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COVER PHOTO:
Hannah Georgas by
Vanessa Heins,
www.vanessaheins.com.

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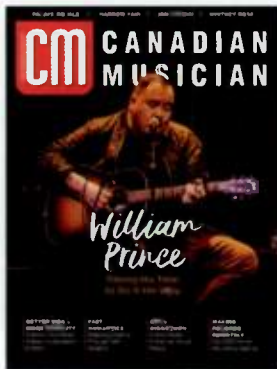
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CREATIVITY & RESILIENCE GO HAND-IN-HAND

By Andrew King, Editor-in-Chief

We've proven it time and time again: musicians are a resilient bunch. These days, it seems like an inherent pre-requisite – like if there was a formal job application to call oneself a musician in any capacity, anyone that might hesitate before checking off that particular box simply need not apply.

Resilience basically goes hand-in-hand with creativity. After all, many of us are simply compelled to play, to experiment, write, record, and collaborate. Throwing in the towel or “trying something else for a while” are, in most cases, simply not an option, and as they say, necessity is the mother of invention.

Obviously, ours isn't the only industry to be significantly or repeatedly disrupted over the past 20 years; but that said, I'm hard pressed to think of another where that disruption has been so simultaneously consistent and unpredictable.

Just think of the tools we use to create music, or the ways it's captured, produced, disseminated, and consumed. Most importantly for today, though, think of how it's monetized and, ultimately, how creators themselves get compensated for it.

Since 1999, the goal posts have been moving pretty much non-stop. Piracy and the corresponding devaluation of recorded music as a product made live performance the main source of revenue

for most. Since, streaming has largely curbed illegal downloading, but most artists' bottom lines don't look much different from before. As many in the industry were advocating for change in that business model and it even felt like our chorus of voices was loud enough to start moving the needle, along came COVID-19 to basically wipe out the still-somewhat-profitable side of most full-time musicians' careers.

But we're still here. Still making (orchestrated) noise and finding ways to share it with people.

I was on a call earlier this week with Toronto-based artist Suzi Kory to talk about her DIY drive-in country music festival, Love Revolution, that she and a scrappy group of collaborators delivered in mid-July after just three weeks of planning.

“It just made perfect sense and my gut instinct was saying: ‘Just do it, even if you don't know what you're doing; it doesn't matter.’ And that's exactly what happened. I just jumped right into it,” she told me.

Look at what Dan Mangan, Laura Simpson, and their team at Side Door have done to help artists all around the world produce, promote, and monetize their virtual shows – and of course, look at how good and, in some cases, groundbreaking some of those virtual shows have been.

Look at how we've come together to support each other, to support the technicians and venues and journalists and all the other cogs in this big wheel of ours; a wheel that's dented and rusted and not

even that round anymore but still keeps on rolling.

None of this is particularly novel or revelatory, but a part of it that might be: not only are we a resilient bunch, but that resilience seems to grow in tandem with the size of our community.

Let's be clear: things are looking pretty bleak for a lot of us, and there are no sure signs of that changing any time soon. Yet through this whole mess, I haven't heard a single story about anyone “quitting” music. Confusion, discouragement, frustration, fear, even rage aren't in short supply, but I don't know one person that's picked up their bat and gone home; on the contrary, I've only heard of people picking up an instrument or trying to make beats for the first time or signing up for virtual lessons. Our community is *growing*, and as our friend Harrison Fine of Fine Productions predicted on this very page last issue, a silver lining of these strange times will be an influx in fresh new sounds and creations.

It's been no walk in the park; figuratively and literally, it's quite the opposite of that, and yet look at us. Still here, still performing, still recording, still channeling the emotions and experiences and ideas of the wider populace into art that brings us solace, brings us together, and helps us to process what's going on.

We're a resilient bunch indeed, and I'll continue hoping and working to make it so that we don't have to prove it so damn often.

INSURE YOUR GEAR Unfortunate Examples of Instrument Damage

By Grant Patten

As an insurance brokerage, we're of course interested in helping our musician customers protect their instruments, thereby avoiding the need for any claims. Let's take a look at some cases of musical instrument damage that have received media attention recently. We will then offer some speculation as to how each musician may have avoided the instrument damage.

Angela Hewitt's Smashed Piano (2020)

Renowned Canadian classical pianist Angela Hewitt posted in February 2020 about an unfortunate incident involving her US\$194,000 Fazioli grand piano. Movers had accidentally dropped the piano during a move, causing extensive damage to the instrument, including breaking the iron frame. Fazioli inspected the damage and informed Hewitt that the piano was, unfortunately, not salvageable.

It seems that this was an honest mistake by the movers, who were trying to place the piano on a trolley when it slipped. The best that can be done here is to vet a moving company and ensure that they have a record of accomplishment with moving similar pianos – but sometimes, even if the track record is solid, mistakes can happen.

The Global News article mentions that Hewitt is "waiting for insurance to address the accident," so it seems that the instrument was indeed insured. Let's hope Hewitt's policy includes coverage for full replacement cost or agreed value of the piano.

Musician's Guitar Broken on a Flight (2019)

CBC reported in 2019 about a Canadian musician whose guitar was broken on an

Air Canada flight from Toronto to L.A. Air Canada refused to reimburse for the damage, arguing that the musician hadn't properly loosened his guitar's strings and, therefore, air pressure on the flight caused the damage. This explanation is dubious at best and at least one guitar technician believes the kind of damage sustained to this guitar could not have been created by air pressure alone.

However, something that this musician could have perhaps done better is use a specialized flight case for his guitar rather than a soft case. Hard-bodied flight cases are designed specifically for flying instruments. Look for phrases in the product description such as "ATA" (Air Transport Association), "ATA approved," "ATA flight case," etc. When in one of these cases, it is much less likely (though not impossible) that an instrument will sustain damage.

Musician's Guitar Damaged by Forklift (2018)

In 2018, another case of Air Canada damaging an instrument occurred when the airline's forklift operators managed to poke a large hole in a PEI musician's vintage guitar. Air Canada informed him that the airline could replace the case only – not the instrument. A specialized instrument insurance policy will cover replacement cost of the instrument.

Some airlines now allow instruments as big as guitars to be taken on as carry-on luggage. This is the preferred transportation method when possible.



PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

When carry-on isn't available, musicians may consider paying for an additional airline seat for their instrument. It won't be cheap, but it more or less guarantees that the instrument will remain safe.

Consider Musical Instrument Insurance

It is a common misconception that musical instruments are covered under homeowners' insurance policies. The reality is that if musicians perform for money, the instruments used in those performances will then be considered commercial equipment and therefore won't be covered under any home policy.

Grant Patten is VP of Marketing at Front Row Insurance. Grant has an insurance marketing background with roughly six years of experience at CSIO, where he did much marketing communications work for the organization. He has been with Front Row since 2019. Grant holds a bachelor's degree in Film Studies (Ryerson University) and a master's degree in Information Studies (University of Toronto). He is also a Project Management Professional (PMP).

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT THEFT PREVENTION

By Meghan Stickney

Unfortunately, there seems to be an increase in musical instrument theft over the last couple of years, but there are some actions you can take to protect yourself and your gear.

We've provided some tips and tricks for how to guard your instruments, as well as some information on how to get them insured so you are protected in any worst-case scenario situations.

1. Anonymity

- One of the best ways to prevent your instruments from being stolen is to remain as anonymous as possible in terms of your band and your instruments.
- Avoid having band stickers on your vehicle and instruments so that you aren't a clear target.
- Tint or paint your windows or buy blinds so people can't see into your vehicle, your rehearsal space, or any place you store your instruments.

2. Security

This one might sound obvious, but there are a few critical steps you can take to make sure that you're keeping your items as secure as possible. These include:

- Install an alarm.
- Develop a protocol to make sure that your vehicle is locked at all times – even when you're loading in and may be making several trips to a nearby space. This happens a lot with bands and musicians and presents a target for thieves.
- Chain all of your gear together in your van or trunk so that if the thief does a smash-and-grab, they will not be able to get away quickly.

3. Parking

- Many instrument thefts happen overnight, so it is important to be careful about how and where you park.
- Park your vehicle back against a wall whenever possible so it's harder to

get in the back doors.

- Park in the underground garage of your hotel rather than the surface lot.
- Leave your vehicle at a tow truck yard: they are manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Plus, the cost is usually reasonable for the protection provided.

4. Keep Records

- In the unfortunate case that something does get stolen, it's important that you have the proper records. It helps with the investigation and increases the chances of your property being found.
- Take pictures of your instruments. This way you'll have an image to present should something be taken.
- Keep a record of serial numbers. This way investigators will absolutely know if an instrument is yours or not.
- Store a copy of the appraisal if the instruments are older than five years. Vintage gear will have the best claims settlement if there is an appraisal to refer to.

