influence has been present on every album, it was far more extensive this time around. "In the past, Sam would bring songs to us with a pretty clear idea of how he wanted to present them," shares Nugent, reflecting on past projects. "This time, it was more of a collaborative effort."

Once the songs had taken a shape representative of how they'd be performed live – a very crucial component to the group's output – the band was ready to enlist the help of a producer and enter the studio to finally put their efforts to record.

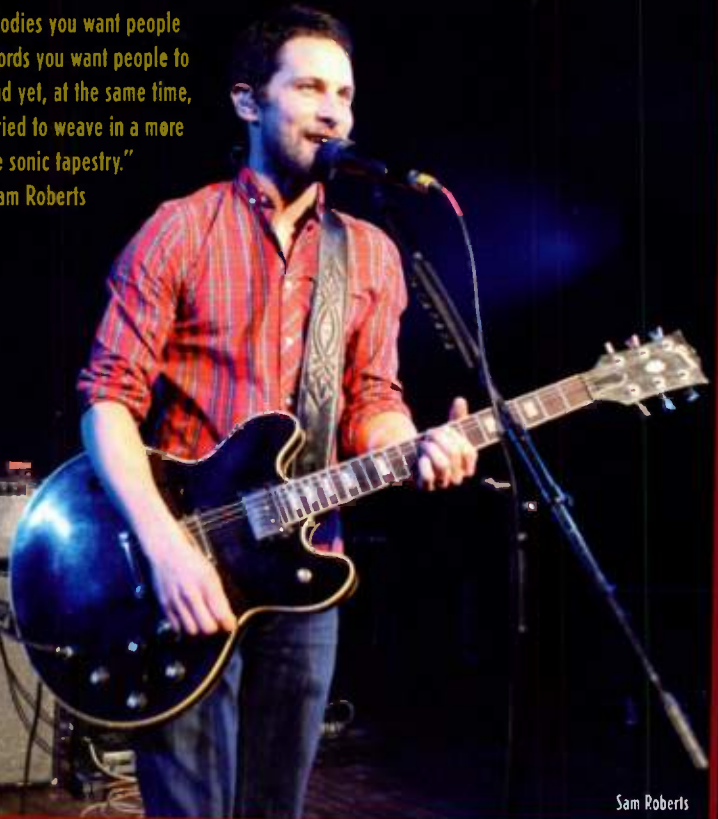


SAM ROBERTS BAND

On The Grafting
Of Collider

"There are melodies you want people to latch onto, words you want people to connect with, and yet, at the same time, we've always tried to weave in a more elaborate sonic tapestry."

- Sam Roberts



Sam Roberts Band (L-R): James Hall, Sam Roberts, Dave Nugent, Josh Trager & Eric Fares.

Sam Roberts

SAM ROBERTS BAND



Fares on the keys.

The five musicians headed down to Engine Music Studios in the Bucktown neighbourhood of Chicago, home base for producer Deck, who's worked with artists including Modest Mouse, Iron and Wine, and Califone. The band actually stayed onsite at the studio, which has small apartments to accommodate visiting artists, for six weeks, completely immersing themselves in the album making process – or, as Roberts jokingly describes it, “like a Navy SEAL boot camp for rock and roll.”

Informing the choice of bringing Deck onboard was the appreciation Roberts has for his previous output – specifically the Midas touch he lent to Califone's *Roots & Crowns*, which spent a lot of time in Roberts' stereo leading up to the composition of *Collider*. “None of the production is overwrought, which I've never been a fan of,” explains Roberts about what drew him to Deck. “I'm not talking about ‘Dark Side Of The Moon’ or a Beatles album – more so that really glossy production. That's never melded well with my songs or our band.”

Instead, continues Roberts, Deck has a way of weaving intricate and interesting sonic textures into his records, “but at the heart of it all, the song comes through,” and with sticky songs in the vein of radio staples like “Them Kids” or “The Gate,” that's very important to Sam Roberts Band. “There are melodies you want people to latch onto, words you want people to connect with, and yet, at the same time, we've always tried to weave in this more elaborate sonic tapestry,” muses the band's namesake. “Brian's records have a tasteful way of doing that.”

Deck's adopted philosophy for *Collider* was one of addition by subtraction, working hard to eliminate dilution and strip songs down to their very essence. “You don't realize when you're writing, but you'll often unconsciously stay within your own safety zone,” shares Roberts about what came of the process. “The whole idea with bringing in a producer like Brian was to bring us out of that and into a new place – somewhere we wanted to be but might not have ended up on our own.”

DECONSTRUCTING COLLIDER

Throughout the writing and recording process, the band placed a heavy emphasis on the album's rhythmic elements. Even rooting back to Roberts' basement, the songs were mostly written from the rhythm up, with the same hierarchy existing through pre-production and the first few studio sessions with Deck. Of course, Trager was expectedly excited. “I had the opportunity to explore things a little more, rhythmically speaking,” shares the drummer. “Everyone was open to that, and the songs really lent themselves to it.”

Coupled with its more communal crafting, the album's percussive focus lends a slightly different flare to the tracks the comprise *Collider*. The overall sound is unmistakably Sam Roberts Band, though existing fans will come across some not-so-familiar elements that differentiate this album from its predecessors. In fact, they don't disguise themselves too long.

“Like a lot of the songs on this album, the opening track (“The Last Crusade”) has a very African rhythmic feel with complementing guitar styles,” says Trager. His percussive performance, cowbell included, for the number was actually inspired by Paul Simon's “Late In The Evening,” the rhythm for which is actually of Mozambiquian influence, and elevates the song's upbeat and infectious groove. It's also not the only bit of cowbell incorporated into the record, either, though like the rest of its appearances, it's kept quite tasteful.

“Let It In” is another number where the album's rhythmic focus is immediately evident – cowbell and all. Much like a good funk track, the song finds the melodic instruments almost taking on a percussive role in themselves, very supportively layering some melody over a danceable, driving beat. Says Trager: “We're delving a little bit into hip-hop territory on that one, even, which is pretty cool.”

Both Trager and Nugent highlight the album's first single, “I Feel You,” as another standout track. “When Sam brought it to us, he had a vision for the song, but it wasn't as mapped out as most of the others,” begins Nugent. “We all really tossed ideas into that song, and the album track is quite different from what he first brought us because of it.” Trager adds that it's one of the first songs where the band really explored the electronic realm, incorporating some synth bass and spliced-in retro drum samples.

“It was fun to be in that creative environment for such an extensive period of time. As a band, bonding in that setting was kind of new. If one person was tracking, everyone else was there, and that really brought out something special in our performances.”

-Josh Trager

Another unique aspect to this album is that the collaborative component wasn't limited to the five musicians in the band. For *Collider*, Sam Roberts Band welcomed a number of additional musicians into the studio during the final third of their stay, including Califone percussionist Ben Massarella, woodwind player Stuart Bogie of Antibalas, and Liz Powell, vocalist of fellow Montreal outfit Land Of Talk.

“The type of percussion Ben brought to the table wasn't your standard, everyday rhythm-based playing,” says Trager about his percussive peer. “He added a lot of different colours and textures with various sound sources – some of which were actually instruments he made himself.” These performances sit subtly in the mix, again enhancing the album's rhythmic bedrock but not commanding too much attention.

Nugent admits he was anxious at first about how these external performances would fit the group's well-established dynamic – another example of Deck bringing the members outside of their safety zone and exploring. The worry didn't last long, with Nugent asserting it made for a terrific experience. “We were all in the control room with Brian, just watching Stuart play, and we experienced him giving these songs just what they needed as it happened.”

Bogie's fingerprints are all over the record. The saxophone incorporated into “Streets Of Heaven” augments the song in a very special way, and the process ultimately may have informed how Sam Roberts Band approaches the album making process in the future. Says Nugent: “We're well schooled in the class of ‘rock and roll band,’ but it was so much fun and eye-opening exploring outside of that.”

As for Powell's performance on “Longitude,” Roberts is quick to shower her in deserved praise. “She has an amazing voice,” he says. “It's not just about her voice, but something about her delivery and what she brings to a performance that I've always loved about Land Of Talk. There's something that comes through her that I knew would be perfect for this song.”

Generally speaking, inviting these guests to the party forced the band members to stay elastic with their vision of what a given song – and its recording – was supposed to be. Says Nugent about the experience: “I can't see us making another record without bringing some outsiders in.”

Reflecting on the overall experience, Trager shares: “It was fun to be in that creative environment for such an extensive period of time. As a band, bonding in that setting was kind of new. We couldn't just go home – we were in a new city with only each other. I think that's part of what brought that live band feel to the record, even though we didn't record live off the floor. If one person was tracking, everyone else was there, and that really brought out something special in our performances.”

But that immersion in the process, despite its positive influence on their craft and camaraderie, could be trying for the individual members at this stage in their lives. For as Sam Roberts Band is poised to reach a professional pinnacle



(L-R) Trager, Hall, Roberts & Nugent.

with this fourth full-length, the individual members are also at important points in their personal lives, centred back in their home city.

OF MONTREAL

"A good deal of my relationship with the place is unquestioning – it's just how it is and how it's always been," says Roberts, reflecting on his connection to his region and how it nurtures both his art and his family.

Both Nugent and Roberts are family men, the former married with a three-year-old daughter and the latter married with three children, the youngest of whom was welcomed into the world just a couple of months prior to *Collider's* mid-May release. Balancing their personal and professional lives may at times be trying, though both are determined – with the support of their band mates – to make the best of it.

"The goal is to make them non-opposing forces – making them work as harmoniously as possible" Roberts says. "It's a challenge, and still a work in progress," though as he confidently states, being in a touring band and being a good parent aren't mutually exclusive. "In fact, being part of a family has greatly influenced what this record is – what it's all about."

On the other side of the coin, when the band is touring, Roberts now finds himself propelled by a relatively new sense of purpose. "I've got this incredible sense of motivation to make the most of this opportunity," he elaborates. "There are no days squandered or shows taken for granted. I almost owe it to my wife and kids to do this as best as I possibly can."

"[Montreal] lets you do what you want to do and think the way you want to think. I think that keeps the music coming out of here very fresh ... to the point where the most exciting time to be here is always the present."

-Dave Nugent

Nugent finds that the overall dynamic between band members hasn't really changed, though as a unit, they're all very supportive of each other's endeavours and priorities. "When we were making this record, for example, we were lucky enough to approach it almost like a nine-to-five job," says the lead guitarist. "That was quite different from when we used to just get up and go jam; you could start at midnight if you wanted to." He emphasizes that it works because all five members let it, adding: "It's a different thing, but it's a great thing."

And as well as it works as a place to plant your roots and raise a family, Montreal is just as welcoming to creativity and artistic output. "It lets you do what you want to do and think the way you want to think," says Nugent about his home city's appeal. "I think that keeps the music coming out of here very fresh. The music just keeps getting better, to the point where the most exciting time to be here is always the present."

Regarding both the quality and quantity of music emerging from the Quebec



metropolis, Roberts attributes it in part to the city's relative segregation – culturally, not geographically – from the rest of the country. When Roberts began making music, he recalls, "There was no record industry or infrastructure for an English rock band. There weren't people to know or any clear route to success. That was in Toronto or New York or L.A. so it was all about just being in a band and making music – our own music."

Over the last decade or so, there's been an enormous flourishing of diverse, innovative English acts coming out of the city, including Sam Roberts Band comrades The Stills and The High Dials. "We all

grew up together," says Roberts of his friends and fellow musicians. "We've all been making music together here, so there's a natural affinity that binds us."

In such a culturally-diverse city, where creative achievement is unquestionably valued, artists can comfortably find sustenance while staying true to their passion. Combine that with a relatively low cost of living, and you've got an incubator for intriguing and cutting-edge music to be made. "At one point, it seemed to reach critical mass and became undeniable everywhere else," concludes Roberts. "People couldn't help but notice this deep, deep pool of great music coming out of this place."