In the unfortunate event that your gear is stolen, you'll really only be protected from losses if you've chosen an insurance provider that specializes in instrument insurance for professionals. Most homeowner policies will not insure instruments and gear used professionally or damage caused by airlines, so be sure to source a policy for professionals. This ensures all of your bases are covered and the tools of your trade will be protected.

In terms of protecting your instrument at airports and on planes: Rule No. 1 is to never check instruments with your luggage unless it's impossible to transport them as hand luggage. Keep watch on your instrument while in the airport terminal. Consider using a Velcro strap to attach it to your trolley to prevent a snatch-and-grab. Hiding a Tile or similar tracker in your cases results in a good recovery rate for stolen gear. These products are especially valuable for vintage gear.



Meghan Stickney is a registered Level II insurance broker focused on providing risk management and insurance services to film producers and production companies. With a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of British Columbia, Meghan continues to support local Vancouver filming and cultural events around the city.

Front Row Insurance is a brokerage specializing in entertainment-related risks with offices in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Halifax, LA, NYC & Nashville. It has an online instrument insurance program available 24/7 for musicians who are members of certain music associations (check the site to see which ones). Custom packages include tour liability and coverage for recording studios.

DISCLAIMER: Informational statements regarding insurance coverage are for general description purposes only. These statements do not amend, modify or supplement any insurance policy. Consult the actual policy or your broker for details regarding terms, conditions, coverage, exclusions, products, services and programs which may be available to you. Your eligibility for particular products and services is subject to the final determination of underwriting qualifications and acceptance by the insurance underwriting company providing such products or services. This guest blog post does not make any representations that coverage does or does not exist for any particular claim or loss, or type of claim or loss, under any policy. Whether coverage exists or does not exist for any particular claim or loss under any policy depends on the facts and circumstances involved in the claim or loss and all applicable policy wording.

New Surveys: Canadians' Concerns About Live Events Not Abating; Musicians' Concern Growing

Concern among Canadian music fans about the pandemic remains elevated, with more believing that "the worst is yet to come" than did in April, according to a second round of surveys conducted by Abacus Data and commissioned by Music Canada.

The research shows that even as economies are slowly re-opening, more Canadians expect to stay away from live music events long after physical distancing restrictions are lifted. Even of those who regularly attended live music events before the pandemic, 55% said that they will wait at least six months or longer to attend a music festival after physical restrictions end, and for large concert venues, it was 60%. The findings ultimately point to the prolonged threat faced by the live music industry.

These findings are made even more concerning by a separate survey of 700 professional Canadian musicians released in mid-July, again done by Abacus Data and commissioned by Music Canada. It found that for the remainder of 2020, musicians' average number of bookings is down more than 90% compared to last year. As well, most of the professional musicians indicated they were reliant on government emergency aid to get by, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). As such, professional musicians report feeling anxious, scared, uncertain, and worried about the future.

For the full reports, go to www.abacusdata.ca/live-music-threat-pandemic-music-canada/.

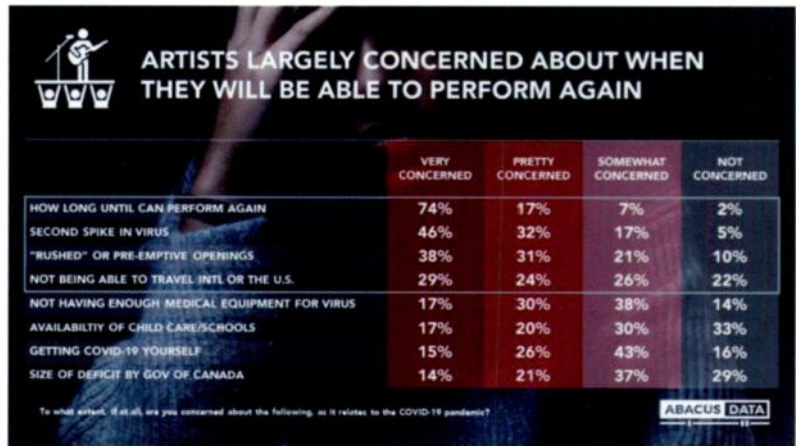


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PRE-/POST-COVID-19 ANALYSIS: 2020 VS. SAME PERIOD IN 2019

	YEAR TO DATE THROUGH MARCH 12	MARCH 13-JULY 2	TOTAL 2020 YEAR TO DATE
Total Audio Activity	+10.8%	+2.6%	+5.7%
On-Demand Audio Streaming	+21.3%	+14%	+16.6%
Total Album Sales	-27.1%	-45.7%	-38.4%
Physical Albums	-26.2%	-64.7%	-49.7%
Digital Albums	-28.4%	-16.7%	-21.4%
Digital Song Sales	-29.7%	-24.5%	-26.6%

Pandemic Has Accelerated Streaming's Rise & Physical Music's Decline

Nielsen Music and MRC Data released their 2020 Canada Mid-Year Report, which provides a comprehensive overview of Canadians' music consumption in the first half of this year. Overall, it shows that recorded-music consumption has proven resilient as audio streams are up 16.6% to over 42 billion.

Total album-equivalent audio consumption — the combination of album and song sales with on-demand audio streams — was up 5.7% year-over-year. Country music saw the biggest gains of any genre, with 22.7% more audio streams year-to-year.

Vinyl sales, which were already dipping before March after a decade-long revitalization, took a big dive as record shops were forced to close. Through March 12th, vinyl sales in Canada were down 8%, and post-lockdown the deficit increased to 28.5% by June 4th; likewise, physical music sales have taken a big post-COVID dive. A 26.2% pre-COVID-19 deficit in physical sales from March 12th deepened to a 48.8% year-to-date loss through June 4th.

CERB Extended for 1 Month, EI Expanded & Gig-Worker Benefit Announced

The Federal Government announced on Aug. 20th that it's extending the \$2,000-per-month Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) for one more month, meaning it now ends on Sept. 27th. Additionally, the government is amending its employment insurance program so that more people will qualify for financial assistance when CERB ends. These changes include greater flexibility on the work hours required for EI, which makes it easier for people to qualify for a one-year period. After CERB ends on Sept. 27th, those eligible for EI will transition to that program and those who do not qualify can apply for new recovery benefits.

Importantly for musicians, self-employed or gig workers can apply for a benefit of up to \$400 per week for up to 26 weeks if they have stopped working or had reduced incomes as a result of the pandemic. Under the new arrangement, gig workers still earn money but will need to repay half of every dollar earned over \$38,000.

For more information, go to www.canada.ca.

New Canadian Collective Launched to Champion Black Music Professionals

A new Canadian music industry non-profit organization has been launched to champion the advancement of Black professionals in the Canadian music industry. Called Advance, Canada's Black Music Business Collective, its stated purpose is to hold the corporate, private, and government sectors accountable in order to build a more equitable Canadian music industry that grants Canada's Black music communities a fair and valued voice in a consistently growing music nation.

A couple of weeks after the collective's launch, Toronto Mayor John Tory announced a \$2-million partnership between the city, the Slaight Family Foundation, and Advance to support the entry, retention, and advancement of Black professionals in Toronto's music industry. They are working to target that funding to best achieve sustained and tangible results.

For more information, contact Advance: connect@advancemusic.org, www.advancemusic.org.



(L-R) ROB LANNI, MATT MAW & ERIC LAWRENCE

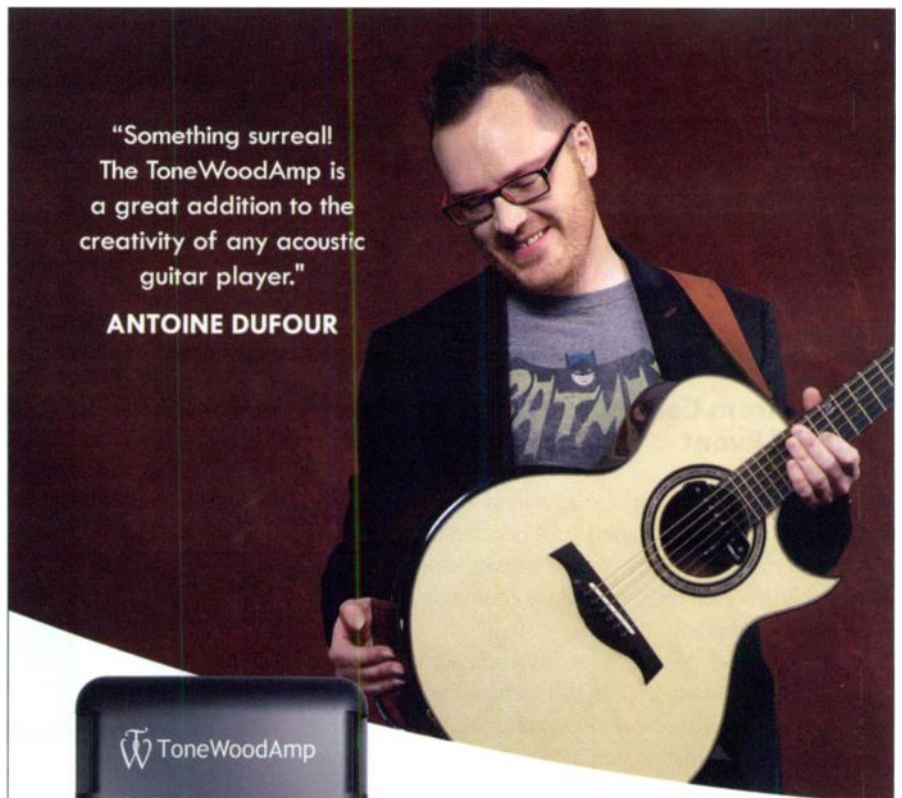
Coalition Music & APTN Launch 'Red Music Rising'

Coalition Music and The Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN) have launched a new Indigenous music company, Red Music Rising (RMR), which is owned, managed, and operated entirely by Indigenous professionals and artists.