Like many of their peers, though perhaps to a more significant extent, Sam Roberts Band have been able to remain uncompromising in their art while enjoying a very respectable amount of both critical and mainstream success. "We definitely don't take either for granted," says Trager, attributing both to Roberts' organic and pure approach to songwriting. "Sam doesn't write songs with a strict formula or any intention of getting on the radio; he just does what he does and we're fortunate enough that people dig it."

Should it receive even a fraction of the appreciation of the band's previous releases, *Collider* will find the band with even more airtime and playing to even larger crowds across the continent, and they're ready for the latter. "With this album," explains Trager, "we really wanted to represent ourselves as the band people see when we're onstage. Since returning from the studio, we've really been hammering out these songs, putting more work into getting them stage-ready than I think we ever have before."

The band will spend the rest of 2011 supporting the album, first playing some primary markets for events including several radio festivals in the States, the Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill, and joining the recently-announced bill for this summer's Osheaga Festival in their home city – all stops on their route to musical growth and the spoils it's yielded thus far. It's still a "Hard Road," but one these five now seem to know like the back of their hands. ■



Andrew King is the Editor of Canadian Musician.

Classified

A SELF-MADE MAN

BY MICHAEL RAINE

Straight outta Compton he's not, but Enfield, NS rapper Classified has never shied away from his Maritime roots. One of the most prolific hip-hop artists to come out of Canada, Classified is currently on the road supporting his latest album, *Handshakes and Middle Fingers*. As always, the album is self-produced and was recorded in his home studio just a few blocks from where the rest of his family resides. From small town wannabe rapper to JUNO nominee, few Canadian hip-hop artists have stayed as true to their roots and kept everything so close to home.

Growing up in a town where country music and classic rock dominate the ears of the locals, Classified thrived on the novelty of being one of the only high school kids listening to hip-hop. "It was me and maybe two other dudes that rapped or even listened to hip-hop in our school," recalls the man whose family and friends know as Luke Boyd. "Around grade 10 or 11, I'd get up at every school dance and rap over the end of (Naughty by Nature's) 'Hip-Hop Hooray.' Any song that had an instrumental at the end, I'd get up and rap at that." Classified says the spontaneous displays of his rhyming skills earned him the moniker "rap guy" at school – and he loved it. He adds that support from his friends and family are what gave him the belief that he could make a career in hip-hop.

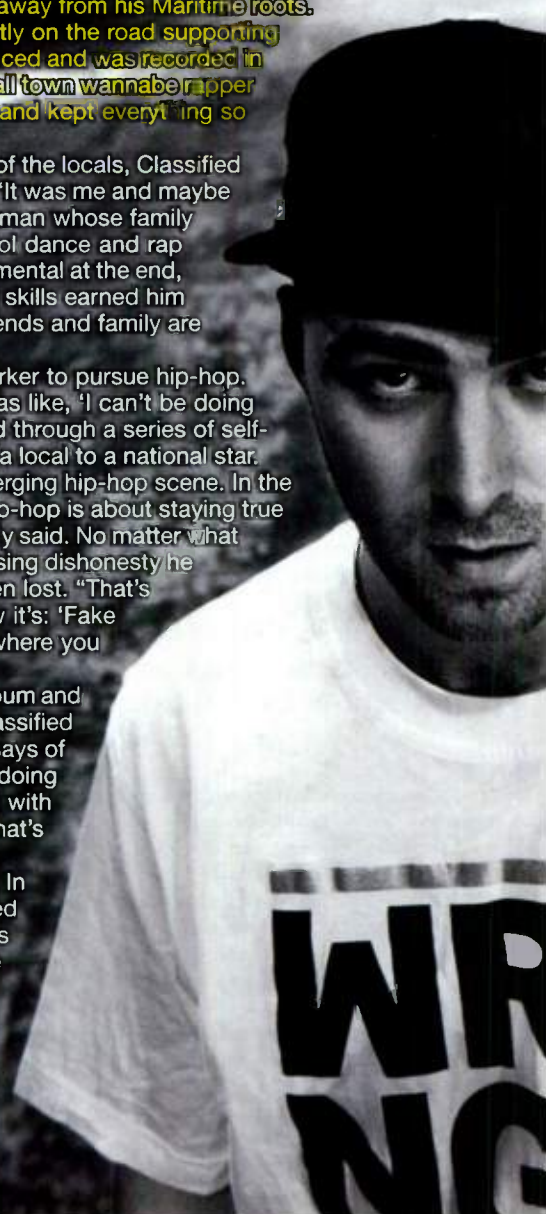
At 21, Classified turned down a \$45,000-a-year job as a computer support worker to pursue hip-hop. "I hated doing computer support. It was good money, don't get me wrong, but I was like, 'I can't be doing this shit for 30 or 40 years, so let's try the music thing.'" The music thing stuck, and through a series of self-produced albums, all recorded in his home studios over the years, he's grown from a local to a national star.

Classified moved to Halifax in the mid-'90s to immerse himself in the city's emerging hip-hop scene. In the Nova Scotia capital, he learned to produce, but more importantly, he learned that hip-hop is about staying true to who you are and where you come from. "Keep it real" was that thing that everybody said. No matter what you're doing or how you're doing it, keep it real," he recounts. He laments the increasing dishonesty he sees in today's hip-hop world, noting that the old ethos of "keeping it real" has been lost. "That's what hip-hop is about and somewhere over the years, that line got faded, and now it's: 'Fake it 'til you make it.' But where I come from, it's: 'Be who you are, and be proud of where you come from.'"

He's now on tour in support of *Handshakes and Middle Fingers*, his 12th studio album and second on a major label. After being on an independent label for over a decade, Classified signed with Sony Music Canada in 2008. "Creatively, it hasn't changed a thing," he says of working with a major label. "The way I made my albums before is in a home studio, doing it myself, and that's the same way I do it now. That's the one thing we talked about with Sony; I said: 'Look, I want to have full creative control on what I'm making because that's what I've been doing and it's been working for me.'"

He says the ability to record and produce as he pleases is essential to his work. In turn, his home studios have become increasingly more elaborate over time. "I started with an in-the-closet-type studio. Then we bought our first house three or four years ago and I ended up building a shed in the backyard and turned that into a studio," he explains over the phone from his new Enfield home, his two children audibly playing in the background. "With this house, I wanted to make sure I had a legit studio."

When he was constructing his current recording space, there were a few specifics he kept in mind. "I knew I wanted to have a room for live drums, and I wanted the room to have a piano in there," he shares. "Just having the live drums in there gives me more options when I'm working on songs."



Classified

For Classified, the most important piece of equipment isn't the largest. The Akai MPC2500 drum machine is where it begins and ends for him. "That's still the everything," he says, emphasizing the MPC's importance in his work. "That's what sequences everything. If I have a live guitar player laying something down, he'll play it, I'll take it, and put it into my drum machine and sequence it up. I'd definitely say the MPC is my main tool."

Having the luxury of a home studio has made Classified allergic to the idea of recording elsewhere. "I've tried to go into a recording studio and record in new places and hated it." He says the creative freedom that having his own studio affords him can't be replicated when producers are watching and every second spent at the mic costs more money. "You have 10 people sitting in the studio watching you record. I find it hard to just let go and try different things because you don't want to look like a fool in front of everybody." He adds: "When I'm by myself, I do the stupidest shit. You know, 90 per cent of it is garbage, but then that 10 per cent is like, 'Oh, that was cool.' But I never would've come across it if it weren't for experimenting on my own."

Though building a home studio is a costly endeavour, it can also mean cost savings when the builder is a perfectionist and studio junkie. "I can sit there and fuck with two vocals or two lines for eight hours at my studio – I could care less. If it comes out sounding good, then it's worth it," he says. "If I'm in a big studio, it's going to cost me \$2,000 to do that; it'll be in my head."

Being able to record at home also means the album becomes a family affair. His two brothers, for example, both contributed to *Handshakes and Middle Fingers*, one of whom also serves as Classified's touring guitarist. Additionally, his father, who was in a band his whole life, occasionally drops by to lend a hand. "My dad plays every instrument and lives just down the road, so if it's something crazy I need, I just call up the dad and say, 'Come on over; I got something I need you to do right quick.' I'm pretty lucky to have that." His dad can even be seen playing the singing janitor in his son's video to the 2009 single "Up All Night." "He's been living that one up for a couple of years now," laughs the emcee.

Though all 12 of his albums are self-produced, Classified says he enjoys the collaboration that is part of producing other people's work. "It's good to have somebody else's opinion," he says of producing for artists like recent JUNO winner Shad. "A lot of times, when you're working on something for eight hours, you kind of lose track on what's good and what's not. That's my biggest problem when I'm working on my own stuff."

At 33-years-old with a wife and two kids at home, Classified says there's going to be more studio time and less travel in the future. "For the next couple of years, it's going to be a lot of world touring and going all over the place. Then, I want to sit back and produce – really work out of my studio and record and develop young artists."

In the meantime, Classified will continue to work in his own space on his own terms. He refuses to have it any other way. ■

Mike Raine is a freelance writer living in Oakville, ON.

Keeping It Classy:

Key Pieces Of Gear From Classified's Home Studio

- Akai Professional MPC2500 Beat Production Station
- Technics Turntables (x2)
- Digidesign CI24 Control Surface
- Digidesign 003 Rack+
- Roland Fantom-XR Synthesizer/Sampler
- KRK 10" Monitors (with subwoofer)
- Great River Electronics Preamp
- FMR Audio RNC1773 Compressor
- Pro Tools 9
- Propellerhead Reason 5
- Neumann U 87 Microphone
- PLUS: Other keyboards, a drum kit, percussion instruments, and an old upright piano



Johnny Fay



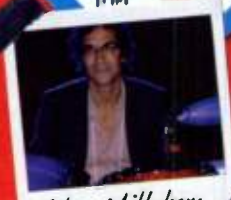
Stewart Copeland



Phil Rudd



Tico Torres



Glen Mitchell

PAISTE

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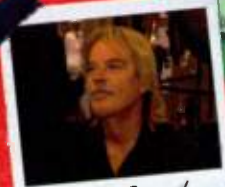
Jason McEvry



Nicko McBrain



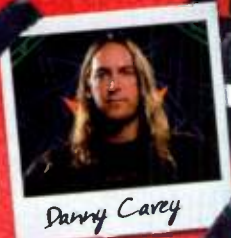
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'TIL THE WHEELS



PHOTO: CELIA MOASE

BY MARK DESLOGES

There's just something about it; something intangible — that feeling you get when you wake up thousands of miles from your family and friends, but somehow, it feels like home.

Bridging all gaps, from the self-booked road trip to the world's most elaborate and well-produced concert tours, there is something addictive about leaving it all behind for rock and roll. Some people have it easy, others are not so fortunate; however, you can't lose sight of the fact that, in one way or another, we are all lucky to be able to do what we do. At the end of the day, music is a business, and the bottom line is the numbers in black.

Whether you've just started schlepping gear around to local venues or are interested in hitting the road as a crew member, if touring is something you feel in your bones, then it's a dream you will sink your blood, sweat, and tears into — and fortune favours the brave.

PRIMER

When the average person thinks of "life on the road," they often focus on the highlights — the hotels, tour busses, catering, free booze, backstage passes, and screaming fans. Such attributes that can attract one to the world of professional music aren't in short supply; however, often overlooked are the countless hours spent behind-the-scenes planning, problem-solving, and of course, performing physical labour.