RMR's mission is to help develop robust, sustainable, life-long careers for Indigenous artists and industry members. RMR will sign, release, and market music from Indigenous musical artists while also assisting emerging Indigenous music companies and industry professionals.

Toronto-based artist manager Matt Maw of Chippewas of the Thames will leverage over 10 years of music industry experience as the first leader of RMR.

To hear an in-depth conversation with Maw about Red Music Rising, listen to the Sept. 2, 2020 episode of the *Canadian Musician Podcast*. For more information, go to www.redmusicrising.ca.



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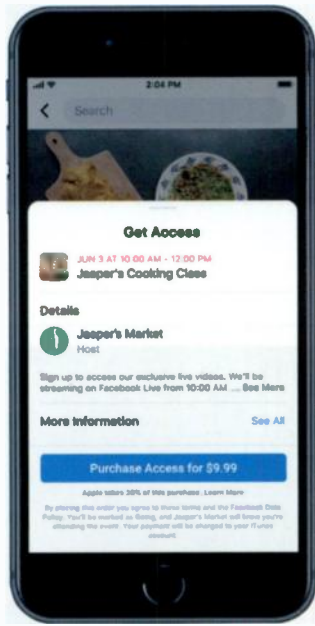
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Facebook Launches Paid Online Events Feature in Canada

On Aug. 14, 2020, Facebook launched a new paid online events feature aimed at helping creators, small businesses, educators, and media publishers in Canada and 19 other countries. With it, page owners can create an online event, set a price, promote the event, collect payment, and host the event on the social media platform.

As well, Facebook also said that in order to support small businesses and creators during the pandemic, it will not collect any fees from paid online events for at least the next year. While announcing that, the social media giant criticized Apple for refusing to waive or reduce its 30% App Store tax. This means 30% of event revenue generated through Facebook's iOS app will go to Apple instead of the event host. Google did agree to waive its fee on Android purchases in order to allow businesses and creators to keep all the revenue.

For more information, go to www.facebook.com/formedia/solutions/online-events.

Live Production Veteran Launches New Initiative to Support Techs in Need

Anthony Crea, a veteran of the Canadian live events industry, has launched a new initiative called Techs in Need (T.I.N.) to support live event professionals currently out of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. T.I.N. will be hosting an ongoing busking concert series and other events to raise funds that will then be distributed to applicants. Additionally, donations are being accepted via a crowdfunding campaign.

For more information or to donate, visit: www.techsinneed.com.

KoSA Drum Camp Decides to 'Just Drum On' for 25th Annual Event

Determined to still hold its 25th anniversary drum camp despite the restrictions on group events, Montreal-based KoSA decided to "Just Drum On" – which was the theme of this year's camp – online instead. Renowned artists and industry professionals delivered their sessions via Zoom from July 6-10 in a carefully-designed educational program.

The week included presentations and lessons from artists like David Garibaldi, John Riley, Paul Picard, Jim Riley, Bill Bachman, and Mike Clark, as well as industry professionals like *Canadian Musician* publisher Jim Norris.

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



MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

BreakOut West Converting to 15-Day Virtual "Home Edition"

BreakOut West is moving online for a 15-day "immersive online experience" that provides artists and industry with keynotes and panel discussions, mentorship meetings, networking mixers, wellness moments, and new music discovery. The annual showcase festival and conference was originally going to be held in Winnipeg in the fall.

After artist and industry consultation, BreakOut West decided to emphasize networking and professional development for the 2020 Home Edition. From Sep. 25th to

Oct. 9th, industry sessions will bring professionals together to discuss timely topics, from self-management strategies and balancing parenting and a music career, to international market deep dives and the future of music. Sessions will include breakout rooms where attendees can further engage in the conversation.

Network mixers and mentorship conversations will give artists the opportunity to connect with industry professionals in both casual group settings and private one-on-one meetings. BreakOut West: Home Edition will also include regular community wellness sessions, including group yoga, the BreakOut West run club, and meditation. Attendees will also gain the opportunity to travel virtually to key international markets



to learn strategies and insights for breaking out internationally.

A juried selection of artists will be highlighted for industry delegates coming from different time zones, showcasing their work, videos, and music leading up to and during the online event.

For more information and to register, go to www.breakoutwest.ca.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...



CMW's Jim Beam National Talent Search Tour Is Going Virtual

Canadian Music Week (CMW) has announced that the Jim Beam National Talent Search Tour will take place virtually from Sept. 26 to Oct. 3, 2020, with 30-minute episodes spotlighting five local bands from eight Canadian cities. Hosted by Josie Dye of Toronto's Indie88 Radio, each of the resulting regional webisodes will be streamed via Indies.ca and CMW.net/music, plus Vimeo, YouTube, and partnering radio stations across the country.

Each episode will focus on one city and feature interviews and performances from five local bands. Fans are invited to vote for their favourite band to play live at the Jim

Beam INDIES in 2021 at Indies.ca. The 40 bands have already begun recording the Jim Beam Virtual Talent Search episodes during socially-distanced studio sessions. All 40 artists will also receive a master tape of the multi-track sound recording and the accompanying multi-camera video to be used in any way they wish to promote themselves.

For more information and live streams, go to www.indies.ca and www.cmw.net/music.

Alberta Electronic Music Conference Postponed Until 2021

Originally scheduled for this November at Calgary's National Music Centre, the 2020 Alberta Electronic Music Conference (AEMCON) has been postponed until November 2021. In June, in response to the COVID-19 shutdowns, AEMCON held the first Virtual Electronic Music Summit (VEMS).

"As you all know, the realities brought forth by COVID-19 have made large-scale, physical event planning impossible, especially ones that rely on international travel, multi-venue collaboration, multi-month planning cycles, and an intimate and close-knit vibe. The environment of uncertainty and risk is too great for us to be able to produce an event to the calibre you've come to expect and deserve," AEMCON or-

ganizers said in an email to media, attendees, and speakers.

For more information, go to www.albertaelectronicmusic.com.



Honey Jam Set to Livestream 2020 Concert on Oct. 1st

The 25th annual edition of the Honey Jam concert will be livestreamed from Toronto's iconic El Mocambo on Oct. 1, 2020. This year's special edition, sponsored in part by *Canadian Musician*, will be a celebration of women in music where past Honey Jam alumni will pay tribute with covers of iconic songs by female artists.

Honey Jam was founded in 1995 in response to the lack of opportunities for exposure and promotion given to female performers, as well as the lack of female representation on the business side of the industry.

For more information on this year's edition as it becomes available, visit www.honeyjam.com.

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SING! Festival Ready for Virtual 2020 Run

SING! The Toronto Vocal Arts Festival is presenting its ninth annual edition online from Sept. 29-Oct. 4, 2020. Some of the programming highlights announced for the virtual event, which is sponsored in part by *Canadian Musician*, include: the SING! In Concert Prime Time series of nightly performances by artists including FreePlay, Beatsync, Cadence, and Retrocity; a celebration of the 10th anniversary of one of SING!'s founding groups, Countermeasure; best-selling author and Juno Award-winner Tom Wilson of Blackie and the Rodeo Kings and Lee Harvey Osmond headlining the annual O Canada concert; a Las Vegas-themed show headlined by Micah Barnes; SING! and Learn interactive Zoom workshops with internationally-acclaimed clinicians; and more.

For more information, go to: www.singtoronto.com

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...



William Prince's "The Spark" Wins SOCAN Songwriting Prize

William Prince won the 15th annual English SOCAN Songwriting Prize for his song "The Spark." Canadian music fans voted online from July 16-30 from a short list of 10 songs

picked by a panel of music experts. For winning, Prince received the \$5,000 first prize, a Yamaha keyboard, and a \$500 gift card from Long & McQuade.

In a first in SOCAN Songwriting Prize history, the writers of each of the remaining nine nominated songs were awarded \$500.

For more information, go to www.socansongwritingprize.ca.