When you see the blinders hit the crowd at the same time the pyro goes off and the bass drop shakes the rafters, know there were a lot of hands involved in making that happen. What you don't see is the woman

in the office drawing the rigging plans and calculating weight loads, the crew at the shop packing miles of cables into cases, the local hands that unloaded the trucks and helped assemble the rig, or the smiling catering guy who was stuck with the arduous task of feeding everyone.

The biggest mistake any artist, crew member, or manager can make is to underestimate, and therefore under-plan, their tour. There are hundreds of minor details to factor into a tour of any size, and failure to pick up on any of these can have disastrous results. The key to success is proper advancing and planning. You have to know what you are getting yourself into, what it's going to entail, and how you will overcome the inevitable disasters you will encounter.

It's easy to assume that when you arrive at the venue, everything will be to specification, your gear will work as usual, and tickets will sell. The difficult part is knowing what to do when your gear catches fire, or the promoter doesn't have the money to pay you on-hand because nobody came to the show.

As an artist, it's mission-critical to know and understand as many aspects of your tour as possible to ensure its success; however, there will come a time when you will no longer be able to properly manage your own act and carry on as an artist. When that time comes, it is crucial to bring in a professional to take care of it for you.

ETIQUETTE

From management to the booking agent, the tour manager, the sound engineer, the lighting director, the merch person, the instrument techs,

FALL OFF

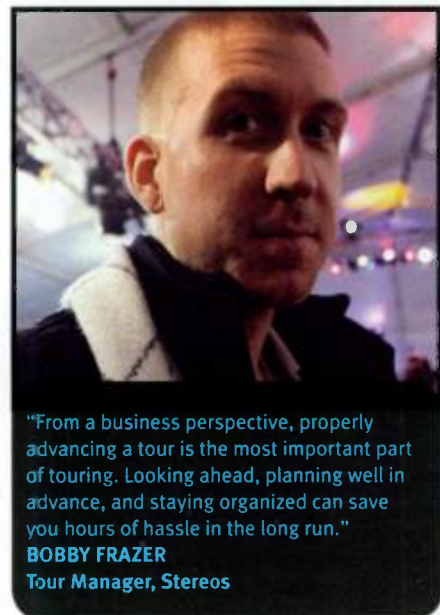
A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT LIFE ON THE ROAD

and even the driver, your crew is your family. They are the ones who will make the proper plans and execute them with military-like precision before, when, and after the curtain falls and all eyes are on you. They're the ones who will drive you to the airport, make sure the numbers are right, and ensure the cheques go through so you get paid. Always remember what others go through to make your dream possible; without them, you wouldn't be there. Let them know that you appreciate what they do for you. It will never cease to amaze you how far a little respect and compassion can actually take you.

As your act grows and you have more time to focus on the fun parts of tour, it's always good to keep things in perspective. We've all heard the wild stories of trashed dressing rooms and late-night VIP after parties where what happens on tour stays on tour. In a world of shining lights and dollar signs, it's easy to lose sight of where you came from. Nothing will crush a career quicker than a bad attitude, especially these days.

It may seem like fun to lose control for five hours and trash a greenroom, but the people involved with the show will remember it for five years, and you'll notice very different treatment the next time you're around (if you're lucky enough to return at all).

Even though you are the artist, you are a guest of that house and your actions should speak accordingly. When you get to the venue, don't make demands; instead, get to know the people you will be working with. Generally, you'll find that the people who book shows, manage venues, provide backline, and so on are all in this business for the same reason you are; they love the music and the lifestyle. So before you go and wear out your welcome, remember that the people involved have a lot of common loves and interests.



"From a business perspective, properly advancing a tour is the most important part of touring. Looking ahead, planning well in advance, and staying organized can save you hours of hassle in the long run."

BOBBY FRAZER
Tour Manager, Stereos

MANAGEMENT

Now that we've gone over some of the basic etiquette involved, let's get down to the brass tacks. There are many aspects to a tour of any size that must be looked at and evaluated before hitting the road. Take the time, have meetings, discuss outcomes, and weigh possibilities. Hindsight may be 20/20, but foresight isn't; therefore, it is important to plan, review, and confirm all of the details regarding your production, transportation, and hospitality. Changes will be made mid-tour and things will go wrong, so it's important to make back-up plans and put away money and resources that can be used in case of an emergency.

Accurate information is crucial to the planning of any event or tour. You have to know and confirm even the simplest details for every show. You have to know the name and address of the venue; the promoter's full name and



'TIL THE WHEELS FALL OFF



detailed contact info; the gear that will or will not be provided. When is load-in? Will parking be available onsite? How many techs or local hands will or will not be onsite? What time does your set start? How long is it? What's your financial guarantee? Is it a percentage of the door or a flat fee? Is there a backend? If so, is the backend a percentage or flat fee? What are the show's expenses that will determine the breakeven point? How many tickets must be sold to reach the breakeven point? What is the venue's capacity?

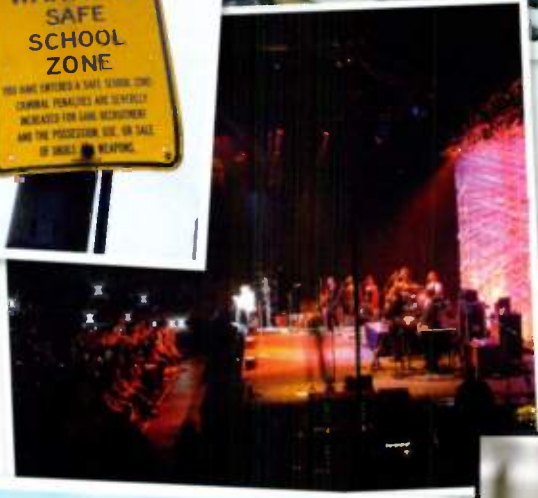
Furthermore, you have to look at the percentage of tickets sold versus the capacity of the room you're playing. If a promoter needs to sell 950 out of 1,000 tickets just to break even, then the chance for a true success are dependent on you selling out the show. Have you played that city before? What size of crowd do you expect?

Every show on a tour should be laid out on what's called an advance sheet. This is a document that has all of these and many more questions answered prior to the event. This is taken care of by the tour manager and it is up to them to discuss these details with the promoter long before the show ever happens. This is the crucial information that you will base your decisions on; therefore, it is important to check and confirm all of these details.

On the day of the show, the tour manager will use this information to output a document called a day sheet. This is a piece of paper that gets taped to your dressing room, tour bus, side stage, or anywhere that the manager feels he or she will have the best luck getting the band members and crew to read it. It is only meant to contain information that is relevant to that particular day's show and a few key points about the next. Some key notes to have on your day sheets are the venue and city's name, as well as the civic address. It should include all load-in and load-out, change-over, set, and transportation times. It should lay out plans for the accommodations as well as the contact info and civic address of the hotel. The beauty of day sheets is that everyone involved is going off of the same printed information that is in plain view and easily referenced. If it's in writing and clearly posted, there should be no excuses for ignorance.

PRODUCTION

Next we come to production. Whether all you're carrying is your own instruments, nothing but a suitcase, or 24 tractor trailers full of sound and light



"If I could offer one phrase that has gotten me through virtually any rough situation I've encountered on the road as a production manager, tour manager, or as a lighting director, it would certainly be: "Best day ever." It's important to remember what we do is awesome and a lot of fun. There is no need for anyone to yell or get worked up. Take a moment to laugh and carry on; don't let other people get you down. Attitude is contagious and affects the morale of the whole band and crew."

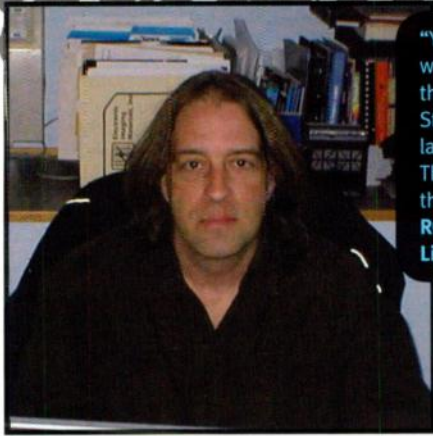
GEORGE GORTON
Production Manager & Lighting Director,
Johnny Reid



"One thing to look at is whether you want to travel in a van or a bus. What's the difference in cost? A bus will be more expensive, but not as much as you might think. You have to factor in the cost of hotel rooms with a van tour; however, on a bus tour, you can sleep on the bus. If comfort is important to you, you have to be at the venue for early load-ins, and have to drive all night, a bus is the way to go – especially if you're traveling with technicians who will be setting up your equipment. If you're an opening act and don't have to be at the venue until a late sound check, a van would likely be more cost effective."

SHAWN ORGAN
Lighting Director, Tour Tech East (Avril Lavigne,
Great Big Sea)





"You get a lot more accomplished with both your crew and the local crews by just being human. Once while on tour, I decided to prank the locals first thing in the morning. The very last case we loaded on the truck was our case of rigging burlap. The case was flipped off of its wheels, and I labelled it '1/2 Steel - HEAVY.' After six guys grabbed it and almost sent it through the roof of the trailer, they all started laughing. That was an ice breaker that made us 'OK' with them. The rest of the day was smooth as silk. They got a laugh and we gained their respect. Afterwards, many of them said: 'That was good! Last night, the travelling crew we had were a bunch of knobs, so we treated them accordingly.'"

ROY MOMBOURQUETTE

Lighting Department Manager, Tour Tech East (Haywire, Rita MacNeil)

equipment, you have to know what you have, what will be onsite, and how it will all be integrated together on show day to give you the best results with the least amount of headaches. Like everything else, these details must be laid out in advance and all parties must be on the same page.

During the booking process, all details about production should be forwarded to the promoter who will forward to the local production supplier. After that, management must speak to both the promoter and local production team to ensure that all requirements will be met, and confirm all details as to what your show and production will entail. If your show requires a certain piece of equipment that you need to have provided for you, then you must be clear on this issue. It is your responsibility to make sure that you inform the promoter and the local production company and make sure that they are actually able to provide what you need on-time and on-budget.

If you are carrying your own equipment, inspect it all before you leave and pack spares of equipment that is prone to damage. From drum sticks to tubes to lamps, there are things that will break and need replacing, so you must bring extras or have plans to find them so you're not stuck without something miles away from your normal resources. Last minute changes or forgotten items can prove to be very costly, so plan your production very carefully.

TRANSPORTATION

One of the biggest factors in any tour is your transportation. There are lots of points to keep in mind when planning yours. How many people are in the band? How many people on crew? How much gear are you bringing? Are you bringing sound and light production? How many drivers do you have? What sized vehicle and trailer will you need to safely and properly transport you, your crew, and equipment from city to city? What's the price of gas? How far can you travel before you have to fill up?

As with everything else, you have to consider all of these factors, weigh them against your options, and decide what is the safest, most reliable, and cost-effective mode of transit. There are also smaller issues to look after. Will transportation be provided by the promoter to take the artists and crew back and forth from the hotel to the venue or will the responsibility be placed on you? Will there be a runner on site?

Consider the vehicle that you've chosen. Is it properly maintained or is there a good chance that it will break down half-way through the tour? Do all of the drivers have the proper insurance coverage? Does your insurance cover theft? What is the deductible for your insurance? How quickly can a claim be processed? What will you do in the meantime to continue on? Your ability to make a tour happen is dependent on being able to get to the next city on time for load in. There are corners that you can cut while on the road; however, when it comes to people's safety, no expense should be spared.

Everyone loves hospitality. Whether it's free drinks, food, or hotels, a perk is a perk; however, it's easy to go overboard or abuse these perks. Hospitality privileges exist because you're on tour and away from all of the comforts and essentials of home. So there are certain things that need to be provided onsite to ensure that artists and crew are able to perform and live with the basic human necessities; however, you can't forget that it is also there as a means of relieving stress and improving morale so a few added bonuses here and there will not hurt as long as things are kept within reason.

Ensure that artists and crew are fed a hot, healthy meal, and that drinks and snacks are provided at all times. You can't wake your crew up at 8 a.m. and keep them working until 5 p.m. Breaks and meals are crucial to their performance and these details must not be overlooked. It is also important to keep everyone's food preferences in mind. If you have a vegetarian on tour with you, you can't serve just hamburgers for lunch. If someone on crew is allergic to gluten, it's of vast importance that the right people are made aware of this in advance so that the person involved is able to break and eat at the same time as everyone else. If meal buy-outs are provided instead of catering, then you have to allow time for artists and crew to leave site and make their own arrangements.

Hospitality lets you take a weathered band and crew and give them the time to relax and enjoy themselves, leaving them rested and ready to perform night after night.

When it's all said and done, touring can leave you with some of the fondest memories of your life, so if you're going to do it you might as well do it right and make sure that your time on the road is as pleasant and stress-free as possible. Take time to visit tourist attractions, friends, and family. Make new friends and see the world from a perspective that not everyone is fortunate enough to see. Most importantly, never forget who you are, where you came from, and why you are on the road. Plan your tour right and you will have a lifetime of stories to tell and friends and memories you will cherish forever.



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





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AXE, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE

CM's 2011 Guitar Special **BY MICHAEL RAINE**

Any guitar teacher can run through the basics of guitar theory and chord progression, but tone and space are a completely different matter; they are the elements that come with maturity and a subsequently developed ear. Experienced guitarists know what they like, even if putting that sonic signature into words can be trying. With an endless combination guitars, amps, pedals, and processes, no two guitarists will emerge from the studio with the exact same sound.

Recognizing how to accent your playing using time and space is something only experience can inform. Many players and listeners alike know when something is off, but only the educated ear can pinpoint the problem and understand how to mend it. When does the guitar part go from heightening the song to hindering it?

With these vague ideas in mind, *CM* spoke with some of Canada's most exciting guitarists, both emerging and established, about achieving the right tone, their live rigs, and the art of leaving space.

That Ever-Elusive Tone

"The best way I can equate it is, let's say that we have certain outfits that we wear," begins Dave Martone's odd explanation for how he discovers the right tone for a given song. "If you're going to a funeral, you're not going to wear a clown outfit. If you're going to the beach, you're not going to wear a parka. When I'm writing a song, I have an idea of what the sound is supposed to be for that song."

The idea that the song dictates the tone is repeated often. "I just know when I feel it. When you sort of relax and don't hold on tight anymore, then you know you've got your tone for that particular part of that song," says Kim Mitchell, who needs no introduction to Canadian rock fans.

In variations of the same wording, this idea is repeated by Deryck Whibley of Sum 41, Adam Hogan of Hey Rosetta!, and Dan Saitua of Crash Parallel. Nonetheless, they all express some specifics of their tone that they often fall back on. As with wine and pizza toppings, they all experiment to a degree, but inevitably come back to what they know and like.

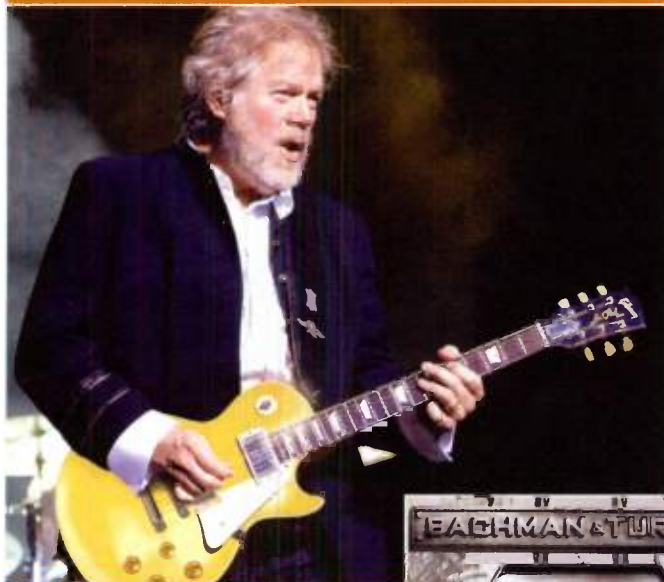
For instance, Whibley, who's currently supporting Sum 41's 2011 release *Screaming Bloody Murder*, enthusiastically explains how he gets his signature low-end sound from an old Marshall Super Bass head he customized as a guitar head. "It's super clean and really big and rich. A lot of times, with Marshall amps, it's hard to get a lot of low-end out of them – you always have to have the bass on full," he explains. "This one is a bass amp, so it's got lots of low-end. Then I just put on a preamp mod so it's really distorted."

Hogan says his sound is still evolving, going from the straight-ahead chords of early Hey Rosetta! records to the more atmospheric tones on their newest album, the critically adored *Seeds*. "I don't play a lot of bright and jangly Telecaster-type tones. I think a warmer tone is more accurate for most of our stuff." About *Seeds* specifically, he adds: "It has some of the crustiest, fuzziest guitar tones that have been on Hey Rosetta! records. Ultimately, the section and the song dictate what the sound needs to be."

A great discovery for Saitua while writing his guitar parts for the second Crash Parallel album, *Sunset in Reverse*, was the Line 6 POD Farm. The POD Farm tone plug-in allowed him to experiment with combinations of classic amps, stompboxes, preamps, and cabs. Saitua says this allowed him to find the tone he wanted before going into the studio. "I'd write down what I used on the demo, and when it came time to go into the studio, I made a list of a few choice pieces of gear that I thought we



Access CM's exclusive interview with Randy Bachman and Fred Turner at: www.canadianmusician.com/multimedia



Randy Bachman ROCKING WITH A LEGEND

Having recently reunited with Fred Turner for a new release, longtime Guess Who guitarist and Canadian rock icon Randy Bachman took some time to talk with CM about the instrument that's been so good to him over the decades.



CM: In terms of tone, were you able to incorporate anything new into the Bachman & Turner self-titled that fans may not have heard from you in the past?

RB: Yes, I went back to Jimmy Page's first Zeppelin album with a small Supro or Belltone Amp and tried the Ray Davies (The Kinks) Harmony Rocket and Stratocaster guitars for solos and the sounds were amazing – really stood out naturally in the tracks.

CM: What's your go-to live rig?

RB: Two Gibson Les Paul 59 Burs, Chambered Reissues, which sound amazing and weigh under 8 lbs., and a pair of Gibson Les Paul 57 Goldtops, also under 8 lbs. These are my go-to axes. My standard amp is a Fender DeVille with a pedal board with BOSS Blues OverDrive pedals and a BOSS Echo pedal that are amazing.

CM: What are some of the key pieces of gear that have contributed to your studio sound over the years?

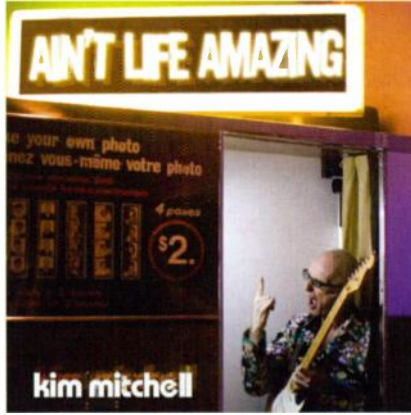
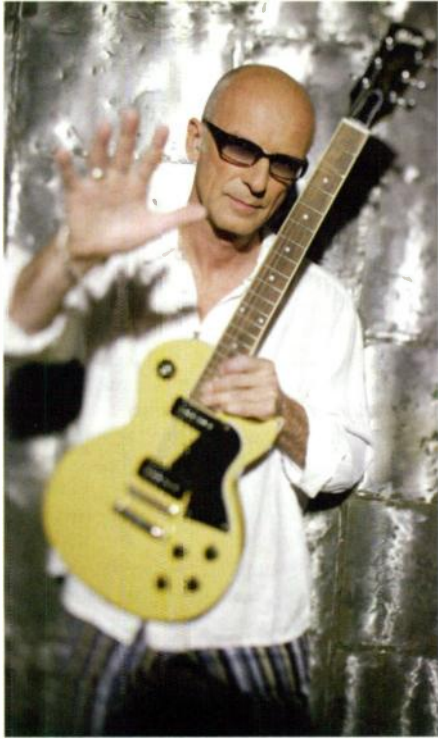
RB: Besides the Gibsons and Fenders, which each have an established tone, I use many eBay purchases of 1950s guitars that are sometimes tough to play but are tone monsters. Bachman & Turner feature a different one on every solo: Danelectro, Harmony, Silvertone, Airline. These are the "catalogue" guitars that every blues player and rocker started out on before they could afford to get their Gibsons and Fenders.

CM: How do you approach the composition of your solos?

RB: Usually take an attitude of "What would Clapton play, or Neil, or Jimi or Lenny Breau? I try to jam out a bunch of their riffs with breathing room and mix in a few of my own ideas. It must be melodic or singable, because it'll be more memorable. I try to play something that fits the song and its ambience.

CM: Over the years, you've had the chance to collaborate with a number of very talented artists on various projects. What is it that draws you to all of these various collaborations?

RB: No matter whom I play with, or their age or status as a player, they can all do something better than me and I compliment them on it and ask them to show me how to play it. Hopefully, I can return the favour if I play something they like. That's the greatest gift in the world. I've got licks from Les Paul, Lenny Breau, Jeff Beck, Chet Atkins, Duke Robillard, and many unknowns who knew something I didn't.



needed, and then we actually rented them to do the real thing." He says he generally goes for "crunchy [tones] and nothing too offensive. As the song, the identity, come to the surface, I'll start digging into more specific tones."

Martone thinks of tones as colours of paint, and each colour needs a medium. "Red will work where black won't. So that's why I have bunch of different guitars that will do different jobs," explains the Vancouver-based virtuoso. "I will have a

Les Paul to do a lot of the heavier sounds. That will be that colour. I have a certain amplifier, say a Johnson, which gives me a keyboard-type Allar. Holdsworth sound. So I have that colour to do that type of job."

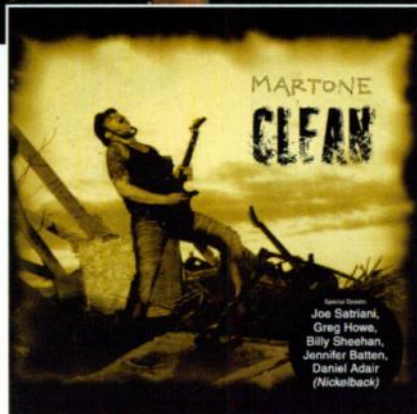
Another interesting tone (or colour) in Martone's music comes from his use of nylon strings. "It's not really happy; it's got these haunting sounds and tones and I really enjoy mixing that in." He directs listeners to his song "Big Church" off of *A Demon's Dream* as an example. "Check that and you'll see what I mean about the mixture of nylon with a really heavy guitar."

PHOTO: EDGAR BARSCHEGAN



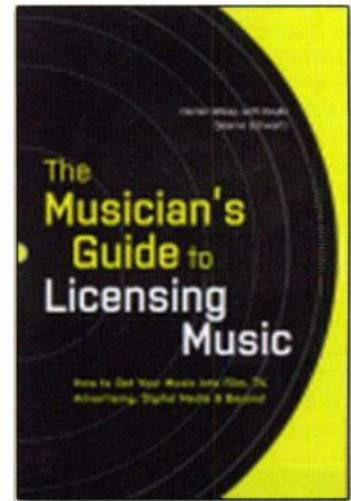
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GUITAR 2011

"The studio is one of those places where anything goes. You can plug in a guitar cable into a keyboard to see what happens, just to experiment," adds Martone. And as Saitua's use of the POD Farm illustrates, the studio affords guitarists options that are not available in a live setting. Finding the right tone onstage is a potentially arduous pursuit in itself.