Video for Jessie Reyez's "Far Away" Wins 2020 Prism Prize

The 2020 Prism Prize jury of over 120 Canadian creative arts professionals selected director Peter Huang as the 2020 Grand Prize recipient for the Jessie Reyez music video "Far Away." The Grand Prize carries a \$20,000 cash prize and recognizes outstanding artistry in Canadian music videos. The fan-voted Audience Award was given to directors Keavan Yazdani and Sean Brown for the video for Daniel Caesar and Koffee's song "Cyanide Remix."

Huang and Reyez's heartbreaking video for "Far Away" makes a vivid statement about the lives ruined by ICE and the Trump Administration's immigration enforcement policies.

For more information and to watch all the winning and short-listed videos, go to www.prismprize.com.



Tenille Townes, Brett Kissel & Dean Brody Lead 2020 CCMA Award Nominees

The Canadian Country Music Association (CCMA) announced the nominees for the 38th Canadian Country Music Awards, and

also confirmed that it will now be a broadcast- and online-only event airing Sept. 27 on Global TV and web platforms.

Leading with six nominations is reigning Female Artist of the Year Tenille Townes. She is up for Female Artist, Songwriter, Video, Interactive Artist or Group, and Entertainer of the Year, as well as Fans' Choice. Dean Brody and Brett Kissel follow with five nominations each.

This year's nominations see women represented in 91% of artist categories (where eligible) and includes five artists receiving their first-ever CCMA Awards nomination.

To view a complete listing of the 2020 nominees, go to www.ccma.org.



JESSIA & MELISSA KADAS

LVS Announces Winners of Inaugural 'Becoming' Emerging Artist Contest

Lawson Vocal Studios (LVS) has announced the winners of the inaugural Becoming contest for emerging artists, sponsored in part by *Canadian Musician*. Out of the hundreds of entries received, eight promising emerging artists were chosen as standouts between the under-17 and 18-and-over categories, including overall Standout Artists Melissa Kadas and JESSIA, respectively.

LVS aims to support continued artist development and awarded thousands of dollars' worth of prizing. The Becoming contest was held as a celebration of the studio's fifth anniversary and will continue as an annual event.

For more information, visit www.lawsonvocalstudios.com.

ONLINE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

Canadian Musician surveyed artists to find out if they've been taking advantage of any online career-development opportunities and what their experience has been. Here are the results...

Since the pandemic shutdowns began, have you taken the opportunity to develop your career through things like webinars, virtual conferences/panels, online workshops/tutorials, etc.?

- 23% Yes, a great deal
- 61% Yes, a little bit
- 16% No

If you have taken part in any online career development opportunities, which have you done?

- 22% Virtual conference(s)
- 19% Virtual panel discussion(s)
- 43% Music career/skills-focused reading
- 16% Other

Generally, if you have taken part in some of the virtual learning opportunities that have sprung up in response to the shutdowns, have you found it helpful?

- 34% Very helpful
- 50% Somewhat helpful
- 14% Not very helpful
- 2% Not at all helpful

Had these same opportunities been available before the shutdowns, do you think you would've taken part?

- 24% Definitely
- 42% Probably yes
- 33% Probably not
- 0% Definitely not

Since the pandemic began, what career-development activity have you found most helpful? Why was it useful? [selected responses]

"Online networking and attending panels. It's tremendously helpful to keep everyone busy focusing on the positives, rather than dwelling on the bummer that is COVID-19. Find your silver lining is what I am telling everyone who will listen."

"Independent study. Focused work on vocal elements, exercises on music composition, and online workshops on the business side of being an artist."

"SongStudio2020 was on Zoom. It was different but still wonderful (I've attended since 2012) RE: songwriting, production, evaluations, mentors. I've attended CIMA/MusicOntario events, Indie

Week panel discussions, and Zoom meets with the Female Musicians Academy."

"NWC Webinars, An Incoming Emails, MICEO, and Canada.ca have helped with funding programs to help the future of my music."

"I have been taking online recording/producing courses. It's self-paced and we have meetings. Just a reminder that you can do more remotely than you thought possible; you just have to think outside the box. I've been taking online courses for years."

"Staying true to doing a weekly online show to stay fresh, relevant, and sharpen our skill sets... Doing that has been the best medicine."



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

Polaris Prize Short List Revealed

The Polaris Music Prize has unveiled the 10 albums on the 2020 Short List. Polaris will be celebrating the short-listed albums and awarding the winner with a special cinematic tribute happening Oct. 19th to be broadcast on CBC Music's online platforms

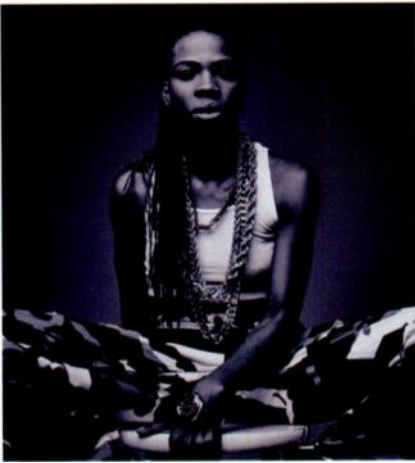
The 2020 Polaris Music Prize Short List is: Backwash's *God Has Nothing to Do With This Leave Him Out Of It*; Caribou's *Suddenly*; Junia-T's *Studio Monk*; Kaytranada's *Bubba*; nêhiyawak's *nipi*; Pantayo's self-titled album; Lido Pimienta's *Miss Colombia*; Jessie Reyez's *Before Love Came To Kill Us*; U.S. Girls' *Heavy Light*; and Witch Prophet's *DNA Activation*.

The Polaris Music Prize awards \$50,000 to the artist who creates the Canadian Album of the Year, judged solely on artistic merit, without consideration for genre or record sales. Albums eligible for 2020 prize consideration had to be released between May 1, 2019 and May 31, 2020. For more information, go to www.polarismusicprize.ca.



canadianmusician.com/news





HAVIAH MIGHTY

For the full interview, listen to the July 1, 2020 episode

CM: You've said the day you learned the actual text of the American constitution's 13th amendment is the day you wrote the song "Thirteen." Can you tell us about that day and process?

Haviah Mighty: It was produced by Tim Hill from A Tribe Called Red and Robotaki. I had this production from them and I wrote, like, three powerful songs, but none of them felt fully right. I felt like I was trying to write an impactful song, but it just didn't feel right. Then I remember one day I was off work and I had snacks and was just doing the YouTube thing. I'm always doing research and I just happened to be doing research on segregation in some country and I stumbled upon the U.S. constitution and the 13th amendment and it actually mapped out thoughts that I'd had in laymen's terms.

What's interesting is that I had written to this beat and the first track that I had was me ... writing as if I was speaking to this friend of my friend who was in jail. Like a message that he might need to hear. So, there was a connection between the first song I'd written to this beat and the research I was doing ... So, I felt very empowered to write this song when I stumbled upon the 13th amendment. I wrote it very quickly; probably this and "Wishy Washy" are the quickest songs I wrote on the record. For this song, still when I listen to it, I am shocked at how well-written it is. I mean, I think it's well-written, as if I didn't write it. But I think it's well-written because it was so inspired by things I'd thought about for so long, questions I had, and all of a sudden here's an answer. I felt like I was just reiterating the answer. I wasn't coming up with the answer or deciding what I felt about it. It was, to me, almost like transcribing what I was learning and it was just coming back out of me and it was just making sense in that moment. As I was writing it, I was realizing the answers to the questions I had.

AS HEARD ON THE...

The Feldman Agency's

JORDAN POWLEY

For the full interview, listen to the July 15, 2020 episode

CM: We've just seen Brett Kissel sell-out a bunch of drive-in concerts in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and a drive-in concert stage being erected in Toronto. What are your thoughts on the drive-in concert model?

Jordan Powley: This doesn't reflect our company's overall view, but personally, I'm very skeptical of it because there's so many variables that come into this. You look at how the washrooms are being utilized; how are they being sanitized? Are people actively using the washrooms, or are there even washrooms onsite? That's just one aspect of it ... You're seeing a lot of these drive-ins pop up and we don't have a proven model for it yet.

So, until we get to a point where someone executes it basically perfectly and we've got all the logistics sorted out, I'm very much on the reserved side where I'd like to hold back and make sure that my clients are protected and don't end up walking into a situation like the concert with Chase Rice that just went down in Tennessee and turned into a giant social media backlash. It was all over the headlines and I know they say "no press is bad press," but in this situation, it was *very bad press* ...

We're doing a great job containing [the virus] in Canada, but if we keep pushing to reopen things up, like the drive-in concerts, and there's some kind of issue and a COVID outbreak comes from one of these things, I would rather not have my clients be at the forefront of it.