The Live Rig

Mitchell, who generally keeps his live rig pretty basic, says: "When it comes to a distorted tone, people are always surprised to walk up onstage and see, on my Marshall amps, the treble is in the mid range and all that stuff is rolled back to three o'clock, just barely on." He adds that there is one setting absolutely vital to his show: "I have a certain setting for out front that I like the soundman to use for delay. Stereo delay with a bit of modulation; I'm very specific about that."

Mitchell says equipment changes have contributed to the evolution of his sound since his early days with Max Webster. "Back then, I used these little 22-watt Fenders and same old 12" Deluxe Reverbs; now I use closed-back 4x12s and just went to a Blankenship VariPlex, which is a boutique amp company out of Texas." He enthusiastically adds about the VariPlex amp: "This thing is just so focused. That's the word that comes to mind. It's really defined – the top-end and the mid-range. Fuck, is it awesome!"

The classic Vox AC30 amp is a favourite among most of the guitarists mentioned. Saitua, who uses a Fender Telecaster as his main guitar, says he gets his tone by combining the AC30 with a Fender Vibro-King. "I kind of chain them together when we play live. We usually have the two, then go stereo, so it's kind of different," he explains. "The Vox is nice and gritty, but it also

chimes nicely whereas the Vibro-King is known for its clean tones, so when you put a distortion pedal through it, it actually sounds pretty sick."

Saitua says he keeps things basic onstage so as not to distract the listener from the overall song. "I try to keep the chain pretty simple because I don't want to take away too much from the tone. It's pretty much just a distortion pedal, delay, and then right into the amp." But he adds that he sometimes uses a wah pedal "for some of those cock-rock moments when you just want to rip," because everybody needs to indulge on occasion.

Martone – who boasts the most extensive live rig – uses Vox VTH heads, employing a combination of a solid-state preamp and tube power amp. "They're stereo and I really enjoy stereo because I always say mono is a disease, I don't like it. I really enjoy the stereo idea." His main guitar onstage is usually one of three Parker guitars with electric and acoustic sides.

As well, Martone has a 90-pound pedal board that includes a Radial PZ-DI, DigiTech whammy pedal, and a Pigtronix Envelope Phaser. He loves the Pigtronix pedal in particular because "it gives it a bit of character – a little extra than just the pure tone. You're like, 'What's that?'"

On the road with Hey Rosetta!, Hogan has been enjoying the Celestion Blue speakers he installed in his old Vox AC30. For guitars, he uses a Gibson ES-335 and Fender Jazzmaster run through a Boss DD-3 delay, Diamond compressor, and Diamond tremolo. As well, he has a Fulltone Octafuzz pedal that he purchased in order to replicate some of the sounds on *Seeds*.

Hogan says he always kept things pretty simple, but has recently started experimenting. "Over the last three or four months, I've become a total gear nerd. I'm online scanning forums and searching for pedals," he laughs. "I've realized the way my guitar playing is going, I want all kinds of stuff at my feet, but don't want to overdo it."

Overdoing it, after all, is something that each of these guitarists expresses distaste for. Whether a shredder like Martone or

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**Whibley Explains The Process
Of Creating His Signature Axe**

"I've been endorsed by Fender for a long time. I'd custom-made my own guitar. I put the Xs on it with red tape and changed the pickup configuration. They initially asked me if I wanted my own signature model and I said 'no.' Two years later, I thought, 'Why the hell didn't I say yes?' Luckily, they asked me again.

I sent them mine and they just copied it - pretty much exactly. They had to make it a little different to make it more affordable. Basically, the whole idea is to help young kids get into music. It's supposed to be your first guitar - something cheaper for beginners.

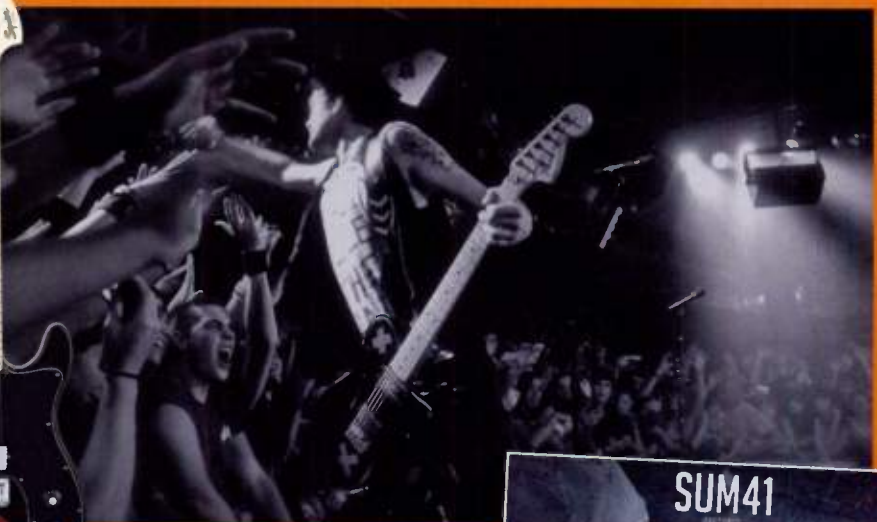


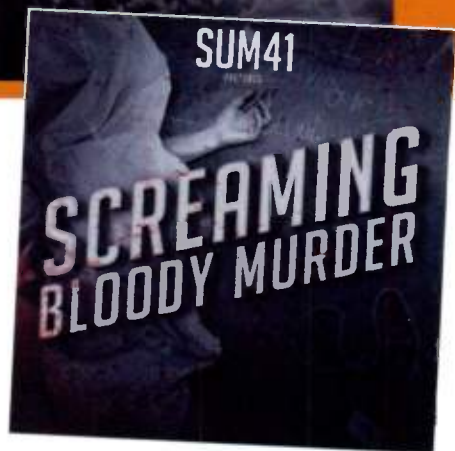
PHOTO: JIMMY WHIBLEY

atmospheric player like Hogan, they all say the song should guide the player and not the other way around.

With Experience Comes Restraint

"At first, you're kind of just ripping away and picking up women. Now, I try and say something," says Mitchell of his maturing approach to playing. "I like playing stuff that has more meaning. There's holes and spaces, and music is not about filling every hole."

Even a notorious shredder like Martone agrees with Mitchell's sentiment. "It's funny; I was listening to one of my old albums from 1995, and there were parts in there where I was wondering: 'Why did I throw so many notes in that spot?'," he recalls. "It seems I came out



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Robbie Robertson

INSIGHT FROM AN ICON

Few musicians have reached such historic heights that they could never write another note and still have their names remembered for decades, their songs played and passed on to the next generation. Robbie Robertson is one of those musicians.

He was there, backing-up Dylan on his legendary first electric tour. He's the songwriter behind much of *Music From Big Pink*, The Band's iconic debut that brought rock and roll back to its roots after the bloated excesses of the psychedelic era. He was centre stage as Martin Scorsese turned The Band's 1978 final show into the greatest concert film of all time. Robertson simply has nothing left to prove, yet he's back with *How To Become Clairvoyant*, his first album in 12 years.

"This is probably the most guitar-oriented record I've ever made," says the man ranked 78th on *Rolling Stone's* "100 Greatest Guitarists Of All Time" list. Among the notable musicians Robertson brought onboard for *HTBC* are his old friend Eric Clapton (4th on the list), Tom Morello (26th), and Robert Randolph (97th).

"I started it with Eric and it just grew out of the ground that way," Robertson explains. "He has an extraordinary ability, he can completely get in your zone and go there. We have a long friendship and one of the first things he admired about what I did with that instrument was subtlety – trying to do as much with one note as others did with 20."

"I was always a little bored with just a singer and guitar myself. I really like what happens when musicians improvise together."

- Robbie Robertson



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of the gate with all guns blazing and as each progressive album goes farther and farther along, I like to save that element for maybe a certain part in a song and not overuse it as much as I did before."

Martone says he now puts more focus into strong melodies and hooks within a song rather than blowing through everything he knows in a single solo. But he adds, like a stubborn teenager, new guitarists have to learn that on their own. "You can't tell a young kid what to do; they have to figure it out themselves."

Likewise, you won't hear Whibley tearing it up on any Sum 41 records because, he says, he's always preferred the under-



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Robertson says he and Clapton got into a groove that wouldn't allow for any six-stringed acrobatics. "That would be corny in this context," he continues. "What we're doing is we're telling a story here, and we're telling it in the song and the lyrics."

The subtle back-and-forth guitar tracks he laid down with Clapton came naturally because of their shared history and chemistry; however, it was slightly more difficult getting Randolph, a pedal steel master, in sync with album's guitar style. "It took a little bit of time to reel him in and get him off the trapeze just because he has amazing abilities and he loves to use them,"

Robertson explains. "To get him to a place where the discretion and the subtleties were just as important and the emotion, really, is what we're trying to achieve here."

As for Morello, Robertson says he was quick learner. "Tom's been around and he has a pretty broad horizon of musicality. All I had to do was just kind of talk to him," Robertson recalls. "All he needed to do was hear what I was doing and I said, 'I'm interested in a complete counterpoint to what I'm doing.'"

Robertson, despite being considered one of the greatest guitarists ever, says he brought Morello and Randolph into the studio to expand his own musical horizons. "I can stand right in front of them and watch what they do and I have no idea how they do it. That intrigues me; I love the mystery in the music."

Collaborations are nothing new to the man who got his start playing behind Ronnie Hawkins and Bob Dylan. The Band's historic final concert, documented in *The Last Waltz*, was the ultimate collaboration. "I don't come from the folk music background like some of my friends do where it's just a singer and guitar. I was always a little bit bored with just a singer and a guitar myself. I really like what happens when musicians improvise together," Robertson says of his collaborative approach.

The excitement in the search for new musical territories is what keeps Robertson going. From the youth on the Six Nations reserve to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Robertson has been in the game for 40-plus years and still isn't satisfied. "You're always searching and in that journey, you can never find what you're looking for," he says. "That journey is an ongoing thing and I don't think I've ever met a musician that has said, 'I have played everything that I want to play,' because it's infinite."



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stated to the flashy. "My favourite guitar players aren't necessarily guys that can play really fast and shred," he explains, citing AC/DC's Young brothers as examples. "I like people who, when they hit one chord, just sound fucking great."

Hogan echoes Whibley's opinion. "I'm into players who like to leave space and I'm into guys who aren't flashy," he says, heaping praise on Wilco's Nels Cline. "I just try to boost the song and give it life, whether it calls for a solo or something subtle."