ADVANCE – Canada's Black Music Business Collective's

ERIN LOWERS

For the full interview, listen to the July 22, 2020 episode

CM: In a recent interview, Jessie Reyez pointed out the lack of Black professionals working at the major labels in Canada. She said that at Sony Music, there are 90 employees and only eight are Black. At Warner Music, it's 86 employees and only seven are Black, and at Universal Music, where she's signed, it's 175 and only 11 are Black. As well, Vivian Barclay at Warner Chappell Music is the *only* Black executive at the major labels or publishers in Canada. What are the tangible steps towards changing those ratios?

Erin Lowers: That's just a lot of conversations with the presidents of companies and the executive teams of companies. Of all those people who work at the labels, we've pretty much spoken to everybody there, and in another country, that's not even possible. So, for us to create that change, we need to start conversations within our own companies and get people with some kind of power behind us. And I do think a lot of people have been receptive within these spaces. I think a lot of people are very open to changing the structure of what's happening within corporations.

At the same time, it's a matter of making sure this conversation doesn't fall apart four months from now, which has been a historic trend for Black people within a lot of different industries. It's that these issues come up and it's a time-and-place moment or vibe, and then when that moment is gone, the conversations fall on deaf ears. So, for us, it's just a matter of really reaching out to who our allies are and those who are interested in being a part of this historic change in Black music in Canada.



EVENTS

nwcworld.com/events



PHOTO: COREY BENOIR/PIGEON ROW



HALIFAX POP EXPLOSION

PHOTO: GEORGE TERNEY



MATTHEW BYRNE AT THE CMFAs

NOTE: The following events are still on the calendar as of press time for this issue, though they may be affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout going forward.

SEPTEMBER

BreakOut West: Home Edition

Online
September 25-October 9, 2020
204-943-8485
info@breakoutwest.ca,
www.breakoutwest.ca

OCTOBER

AES Audio Engineering Month

Online
October 5-30, 2020
212-661-8528, FAX 212-682-0477
www.aes.org/events

Toronto Audio Fest

Toronto, ON
October 16-18, 2020
514-267-8231
mplante@torontoaudiofest.org,
www.torontoaudiofest.org

Halifax Pop Explosion Music Festival

Halifax, NS
October 21-24, 2020
902-482-8176
festival@halifaxpopexplosion.com,
www.halifaxpopexplosion.com

Halifax Pop Explosion Music Conference

Online
October 21-24, 2020
902-482-8176
festival@halifaxpopexplosion.com,
www.halifaxpopexplosion.com

Amsterdam Dance Event: Digital

Online
October 21-25, 2020
info@amsterdam-dance-event.nl,
www.amsterdam-dance-event.nl

World Music Expo (WOMEX)

Budapest, Hungary
October 21-25, 2020
womex@womex.com,
www.womex.com

NOVEMBER

PASIC 2020 Virtual

Online
November 13-14, 2020
317-974-4488, FAX 317-974-4499
percarts@pas.org, www.pasic.org

Mundial Montreal

Montreal, QC
November 17-20, 2020
514-925-0050 ext. 227
info@mundialmontreal.com,
www.mundialmontreal.com

JANUARY

Eurosonic Noorderslag Music Conference & Festival

Groningen, The Netherlands
January 13-16, 2021
www.eurosonic-noorderslag.nl

NAMM Believe in Music Week

Online
January 18-24, 2021
760-438-8001, FAX 760-438-7327
info@namm.org,
www.believeinmusic.tv

MARCH

South by Southwest (SXSW)

Austin, TX
March 15-21, 2021
512-467-7979
www.sxsw.com

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Austrian Audio Hi-X55 Over-Ear Headphones

By Adam Gallant

Up for test in this issue we have the Austrian Audio Hi-X55 over-ear, closed-back headphones. Founded in 2017 following AKG's closing of its offices in Vienna, Austrian Audio designs and manufactures professional-tier microphones and headphones to an incredibly high standard. The Hi-X55s were released in January 2020 and are the result of very forward-thinking designs and a high standard of quality assurance. Austrian Audio not only manufactures and designs their own headphones, but they also build test equipment and provide testing services for other leading speaker and headphone manufacturers.

Out of the Box

The Hi-X55s have a sleek matte metallic look. The cable is straight, detachable, and built strong. The headphones collapse and fold easily and without fear of stressing or breaking. The ear and strap pads are extremely comfortable and have a notably soft memory foam that doesn't hold sweat or feel uncomfortable after long sessions. These headphones also weigh less than one might assume at just 305 g, given their robust appearance and durability.

Admittedly, headphones are often mistreated in our studios and the Hi-X55s were obviously designed with daily, extended use in mind. The metal head strap is very flexible and anything that swivels or moves has a strong metallic hinge or clasp. Void of any cheap components, the build quality is top notch and the look is simple and classic. Very impressive.

The Sound

A professional, studio-minded approach has been taken with regards to the sound of these headphones. The frequency spectrum feels flat with no apparent exaggeration on the highs or lows, and the drivers are rated down to 5 Hz and up to 28 kHz. These headphones are great for tweezing out issues in the mids and high-mids

in a mix in the same way a good set of studio monitors should be. They are also great for singers who need an accurate sense of the way their voice feels in a room while monitoring with both ears on. They also reject exterior noise in a very comfortable way that does not create pressure or excess handling noise. To sum up their sound, the Hi-X55s are clinical, clear, and not at all exhaustive.

Comfort

I found the Hi-X55s to be remarkably comfortable throughout my testing. The memory foam is supple and the ear pads give ample room for your ears while allowing the driver to sit in a very controlled position. The headphone strap is really well padded with an open middle that allows air to flow freely. All the cushions and padding are completely smooth and void of folds or ripples, which is where tears often occur and dirt tends to build up. The earpads are easily replaceable and showed absolutely no wear during our test period. Also, when worn with glasses, these headphones do not pinch or squeeze your frames; the cushions are soft enough to fit snugly around them while still providing excellent isolation from exterior sounds.

And finally, for users keen on the on-ear style, check out the Hi-X50s, which feature the same great built quality and driver design as these over-ear counterparts.

Summary

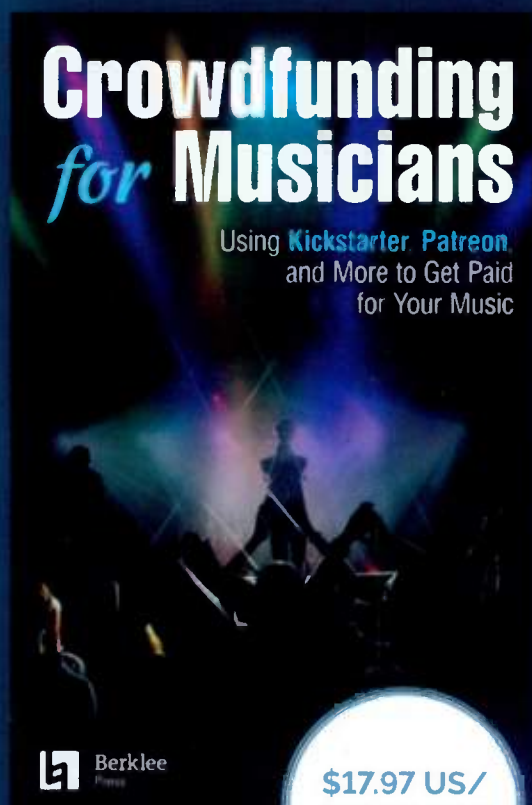
The Austrian Audio Hi-X55s are built with passion, and that was more than evident while putting them through their paces. Austrian Audio is clearly aiming for the modern music professional with this product line and I think they hit the nail on the head. If you spend a lot of time working in headphones and need a pair that provides transparency and translatability, the Hi-X55s are a perfect fit. I'm looking forward to more product releases from this great company.



Adam Gallant has worked in all facets of digital audio production, from music composition to location and post audio for television and film. He currently owns and operates The Hill Sound Studio in Charlottetown, PE.

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Diamond Pedals Comp Jr., Memory Lane Jr. & Nine Zero Two Effects

By Omar Shabbar

I think it's safe to say that we're living in the golden age of guitar pedals. It feels like if you can dream up a sound, you can find a pedal for it, and find it in your price range. While the pedal market is largely dominated by American companies, there are a few Canadian pedal makers who are really holding their own in this rapidly-growing category. One of my all-time favourites is Diamond Pedals, based in Dartmouth, NS. I recently had the chance to play a few of their pedals, and here's what I found:

Comp Jr. Compressor

Compression is Diamond's bread and butter and the CPR-1 (Comp Jr.'s predecessor) put Diamond pedals on the map for a lot of people. The Jr. is a bright yellow, standard single-switch pedal with top-mounting jacks that runs in true bypass. It has three knobs: compression, volume, and EQ. I'm someone who is easily confused by studio compressors but this pedal is laid out exactly like your other gain pedals, which makes it easy to dial in the perfect amount of compression. I will admit that I don't use a compression pedal live; I don't like the way it feels and it's just not my cup of tea. While this pedal didn't convert me to a comp player, I do love the way it can drive a gain pedal or lead channel of an amp. I can see why this pedal has ended up on so many boards and has been such a big success for Diamond.