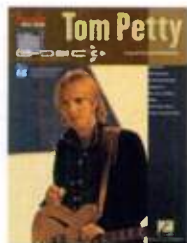
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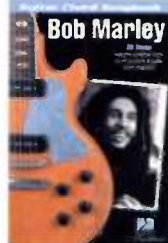
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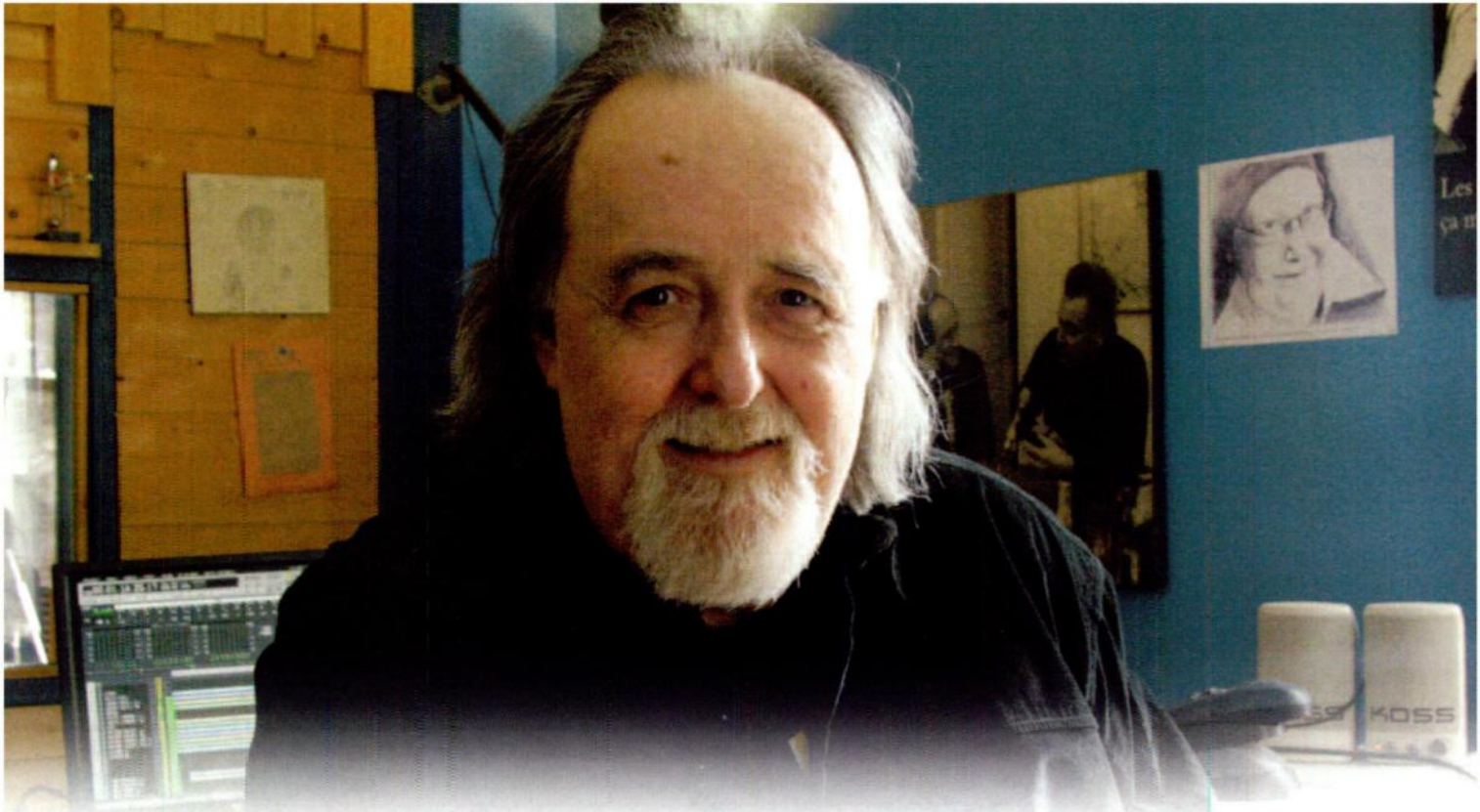
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Saitua, prior to forming Crash Parallel, took a three-year break from guitar and went into producing because he was so uninspired by the bloated playing he heard on the radio. "It got played-out to me and there was a shift in music where I was kind of annoyed; where there was music that had solos just for the sake of solos."

Whether playing in the studio or onstage, searching for tone or knowing when to leave space, no guitarist is ever done perfecting his or her craft. Every song and every riff adds experience that matures the ear and improves your playing. "You have to hear what you want and know what sounds good and what sounds bad," says Hogan. "You can never be really satisfied. There's always an improvement you could make." ■

Mike Raine is a freelance writer living in Oakville, ON.



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

Jean Custeau — TAXI Member

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

A Friend Told Me About TAXI...

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

My First Deal Opened More Doors!

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

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

The Placements Keep Rolling In

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



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My Biggest Check So Far...

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

Don't Wait 45 Years to Become an Overnight Success

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

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



By David Francey

The Gift of Time:

Appreciating & Connecting With Your Audience



In recent years, I've noticed that new artists excel at connecting with their audience through Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and other social media networks. While important, I don't think this form of connection should ever replace talking to your fans face-to-face. Talking in person after a show can make the difference between making a fan and making a fan for life. That short talk can resonate for years, creating friendships, loyalty, support, and most importantly, inspiration for new songs.

Performing can be draining, even when things are running smoothly in our personal lives. There may be an unholy drive waiting for us the next morning, with the weather getting worse, but those people waiting to talk to you nearly all have something to say about how your work affected their lives. It is encouraging to know that what you write does not exist in a vacuum, and you can gain as much hearing this as the person does imparting it.

In essence, I am a story collector. I chronicle my times as writers have always done. By taking the time to talk to someone, you may well end up in a friendship that, down the road, leads to a song. My song "Ashtabula" is a case in point. The "Keli" mentioned in the lyrics was initially a fan, but became a good friend providing a safe house on the road. She learned of my love of industrial landscapes and took me to see the harbor in Ashtabula, OH. I would never have gone of my own volition; I would have shot past on the Interstate as I had done so many times before. Thanks to that initial chat with Keli, though, I wrote one of the more popular songs in my body of work. There is a direct line between our initial conversation, ensuing friendship, and the song.

On another occasion, we were playing at the Ship Inn in St. John's, NL. After sound check, we had fish and chips and I noticed two guys sitting at a stage-side table. The show didn't start for hours. It was a great night and, as always, there were plenty of people to talk to after the show. Eventually, the bar emptied until there were only two fans left – the same

two guys I'd seen earlier. It turned out they'd driven eight hours from Corner Brook on the west coast of the province to catch the show. We hit it off like a house on fire and struck up a friendship on the spot. We later played an excellent gig in Corner Brook put on by these same two men. We met their partners and neighbours and attended a kitchen party afterwards where I experienced the joy of having my own songs sung back to me, with new life breathed into them. The company was grand.

Much grew out of a simple conversation in both instances. This connection doesn't happen every time, but it will sometimes if you are receptive. The stories, great and small, are the stuff of songs.

In all honesty, I think I enjoy meeting the audience at least as much as performing the show. Nothing gives me more pleasure than hearing how a song impacted someone's life for the better, or encapsulated an emotion they would like to convey at just the right time. It is difficult to feel down when people pass on how much the words you happened to write mean to them. To take part in moments of great joy or great sadness is a special place to occupy. Some stories are heartbreaking no doubt, but to know a song helped someone through a difficult time in life is special, no less so than being represented by another song in a moment of triumph. I think I would miss out on a great deal of joy to be derived from a gig were I not to engage the audience.

Lastly, as an audience member myself, I am always happy to say hello and thanks for the show. On occasion, that greeting is met with a certain aloofness or disinterest that is palpable, forever changing my perception of the performer. It is impossible to feel "on" every night, but no matter the situation in your own hectic world (screwed up flights, long drives ahead, etc.), speaking to the audience helps reinforce the privileged position we have been given as artists and the personal bond that our music can instill. It seems only fair to offer up a bit of time in return.



Greg Dawson is a Producer and the Owner of BWC Studios in Brampton, ON. He has worked with artists including Moneen, The End, Black Lungs, The Reason, Arkells, The Junction, and countless indie bands from all genres. He can be reached at: bwstudios@sympatico.ca.

Photo: Jess Baumung

By Greg Dawson

Killer Kick & Snare Sounds

For this column, I'm going to focus on the kick drum and snare drum and how you can obtain crushing drum tones for various rock styles through a balance of live miking and triggering techniques. My goal is always to get as much sound from the original source as possible. This keeps my drums sounding organic and roomy. Here are some key ingredients for killer kick and snare sounds:

Good Equipment

To get started, use the best equipment available for what you're trying to accomplish. A quality drum kit, or one which is appropriate to the task at hand, is key to getting the right vibe for the back bone of your recording.

Fresh Skins

New skins will almost always have a huge impact on the quality of the source tone. Don't go into the studio and tell your producer "I've only had these skins on for 3 months!" That's not cool and it puts the quality of your recording in jeopardy right from the get go. Remember, your recording is forever. Don't be cheap!

Triggers

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

Smash Your Drums!

Now this one is critical, kids. There is nothing I like better than a hard hitter in the studio. If you want punchy, in-your-face kicks and snares, you have to punish those drums. I've had the pleasure of recording and performing with Jordan Hastings (Alexisonfire, Hunter)

– now here's a guy who kills his drums. Watch out! Drummers like him make my job easy!



Miking Techniques

I have a few different mics and techniques that I like to use depending on the situation. The great thing about creating your own samples is experimenting with different techniques and multiple mics. You don't have to worry about bleed from the rest of the kit. I treat every sample a little differently depending on the band.

For the kick drum, I usually start with an AKG D112 (for rock/hard rock) or an Audix D6 (for metal/punk) sitting about 1-2" into the hole of the front skin. I'm also a fan of the Yamaha Sub Kick, which I place to one side of the kick about 4-6" directly in front of the kick drum. Try adding a pencil condenser 2 ft. away from the front skin and EQ the hell out of it to bring out more attack in the kick. I usually mix my close mic (D112 or D6) very dominantly and use the sub kick and condenser just to

enhance the beef and attack.

For the snare, the tried, tested, and true Shure SM57 is my go to mic of choice – one on top about 1-2" from the skin and one on the bottom, mirror imaging the top mic with the phase reversed. Try a room mic for fun and see if you like it low in the mix just to open up the sound. Sometimes, I'll throw a Royer 121 ribbon mic on the snare and get super-fat results. I would never track a snare with a ribbon mic. When tracking the full kit, the mic choice and placement is essentially the same minus the extra room mic. Tracking a full kit is a different animal because overheads and room mics become a big part of your kick and snare sound (but we can get into that another time).

Mixing Stage

Typically, if I'm going to use any triggers in the mix, it's going to be a blend. The mix ratio of live source hits and trigger hits varies depending on the type of sound I'm trying to achieve. For rock/hard rock recordings, I might use a 20 per cent trigger and 80 per cent live blend to achieve an organic or "real" vibe. For metal/punk recordings, a 50/50 blend could be used to increase the aggressiveness of the drum sound. When recording a few intense death metal projects, I have used a blend of 80 per cent trigger and 20 per cent live to achieve a level of punishment that was needed in the mix.

That being said, I have done tons of recordings without any trigger at all. Try it out, trust your ears, and find what sounds good to you. Try to capture and use as much live source as you can. This is the best way to capture the performance and character of any musician that comes through your studio. Triggers are a great tool to achieve a desired effect, but beware of relying on them too much – you can only polish a turd so much.



By Alastair Connor

A Beginner's Guide To The World Of Live Production

Part 2

As discussed, there are certain concepts that one must not just understand, but master before embarking upon the wonderful journey that is the live production industry. The significance of work ethic, humility, and respect are very important. These "stepping stones" are necessary, but while they may guide you towards the second leg of your travels to success in this industry, they will not do so solely.

Education will reveal itself in many forms not always obvious to the untrained eye. Many people take for granted the wisdom and advice given by experienced people in the industry and, in some cases, even disregard these lessons, but listen closely my friends, and absorb as much as you can. In many situations, those who pay attention to and respect the information given to them by a "veteran" will be rewarded in more ways than one.

First of all, if someone of a fine upstanding reputation in the industry decides to offer you advice, it means that they feel that you are capable enough to be in the industry and to possibly excel within it. By accepting and utilizing this information, it will solidify not only a proven understanding but also a tentative relationship with someone that can help you climb the ranks of this cutthroat industry. It cannot be expressed just how crucial these relationships are with respect to an individual's growth. This is by no means an invitation to smother, pester, or buddy up to your superiors as this approach will be viewed as transparent and insincere. The greatest compliment you can give is to apply the lessons given and to deservedly encourage more.

That being said, many "new" people subscribe to the deluded belief that they know everything about their area of expertise (sound, lighting, video,

etc.), but as stated before, this industry is a living and breathing organism that grows exponentially and the only way to survive within its existence is to grow as well. There are two parts to this explanation and I encourage you to consider both:

Evolution

Technology is a force that can not be stopped and, no matter how hard you try to ignore it or to fend it off, will champion the live production industry into many a decade. The best part about these leaps and bounds is that the information supply is limitless and available to anyone willing to learn. It is very important that a person take advantage of this, because the people that you are trying to impress, the experts and the bosses, they know. The most successful people in this industry don't shut down and watch television after a gig; they research gear and methods that they have never seen before, and most importantly, work very hard to stay one step ahead of everyone else.

Expansion

The second and possibly the most controversial part of this point is hard to swallow by some but is believed to be the saving grace for many in the world of live production, and that is to learn as much as you can about every aspect of the industry. That means that if you are an audio person, take time to learn lighting; take time to learn video; take time to learn all the trades that are imperative to a successful show. Not only will you develop a new found respect for the people that you work with but you will also find that you begin to become an indispensable commodity – a person that people turn to when staffing a gig.

The live production industry is not so much of a "dark side" that people

may think it to be, but more of a misunderstood entity that demands and deserves respect. Yes, it has the ability to (and, if given the chance, will) swallow up all those who take it for granted, but it has also delivered to us some forward-thinking individuals, invaluable ideas, and superb performances. You will not find a more enjoyable work environment than that of the live production industry, but only if you are willing to accept her imperfections and tell her that she is beautiful – and mean it.



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By: Donna Habsha

Show Cancelled!

A Performing Artist's Immigration Nightmare

Your four-piece rock band has been performing at local venues and touring regionally for the last two years. Invitations to play in the US start coming in after your debut CD receives much acclaim. Elated by how charmed your local success has been, you decide it is time to start planning your first international tour. A series of US concerts is booked and local media is contacted for promotion and potential interviews.

You now turn your thoughts to the band's US visa applications. Based on your research, you understand that regardless of your length of stay in the US, a visa is required and applications could take a few weeks to several months to process. Twelve weeks later, you receive only three out of the four visas applied for. You discover your vocalist has a conviction for possession of marijuana and, consequently, her visa application has been refused. The tour can not go forward without her, so you begin to research the options to overcome this unforeseen obstacle.

You learn a US waiver is required and that these applications require an extensive amount of supporting documentation, taking four to nine months to process. You conclude it is unrealistic for your vocalist to obtain a waiver in time for the tour and you have no choice but to cancel the scheduled shows. You are devastated by the fact that you have burned bridges with the venues that took a chance on you and wished you had had more information and expert guidance on the immigration implications of planning a US tour.

Post 9/11, musicians cancelling shows due to "visa issues" has occurred with increased frequency even though non-immigrant entertainment visas – the O and P visa classes – have remained fundamentally the same. Issues may arise for entertainers due to criminal convictions, mistaken identity, or lengthy processing times. In any one of these scenarios, artists stand to lose a great deal because, in order to begin the US visa application process, you would have already had to schedule the show dates and started to sell tickets. Given

what is at stake, before booking a US tour, it is worthwhile to seek the advice of a professional who can guide you on the appropriate visa application given your unique needs and goals as well as how to overcome any challenges which could potentially arise.

In general terms, the O-1 visa is for individuals with "extraordinary ability in the arts" who have risen to the top of their field in the arts or motion picture and television production. Applicants must meet a number of very specific criteria in order to demonstrate their ability and reputation. O-1 visas are generally issued for the duration of the event or activity, with a maximum length of three years, and extensions granted in one-year increments.

P-1 visas are for entertainment groups (two or more performers) who are internationally-recognized and who seek entry to the US to perform at a specific event. Specific criteria concerning the length of time the group has been performing together, international achievements, and commercial success must be established. P-1 visas are generally issued for the duration needed to complete the event or performance and are not to exceed one year. Extensions may be granted for one year at a time in order to continue the activity for which one was originally admitted.

With all of these options, the challenge comes in interpreting the various visa categories and convincingly arguing their application in your particular case. There is often more than one way for performing artists to enter the US, so the key is to know which one is most likely to be successful. While music venues in the US want to keep their doors open to international acts, they have no control over whether artists have their immigration needs in place in a timely manner. This leads to stress and reluctance on the part of venues to book musicians without a track record of recent and successful entry. Hiring specialists to handle the complexities of entry into the US is a worthwhile investment benefiting artists, venues, promoters, and the fans.

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Fender Pawn Shop Series Guitars

Fender has released its new Pawn Shop Series guitars. Drawing inspiration from the fringe Fender creations of the mid-'60s to mid-'70s era, the Pawn Shop series is comprised of the Fender '51, Fender '72, and Mustang Special.

The '52 combines a Stratocaster body with a C-shaped Telecaster neck and features a single-coil Texas Special neck pickup, Fender Enforcer humbucking bridge pickup, and an early-'50s Precision Bass-style dual-knob chrome control plate. Other features include a maple fretboard with 9.5" radius and medium jumbo frets, master volume control with push-pull coil split function to get single-coil tone from the humbucking bridge pickup, three-position rotary pickup selector knob, '70s-style hard-tail Stratocaster bridge, and vintage-style tuners and strap buttons.

The '72 is designed around a semi-hollow Stratocaster body with an f-hole and features a U-shaped Telecaster neck, rosewood fretboard with 9.5" radius and 6105 frets, Fender Wide Range humbucking neck pickup, Fender Enforcer humbucking bridge pickup, early-'50s Precision Bass-style dual-knob chrome control plate with master volume and pickup blend controls, '70s-style hard-tail Stratocaster bridge, '70s-style Fender "F" tuners, mint green pickguard, bullet truss rod, and a three-bolt neck attachment.

The Mustang Special features a modified offset Mustang body, '60s-era C shaped 24" short-scale maple neck, rosewood fretboard with 9.5" radius and medium jumbo frets, dual Fender Enforcer humbucking pickups with '70s-style covers, pickup toggle switch, three-way coil selector slide switch for each humbucking pickup (enabling 18 different tonal options), mint green pickguard, '70s-style hard-tail Stratocaster bridge, and vintage-style tuners and strap buttons.

All three guitars include a deluxe gig bag.

For more information, contact Fender Musical Instruments Corp.: 480-596-9690, www.fender.com.



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IK Multimedia iRig Mic

IK Multimedia has announced that iRig Mic, a condenser microphone for the iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad, is now shipping.

The iRig Mic features a unidirectional condenser-electret microphone capsule that is effective in both close and distant miking conditions. It can be mounted on a mic stand and features a three-level gain switch. The iRig Mic also comes with a suite of IK's apps: VocaLive Free, iRig Recorder, and AmpliTube Free.

iRig Mic can be used with any iOS app that uses the microphone input of the iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad for its audio input. This includes music apps for audio recording and processing as well as sing-along apps.

For more information, contact IK Multimedia: 954-846-3101, FAX 418-266-9990, sales.us@ikmultimedia.com, www.ikmultimedia.com.

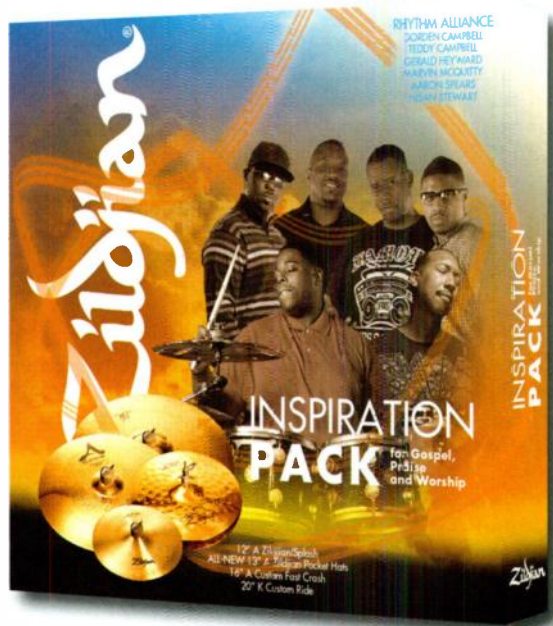


Levy's Bullet Guitar Straps

Levy's Leathers has introduced its line of Bullet guitar straps. These straps are made of 2" cotton webbing with 1 1/2" solid metal fake bullets, suede ends, and tri-glide adjustment.

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Zildjian Inspiration Cymbal Pack

The Avedis Zildjian Company has released its Inspiration Pack, designed especially for the gospel and worship markets. Developed in conjunction with members of the Rhythm Alliance, the Inspiration Pack features a range of bright, dark, quick, and fast cymbals.

The centerpiece of the pack is the new A Zildjian Pocket HiHats. These 13" hats have a combination of a thin top and heavy bottom that are unlathed and enhanced with large hammer marks. Also included in the pack are the 12" A Zildjian Splash, the 6" A Custom Fast Crash, and the medium heavy 20" K Custom Ride.

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

Rotosound Digital Clip-On Tuner

Rotosound has launched its new Digital Clip-On Tuner. This tuner has been designed for use with a range of stringed instruments including the guitar, bass, ukulele, violin, and viola.

This tuner clamps on the instrument, where it can pick up the string's vibration and the display screen shows how close the string is to being in tune. Rotosound's Clip-On tuner can tune in the keys of C, F, B, and E and has a detection accuracy of ± 0.5 per cent.

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



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Qwik Tune Snark Clip-On Chromatic Guitar Tuner

■ Qwik Tune has released its Snark Clip-On Chromatic Guitar Tuner. Available in black, the Snark features a full colour, 360-degree rotational display, tap tempo metronome, "stay put" clip, capo compensating flat tuning, and pitch calibration of 415-466Hz.

For more information, contact D'Addario Canada: 905-889-0116, FAX 905-889-8998, info@daddariocanada.com, www.daddariocanada.com.



Porter & Davies BC2 Silent Bass Drum Monitoring System

■ Porter & Davies is announcing its silent bass drum monitoring system, the BC2. The BC2 allows the drummer to experience the bass using bone conduction to deliver powerful, precise, and nuanced reproduction without sound.

Developed to offer the drummer a portable, small, light, and easy to use monitoring system, the BC2 features a voltage selector switch for international use, phantom power to accommodate both dynamic and condenser microphones, line XLR socket, which accepts both balanced and unbalanced input, and NL4 sockets and connector leads.

For more information, contact Porter & Davies: info@porteranddavies.co.uk, www.porteranddavies.co.uk.



CruzTOOLS GrooveTech Jack & Pot Wrench

■ CruzTOOLS has announced the GrooveTech Jack and Pot Wrench for guitar, bass, effects, amplifiers, professional audio equipment, and other music gear.

CruzTOOLS developed the GrooveTech Jack and Pot Wrench with three socket sizes: 1/2", 7/16", and 12 mm in a compact "T" arrangement. Sockets have thin walls for ease of access into jack plates. All three sockets are deep enough for pot shafts, with extra depth provided on the 1/2" socket.

The GrooveTech Jack and Pot Wrench is forged to precision tolerances and socket ends are smooth for use on delicate surfaces. Additional features include laser imprinting of sizes for identification and the tool comes finished in a polished-chrome. Measuring slightly over four inches, the GrooveTech wrench can fit into instrument cases and gig bags.