Memory Lane Jr. Analog Delay

I have played the Memory Lane Jr. before and I can safely say it is my favourite delay pedal... of all time. (Well, at least top three.) Just like the Comp Jr., this all silver, two-footswitch analog delay is extremely intuitive. There's an on/off switch, tap tempo, delay knob, feedback knob, mix knob, and a mod knob, which adds a lush warble-y feel to the delay trails. There's also a time subdivision switch, which allows you to switch between three divisions and a "variable delay time" that produces those great pitch-shifting sounds. You can plug-and-play with this pedal no problem, but if you want to dive deeper, there's a ton of customization available by holding down switches or adjusting dipswitches inside the pedal. You can switch between true or buffered bypass, cut or add

delay trails, enter kill-dry mode, and enter double time.

Controls aside, it sounds incredible. It'll give you those quick slap-back delays to round out your sound, a nice pronounced short delay to thicken your solos, all the way to lush shoe-gazing delay that washes over you. It's pure analog delay goodness.

Nine Zero Two Overdrive

Named after Diamond's Nova Scotia area code, this drive pedal is the one that surprised me the most. I had never played any of Diamond's overdrives so I didn't know what to expect, and the sea foam blue/green chassis made me think it wasn't going to suit my sound. As they say: don't judge a book by its cover. I was very wrong. It, like the Comp Jr., is a standard, single foot-switch pedal with top-mounted jacks. Just as you'd expect, there are three knobs: gain, volume, and tone. What makes this pedal so great is the wide range of tones. If the gain is around 9 o'clock, you'll get some light to mid overdrive that, to my ears, sounds like a Blues Driver with a little bit of that Tube Screamer mid bump. It's perfect for indie and blues. At noon, you're already in distortion land and from here on up, it sounds like a saggy saturated Rat: lush, silky drive with some bite. I normally gig with an overdrive and a distortion/fuzz but I think this could easily replace both of those pedals. The tone knob is really interesting as well. I hear it more as a treble knob because as you turn it up, you don't lose that thick low end. The sign of a good drive pedal is the amount of tones you can get out of it and this pedal has that in spades.

On top of the Comp Jr., Memory Lane Jr., and Nine Zero Two, I've had the chance to play Diamond's Tremolo and Vibrato and I've noticed a few things that all of these pedals have in common. They're all analog and true bypass, though some will allow you to switch to buffered bypass. The design is sleek and simple and always features a quirky solid colour. The pedal itself is a rock. From the chassis to the knobs, switches, and jacks, it's as rugged as anything you'll see on the market. You don't need to use a manual or spend a whole lot of time with these pedals to figure out how to get your desired sound out of them and, most of all, they sound incredible.



The fact that they're made in Canada isn't the reason I'm always recommending people check out Diamond Pedals; it's just the cherry on top.

Omar Shabbar is a gigging musician based out of Toronto. He's also an onsite guitar tech at The Root Down Studio (www.therootdownstudio.com) and a self-proclaimed gear head. In the rapidly changing industry of modern guitar gear, Omar attempts to discern innovation from distraction. Check out his YouTube channel, featuring dozens of gear reviews and performance clips, at YouTube.com/OmarGearReview.

Oeksound Soothe2 Dynamic Resonance Suppressor Plug-In

By Adam Gallant

I first heard about Oeksound and its first plug-in release, Soothe, back in 2017 during a production seminar hosted by Canadian producer Greg Wells. At that time, the company was just in the beginnings of its word-of-mouth success. Oeksound is based in Finland and, since 2016, the company has released Soothe, Spiff, and now, Soothe2 to much acclaim. After years of relying on the original Soothe in our studio, I'm very excited to dig into this updated and upgraded version.

Soothe2 is a resonance suppressor; it finds the loudest, ugliest, ringing frequencies in a source and provides a vast amount of control over how to turn them down. In this review, we'll touch on some successful uses of the plug-in as well as some of the new and improved features.

In Use

One of the biggest hurdles in a production can be preventing harshness. Often, our goal in a mix is to give the listener the ability to turn up the volume and be enveloped in sound. Too much information in the highs and high mids can hinder this experience.

Before the days of Soothe, a multiband EQ and tedious automated EQing of harsh frequencies were common ways to help soften high-end information. The most common example of this harshness tends to be the result of bright-sounding vocalists singing into bright-sounding microphones. Add in lots of compression and saturation downstream and things will get hard to listen to. Enter Soothe. On a lead vocal, this plug-in tends to live later in the signal chain to help "undo" some of the aggressive mids that go along with conventional vocal treatments. It has an extremely pleasing way of sculpting sources and with this latest update, it presents a lot more versatility.

A good starting place to gain an understanding of how to use Soothe is by placing the plug-in on your mix bus. Start by cranking up the depth until the plug-in is very obviously affecting the track, then hit the Delta button to get a sense of how much content the plug-in is reducing. Use the nodes to sweep around and find harsh areas. Disengage the Delta function and back off the depth while bypassing and engaging the plug-in to get a feel for how it behaves.

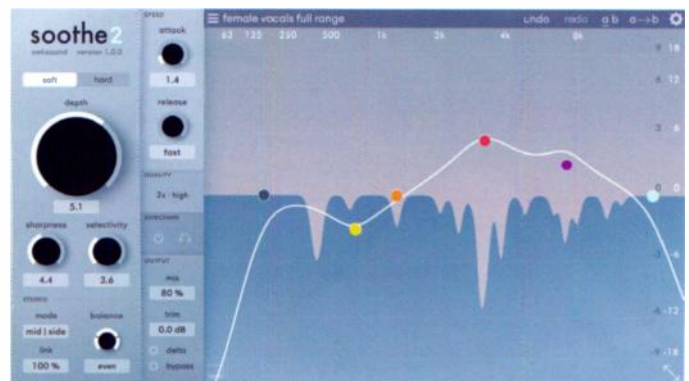
The plug-in looks a bit like an EQ. Moving a node horizontally affects the processing on that band's frequency and moving a node vertically affects the amount of reduction it applies to that specific frequency band (so moving the node up increases the amount of reduction applied). Also like an EQ, we have shelving, bells, and notching nodes, all of which are very flexible.

Aside from a lead vocal, Soothe2 is tremendously helpful on snares that are too gritty, cheap cymbals that have strange and out-of-tune overtones, as well as any instruments that have a general lack of balance in their tonality. By parking the nodes on problem frequencies, sources can be leveled out and the job of mixing becomes more streamlined and enjoyable.

In a recent mix at our studio, we were working on a song with a short recitation meant to sound like it was recorded through a phone. Surely enough, the source had actually been recorded over the phone to voicemail and sounded like an over-cooked, watery, and very harsh MP3. Soothe2 easily irons out all the really ugly high mids while making room for the intelligibility of the human voice.

From Soothe to Soothe2

For readers who are Soothe users and haven't taken the plunge to this latest version, the time is now. The plug-in has been completely rebuilt. Soothe2 uses less CPU power and has twice the usability. The oversampling modes help with transparency and a very unique feature has been added to this update that I have yet to see from other plug-in manufacturers: the oversampling modes can be set independently for online and offline processing. This means that while actively mixing, you can set the plug-in to be less demanding of the CPU. Then, when it comes time to print your mix offline, the offline oversampling setting will kick



the plug-in into its most CPU-demanding mode, giving Soothe all of the processing headroom it needs to behave as transparently as possible.

The GUI has been modernized with a resizable screen and very clear and useful help tips. Its stereo processing features are on par with some of the most celebrated plug-ins on the market (I'm looking at you FabFilter). Each node in the plug-in can work independently on the left or right channel on stereo sources and the output section can be altered to work in left/right or mid/side stereo modes as well as control the stereo linking of the detection.

Imagine a drum submix with a harsh hi-hat on one side and a very silky ride sound on the opposite; there is no better tool to tackle that hi-hat than Soothe2. The new "soft" and "hard" modes give a wider scope of control and transparency, with soft being a more transparent and simpler approach in most cases while hard lets users hone in on extreme resonances and energy build-ups. Lastly, the sonics of the plug-in have also been improved.

Summary

As many of us are relegated to our home studios at the moment, I feel there is no better time to invest in modern tools. I strongly encourage all of our readers to install the Soothe2 demo and do a deep dive; you'll quickly wonder how you ever mixed without it.

Adam Gallant has worked in all facets of digital audio production, from music composition to location and post audio for television and film. He currently owns and operates The Hill Sound Studio in Charlottetown, PE.

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By Hal Rodriguez

Small Steps to "Giant Steps"

I recently transcribed John Coltrane's "Giant Steps" solo and found a simple way to improvise over it for beginner and intermediate jazz guitarists.

The tune has a reputation for being one of the hardest standards to solo over because of its fast tempo and multiple key changes; however, as I transcribed it, I discovered that Coltrane used a few melodic patterns repeatedly to navigate the changes in an easy and elegant way.

In this lesson, I'd like to share two recurring patterns in his solo that use only the Root, 2nd, and 3rd of every chord. If you've ever wondered how to improvise over an intimidating tune like "Giant Steps," these patterns will help you get started.

First Steps

The first Coltrane pattern is to play the Root, 3rd, 2nd, and Root of each chord in that order (1-3-2-1). In Ex. 1, I apply this pattern to the first three bars of "Giant Steps." Notice how this four-note pattern creates a stream of eighth notes that are easy to play, outlines the changes, and fits the duration of each chord. Also take note of the different fingerings I use to play this pattern. This helps for outlining the changes without making large leaps, so it's easier for playing at fast tempos.

The second Coltrane pattern is to play the 3rd, Root, 2nd, and 3rd of each chord (3-1-2-3) as demonstrated in Ex. 2. I suggest practicing both patterns over the rest of "Giant Steps" at a slow tempo and on other areas of the guitar neck.

The fun really begins when you start chaining these two patterns in succession as Coltrane does. In Ex. 3, I alternate between playing 3-1-2-3 and 1-3-2-1. Notice how this sounds more musical and less predictable than just playing the same pattern over every chord. It's also easier to play than Ex. 1 and 2 as the next note in each successive chord is often just one fret away. Again, I recommend alternating these patterns over the rest of the tune at a slow tempo.

Although there are other strategies for soloing over "Giant Steps," Coltrane's patterns are a simple and musical way to get started. Since they involve only four notes, they are easier to use mentally and technically in the beginning than scales. Even if you never plan on playing "Giant Steps" live, practicing these patterns will increase your knowledge of the guitar neck and confidence for playing over other jazz standards.

EX.1

EX.2

EX.3



By Daniel Vnukowski

Seven Steps to Dramatically Improve Your Livestreams (Without the Drama!)

"What do you want? You want the moon? Just say the word, and I'll throw a lasso around it and pull it down," says George Bailey in Frank Capra's bittersweet comedy. Yes, *It's a Wonderful Life* here in the virtual world, where an artist can instantly connect and engage with fans worldwide – from Alaska to Vietnam – with minimal tech skills and quite impressive results.

All you need is an internet connection, a few tech gadgets, and an alarming amount of stamina and persistence.

The good news is that many high-tech gadgets that were once out of reach for the average musician are now available and affordable. The number of pixels your two-year-old smartphone can record is simply staggering. Did you know that your iPhone can record in 4K resolution? "Preposterous!" You say? Read on!

The bad news is that the audio quality on most modern gadgets is still mediocre and not suitable for capturing the many subtle nuances of a classical music performance. Before COVID-19, I was happy to place my smartphone next to the piano keys and stream a short passage onto Facebook Live. It was a pleasant way of sharing a unique musical idea or concept and engaging with viewers from all over the world. Audio quality was not a priority in that scenario.

The challenges and potential roadblocks of livestreaming an entire music performance go up exponentially with every upgrade to your setup. For example, a step-up in resolution from 720p to 1080p requires twice the pixels and, therefore, double the upload bandwidth capacity.

That's why I highly recommend taking things a step at a time. Try to enjoy the learning process with its many quirks and frustrations. Don't attempt to livestream at full 1080p HD resolution with robotic cameras or invest thousands in expensive audio gear and acoustic treatments until you truly know what you're doing or have a professional audio engineer who can assist you in setting everything up.

Here are seven steps to help turn your home into a mini-broadcast studio:

1. Always use a hard-wired ethernet connection. Wifi is simply too unstable and can result in many lost data packets, which are critical to ensure your audience gets a smooth viewing experience.

2. Upgrade your internet connection to the highest upload speed you can afford. Read reviews and shop around to find the most reliable and stable connection in town. Remember that most internet connections are shared among tens of thousands of other customers, so reliability is of key importance when livestreaming. Give your ISP a call and let them help you optimize your router and system configurations.

3. Upgrade your gear in increments. Remember that professional devices require a host of new accessories, which can substantially drive up the costs. Map out a plan that includes your maximum budget and realistic expectations for the project.

4. Let's begin with audio. Most monophonic instruments such as the flute or sax sound quite good on entry-level condenser microphones like the Zoom H5 and IQ6, Shure MV88, and Rode NT1. Many of these can even plug directly into your iPhone, making them ideal for touring.

For more challenging instruments with a wider range of frequencies and dynamics, such as the acoustic piano, you'll have to invest in professional XLR mics in order to properly capture the natural sound of the instrument – for example, a pair of multi-pattern condenser mics.

Mind you, a top-tier solution will also require an audio interface, digital audio workstation, plug-ins, cables, and lots of planning and testing. Entire books have been written about microphone placement alone, which is an art unto itself and more important than the quality of the mics themselves.

5. Great video begins with great lighting. In terms of video quality, most smartphones can do a decent job, especially in well-lit environments. Consider getting adjustable LED lamps or rings so that your talent shines in the best possible light. Also, invest in a few good tripods so that you have more control over the positioning of

your camera and lighting gear.

Note: If you own a DSLR or mirrorless camera, you'll most likely need an adapter and fast computer in order to livestream.

6. To connect your high-end gadgets to the virtual world, you'll need an encoder. This can be software or hardware-based. If you have a decent computer with at least 8 GB RAM, you can get your feet wet with a free software encoder such as OBS Studio, which comes with a host of amazing, professional features once you get to know it. OBS Studio also serves as a switcher to easily transition between multiple camera angles. Hardware encoders and switchers can get quite pricey, but relieve your computer of this CPU-intensive task.

7. Choose an ideal platform. There are free platforms and paid platforms, each with their own set of advantages and disadvantages. Free platforms such as YouTube, Twitch, and Facebook Live are generally the easiest to get started on and can help your livestreams gain instant exposure to a wide audience. Paid platforms, such as Vimeo, offer far more control over your final output and have fewer issues with false copyright claims and other annoyances of free platforms; however, paid platforms generally require several months of payment in advance, which can drive up your costs significantly.

So, you have transformed your home into a mini broadcast studio. Congratulations! Provided you haven't tripped flat on your face over any wire or pulled out (whatever is left of) your hair after a computer freeze, you're ready to take your livestreams to the next level.

Don't make the mistake I did during my first-ever full-performance livestream. After weeks of getting the positioning of microphones just right, I began speaking and, to my horror, the real-time comments started coming back in caps: "WE CAN'T HEAR YOU!" The mics were positioned so far away from me at the piano that I forgot to mic my own voice. So, final words of advice from your virtual sage: Get a lapel mic if you've made it this far!



Internalization Via Externalization

I'm going to go out on a limb and say everyone reading this column has had this experience: You're jamming and you have a great idea to contribute, already fully realized in your mind's ear. You play it just to fall off somewhere in the middle or reasons unbeknownst to you, and you have to return to your original stream, left to ponder what happened. You knew the notes you were going to play, you knew the rhythm, and yet something subtle put you off.

From my own experience I would suggest that an aspect of the rhythm was off, likely the placement of the beat within the metre.

Metric division of time is common to many genres of music around the world, and Western music is no exception. Our language features a synchronous approach to ensemble playing, where the relative placement of rhythms goes to support the harmonic structure and propulsion of the music. Hence why developing a firm internal understanding of the interaction between metre, rhythm, and placement is critical to clarity of harmonic and melodic expression.

We're often advised by our mentors to utilize a metronome if we're going to work on our time and placement. This is a great tool of course, as having an objective time keeper to play against is critical for developing an understanding of the beat. There's even a ton of creative ways one can use the metronome to further challenge oneself by changing how the beat is indicated or perceived.

I have noticed over time though that even with these creative uses of the metronome, all roads lead to the uploading of responsibility for the beat to the musician. After all, the metronome remains an external tool. If you're looking to get the most out of your rhythmic/

vocabulary studies, I would like to suggest an exercise that directly examines the efficacy of one's own internal clock. While it sounds simple on paper, in practice, it can be much more challenging to perform.

A Fresh Exercise

This exercise revolves around projecting your internal clock outside of yourself and playing against that, ensuring that the notes you play cede authority to your internal clock at all times. Simply put, all you have to do is vocalize a click-track or some other stand-in for your metronome and play against that without bending the beat to fit what you are playing. Chances are you've done this at some point by counting a time signature out loud while playing a tricky passage. Doing this can become pedantic if you're applying it to a whole piece/tune/improvisation, though, since the metre itself remains in abstraction; instead, I recommend two approaches that would relate the timekeeping to our own experiences and expectations. We're going further out there to get more at the core of things.