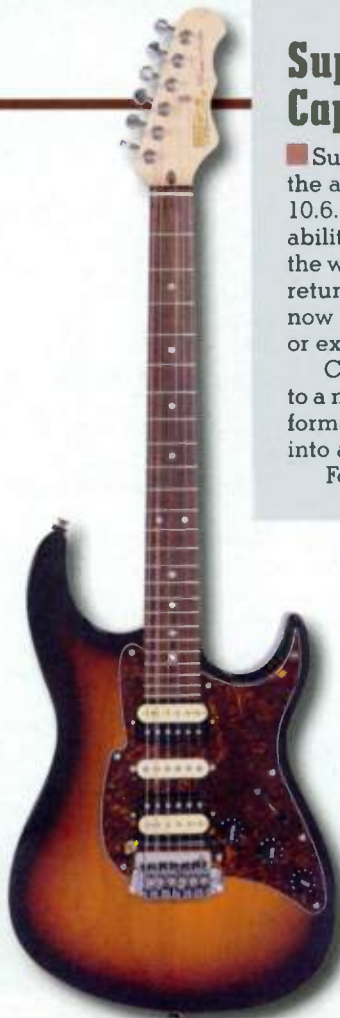
For more information, contact CruzTOOLS: 209-536-0491, FAX 209-536-0463, customerservice@cruztools.com, www.cruztools.com.

SuperMegaUltraGroovy Capo 2.1 App

■ SuperMegaUltraGroovy has announced the availability of Capo 2.1 for Mac OS X 10.6. In this release, Capo has gained the ability to export MIDI transcription data, the waveform representation of audio has returned, and playback commands can now be controlled via learned keystrokes or external MIDI hardware.

Capo allows users to transcribe music to a notational representation using tablature. In 2.1, users can export data out of Capo in MIDI format and use it to incorporate transcribed solos into MIDI sequencers, or import the data into applications that facilitate advanced scoring work.

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



Fret-King Super-Matic Self-Tuning Guitar

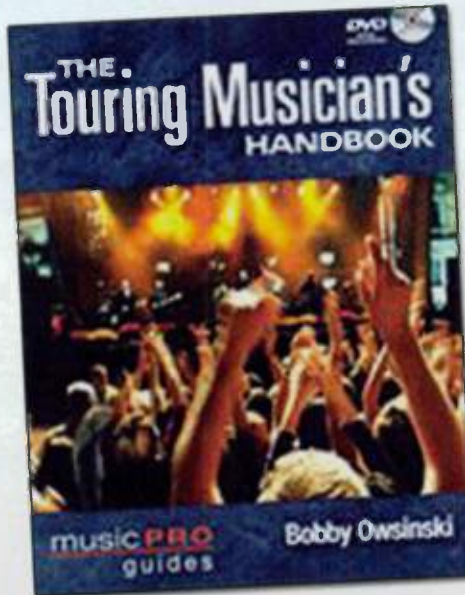
■ Fret-King by Trev Wilkinson has introduced its Super-Matic self-tuning guitar. Featuring a Wilkinson ATD HT440 self-tuning hard tail guitar bridge, the Super-Matic features six preset tunings, allowing the player to move from standard tuning to open E, open G, DADGAD, and more in just a few seconds.

Additionally, the guitar boasts a 25 1/5" scale length with a hard rock maple neck loaded with 24 frets. The Super-Matic features a hum-single-hum pickup configuration with offset pole piece Zebra humbuckers and a Wilkinson WHSM vintage-voiced single coil in the middle. Wilkinson's Vari-coil control allows either of the humbuckers to be progressively wound down to single-coil to add versatility.

Other features include a matched American alder body, maple shallow C neck, Indian rosewood fingerboard, and a rectangular hard-shell case.

For more information, contact MIDC Ltd.: 866-607-7030, FAX 905-258-0140, www.midc.ca.

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ROLAND GR-55 GUITAR SYNTHESIZER

■ Roland has released its GR-55 Guitar Synthesizer. Combining PCM synthesis with digital instrument modeling from the VG-99 V-Guitar System, the GR-55 features the company's latest advances in guitar synthesis.

Driven by Roland's proprietary digital processing technology, the GR-55 features two independent synthesizer sound engines, each loaded with over 900 of Roland's sounds, including pianos, organs, strings, vintage and modern synths, percussion, and many more. A third sound engine is driven by Composite Object Sound Modeling (COSM). With COSM, the GR-55 can emulate electric and acoustic guitars, basses, and other instruments, as well as guitar and bass amplifiers.

The GR-55 features a USB song player that lets users trigger WAV files on a USB flash drive using the onboard pedals. The GR-55 also functions as an audio and MIDI interface for computers, connecting through a rear-panel USB 2.0 port. Users can also integrate with DAW software, recording GR-55 sounds as audio in the DAW and using the GR-55's pitch-to-MIDI capabilities to trigger MIDI sounds such as virtual synths and samplers.

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

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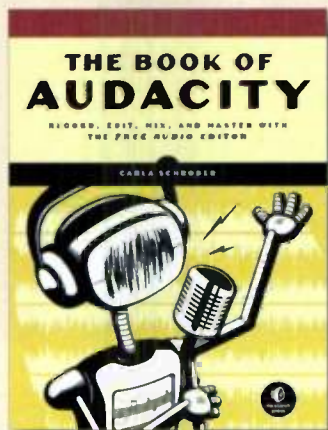


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No Starch Press *The Book of Audacity*

■ No Starch Press has begun shipping *The Book of Audacity*, a guide that shows how to complete projects with Audacity, the cross-platform, open source audio editor and recorder.

The book reveals such things as how to digitize vinyl record collections, create podcasts, record live performances, create super-high fidelity recordings, mix and master multi-track recordings, and create ringtones, special effects, and more. It also shows how to package work for online distribution, whether that means distributing a podcast on iTunes or selling an album on CD Baby.

For more information, contact No Starch Press: 800-420-7240, FAX 415-863-9950, info@nostarch.com, www.nostarch.com.

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Ayotte Drumsticks

■ Ayotte Drums has announced the launch of its line of drumsticks. The line of sticks is made of wood harvested by Ayotte near the company's headquarters in Bedford, QC. Once cut, each stick is rolled and tapped by hand.

The line is comprised of 13 models, including the maple Londoner model and the hickory New Yorker. Ayotte also offers a customized logo design on any model of stick when 12 or more pairs are ordered.

For more information, contact Ayotte Drums Inc.: 450-248-1110, sales@ayottedrums.com, www.ayottedrums.com.

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TOCA CURVED DIDGERIDOO

■ Toca Percussion has released its Curved Didgeridoo. The Toca Curved Didgeridoo offers an authentic original sound in an instrument that respects traditional design while featuring the benefits of modern manufacturing techniques.

These didgeridoos start with synthetic shells formed with a gently S-curved design that replicates the look and feel of traditional organic didgeridoos. The shells are then hand-painted with original Tribal Sun and Gecko designs that evoke images of the Australian Outback.

Tuned to the key of D, the didges offer deep, sonorous tonality, authentic and colourful appearance, and durable construction.

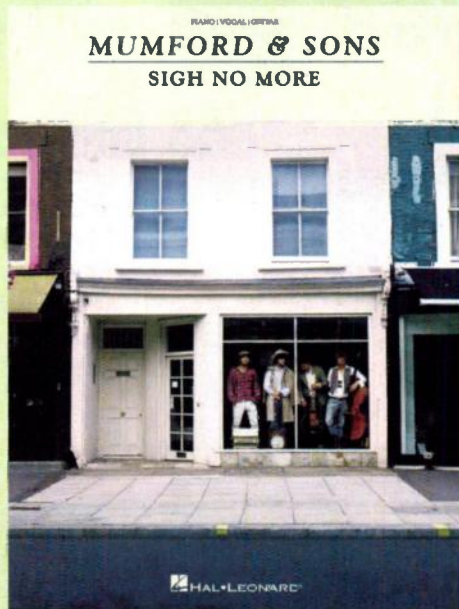
For more information, contact Toca Percussion: 877-526-2668, FAX 877-526-2632, info@tocapercussion.com, tocapercussion.com.

Hal Leonard Mumford & Sons – Sigh No More Songbook

■ Hal Leonard Corp. has released the *Mumford & Sons – Sigh No More* piano/vocal/guitar songbook. This songbook offers all 12 songs off the first CD from the Grammy-nominated English indie folk/rockers.

The included songs are: "After the Storm"; "Awake My Soul"; "The Cave"; "Dust Bowl Dance"; "I Gave You All"; "Little Lion Man"; "Roll Away Your Stone"; "Sigh No More"; "Thistle and Weeds"; "Timshel"; "White Blank Page"; and "Winter Winds."

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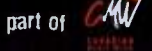


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by Ben Conoley



Cordcalling

What: Alternative Rock
Where: London, ON
Visit: www.cordcalling.com

On paper, London, ON's Cordcalling have a lot in common with The White Stripes. The male/female guitar/drum duo plays loud, blues-influenced rock; however, the similarities largely end there.

Cordcalling's somewhat experimental approach allows them to work a lot of sound into tight two-piece compositions. The husband and wife duo of Denise and Brian Conway take their songs in any number of directions. "What I Have" boasts a country-blues feel while "When I Scream" contains a lot more garage and punk.

The pair recently recorded their debut full-length, *Obsessed By The Light*, which followed a well-received three-song EP. While Cordcalling have a lot of experience playing to London's healthy music scene, they're hoping the strength of their new songs will give them the opportunity to tour outside of their hometown, exposing them to new audiences. The band's willingness to incorporate a wide-range of influences into their sound is a bit of a risky endeavour. And while the band occasionally misses the mark, there is enough done right to demonstrate that the young band is developing what promises to be an exciting approach to music.



I.B. Kredible

What: Hip-hop
Where: Brampton North, ON
Visit: www.promofm.com/ibkredible

Ibukun Akingbola was born in Nigeria and moved to Toronto's Rexdale neighbourhood in 1995 where he grew up immersed in hip-hop culture. He started writing songs at 10 years old and today, the 19-year-old calls Brampton home and performs under the moniker I.B. Kredible.

His songs play like recipes for pop music success with high production values and lyrics common amongst rappers such as the chart-topping Drake. With slick production, well-managed samples, and tight, consistent lyrics, Kredible's songs should have no problem fitting into playlists at clubs, gyms, and on music television.

His first single, "My Life is a Movie" was recorded with his group StacDeck Music. Kredible says: "My Life Is A Movie" represents a direct description of what the song is about and what it means. When people hear about the song, I want them to be able to view the lyrics as though I was telling the story of their lives."

It's this balance of pop accessibility and honesty that makes Kredible stand out from other independent hip-hop acts. "My Life is a Movie" or "Gettin' High" play like they already belong on top-40 radio. And while many might be quick to brush off the pop side of hip-hop, there's no denying that the masses love it; so why not root for one of our own to succeed?



Benhur

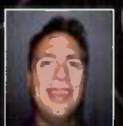
What: Alternative Rock
Where: Toronto
Visit: www.benhur.ca

Benhur's songs might seem like radio-ready alternative rock, but beneath the surface there's some rich and highly-textural things going on. It's a sound that one wouldn't expect from a band with but a single EP under their collective belt (2009's *Trysf*).

Benhur began in Toronto when frontman and main songwriter Ben Nissan finished law school and decided that working 80-hour weeks at a Bay St. law firm might not be what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. Nissan confesses that he tried practicing law, but at work, making music was always on his mind.

So Nissan put away the suits, rounded up some likeminded musicians (Danilo Baracho on bass, Steve Frize on lead guitar, and Mateus Macedo on drums) and started writing. The EP had play on some commercial radio stations as well as overseas radio and the band complemented the coverage by playing at a number of Toronto's best-known clubs. The band recently re-entered the studio and is writing a handful of songs to release as singles. This summer, they're hoping to play some of the many great music festivals happening across the country. Fans of U2 and Coldplay should be sure not to miss the chance to see them if they make it through their town.

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



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Sound matters on YouTube.



Q3HD

Brilliant stereo recording, now with 1080p HD video.

Joe Satriani of Chickenfoot and Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top.

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