One suggestion would be for you to sing your own click track, or (if you're feeling brave) a cymbal/percussion pattern to play against. This has the benefit of not only replicating a real-world situation that you will often find yourself in, but also of revealing your own expectations for the role of the drummer/time-keeper. Plus, it adds an element of creativity to your practice.

The other approach I would suggest would be to use language as a stand-in for a click. When I was shown this exercise by pianist Jacob Sacks, he used the word "li-ttle" as a representation of binary metres (2/4, 4/4, etc.) This works as well because language has its own rhythm and cadence that will be personalized

to your own body. You can use any words you like, so long as they have shorter, percussive syllables, as longer syllables tend to be a stumbling block.

The next element of this exercise comes from the escalation of what is applied to it. As someone who plays a lot of improvised music, I started by making sure I could alternate a dry two feel and a walking line without any wobble between the rhythmic values. Eventually, I brought in skip beats and ornaments to bring things to a more natural feel. Once that was comfortable, I brought in Charleston figures and all their relevant displacements, then I began filling them in with 1/8th notes. Next was beat figures (3s, 5s, 7s), then basic tuplets and polyrhythms, etc. But we don't have to stop just at technical vocabulary though. We can use this exercise to practice "rushing" and "dragging" against our internal clock to better understand our own tendencies and preferential placements of the beat. Whatever you can imagine, you can apply to this exercise.

When we talk to another person, we're not expected to do so in such specifically discrete packets of time – never mind having to do so with such specific rhythms. We're free to bend and flow with language to change our meaning and emphasis and, so as long as we keep a relative pace and familiar accents, we are well understood. Music adds a degree of synchronicity to this communication. Since we are all speaking at once, we need to have a common ground to speak with. To me, this exercise is the equivalent of learning public speaking skills – removing the superlatives, hesitations, and passive language in our speech to make our ideas more to the point. Even a dead-simple idea stated with command will make a deep impression on the listener.



By Ted Warren

Ratamacue Variations

Pity the poor ratamacue! In the early days of marching drumming, it was the belle of the ball as part of the original 13 drum rudiments. The ratamacue, however, fell on hard times with the rise of the modern drumset. Why?

Well, it's very stogy, symmetrical, and just not very hip-sounding. But fear not! In this article, we'll look at simple ways of displacing the lowly ratamacue to make it more suitable to modern music.

To the right are the single (Ex. 1), double (Ex. 2), and triple ratamacue (Ex. 3) in their original form.

Yawn, right? Okay, I'm going to slightly cheat here, but what would happen if we took the "ruffs" in each passage (the little 1/16th notes) and gave them rhythmic value rather than being just embellishments? Also, let's move each phrase over by an 1/8th note twice. This gives us some cool rhythmic cells that a) start with doubles and b) end with the accent on either the second or third note of a triplet, rather than a downbeat. Check it out in Exs. 4-9!

Now, once we get these ideas together with our hands, we can:

1. Accompany them with the hi-hat and bass drum patterns of our choice.
2. Play all R accented notes on the floor tom and all accented Ls on the small tom.
3. Same as 2 but play all R accents as BD and right side cymbal and all Ls as BD and left side cymbal.
4. Play through all with RH on hi-hat and LH on snare with the BD pattern of your choice.
5. Play through all with RH on bell of cymbal and LH on any combo of rimclick/open snare/toms and BD and hi-hat pattern of your choice.

These are just a few possibilities. Use your imagination. Remember, the rudiments are really just raw material that we can use to create our own grooves and ideas. Have fun!

EX.1



EX.2



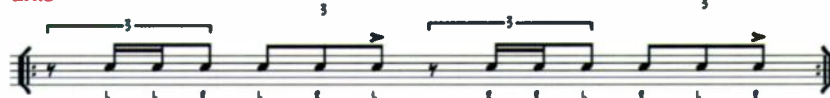
EX.3



EX.4



EX.5



EX.6



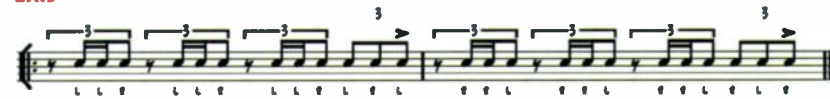
EX.7



EX.8



EX.9





The Woodwind Player's Pandemic Home Studio

Before COVID-19 came crashing down on us in March, I hadn't given a lot of serious thought to home recording. Sure, a home studio was on my wish list, but for the most part, making music was something I left the house to do. When it became obvious that live performance opportunities were going to be very limited for some time, I prioritized getting set up for home recording. In this article, I will share my experience setting up a basic home studio for woodwind recording on a budget.

Computer & DAW

Home recording doesn't require the computing power necessary in a professional studio. I needed to upgrade my 10-year-old MacBook anyway, so I bought a refurbished MacBook Pro. This is a five-year-old machine and it runs all the software I need seamlessly. You can also use a PC, but be aware that many musicians use Mac and things will be easier in terms of file sharing if you are on that platform.

In addition, most major digital audio workstations (DAWs) are Mac-based. This is the software that allows you to record, edit, and mix audio. GarageBand is a basic DAW that comes free with every Mac, and it is really all you need to get started. You can always upgrade to a professional DAW like Logic Pro X or Pro Tools later on.

Microphone

Choosing a microphone can be overwhelming. I would recommend a large-diaphragm condenser mic as the first purchase for a studio. USB mics, which connect directly to your computer, are tempting in terms of price and simplicity, but for quality music recording, you'll want a microphone with an XLR connection. Ribbon microphones are another option, and

while they can sound amazing (especially on saxophones), they are very pricey and also easy to damage. A good condenser mic with adjustable patterns (cardioid, figure-eight, and omni) will set you back \$300-500 and will always be a valuable tool in your home studio. Ask some recording engineers what mics they like to use on woodwinds.

And here's something I learned the hard way: don't cheap out on accessories! The generic XLR cable I bought had a bad connection, and the cheap boom mic stand broke in the first week.

Audio Interface

With an XLR mic you need an audio interface between the microphone and your computer. This little box also provides "phantom power" to your condenser microphone. Be sure you know what type of connections you have available on your computer (USB, Thunderbolt, etc.) before you decide on an audio interface. Apple seems to be constantly changing their connectors so you need to be sure everything is compatible. A basic audio interface with one or two inputs will set you back about \$200.

The Room

My basement studio is 8 x 12 ft. with a 7-ft. ceiling – definitely not an ideal acoustic space. A big issue is reflection of sound. For home recording (and practicing in general), you want to dampen a lot of reflection. Here is a simple solution that I found made a huge improvement: I purchased four acoustic panels from Inity Acoustics here in Toronto and hung two on each long wall. You might need to buy two more for a larger room. They hang in a staggered pattern so that there is no direct wall-to-wall reflection of sound. This made a huge

improvement to the acoustic environment of the room for an investment of just over \$250.

Mic Placement

Mic placement has a huge effect on recorded sound. Remember that most large-diaphragm condenser mics receive sound from the side, as opposed to dynamic mics which get pointed directly at the sound source. Here are some simple guidelines.

Saxophone: I like the microphone at the height of my left hand and angled down towards the bell at a little less than 45 degrees. Personally, I don't like the sound of a really close mic on the saxophone, so my left hand is usually at least a foot away from the mic.

Clarinet: A very challenging instrument to record well. Some engineers use two microphones. To get an even sound with one microphone, you will need to be farther away than you are with saxophone or flute. I like having the top of the mic even with my left hand with the microphone angled down slightly so it is pointed at my right hand. Tiny adjustments up and down or slightly off-axis can make a huge difference.

Flute: It's a common misconception that the flute microphone should be right in front of your nose like it might be on a live gig. If you want a more pure, orchestral flute sound, you can place the mic stand behind you so that the microphone is above the flute and pointed down between your hands from behind. This placement avoids the air sound at the embouchure hole and picks up more of the actual flute tone.

At the end of the day, I spent just over \$1,200 on: the microphone, DAW, audio interface, and acoustic panels to get my modest little home studio up-and-running.



By Chris Coletti

Some Thoughts on Practicing...

How to Have the Right Mindset When You Practice, Improve Efficiency & Develop an Effortless Approach

The word "practice" is an interesting one. In one sense, it's time spent working out kinks and uncovering inefficiencies – it's what we do to improve the various aspects required to play the trumpet well. In another sense, trumpet *is* our practice – a daily ritual akin to yoga or meditation.

While I am certainly not a "perfect practitioner," I sound my best when I'm pairing a consistent, thoughtful, and peaceful daily routine with a big project or performance (or set of performances) that inherently pull(s) me to sound my best.

Establishing Your Routine

Ideally, the routine is something that touches on every technical aspect of trumpet daily and is modified slightly every week, depending on how effective it has been. Changes can be to the material itself, or the ratio of time allotted to a particular exercise vs. the full routine.

Musically, there should always be a project coming up. This is essential. Spending lots of time in the practice room without having meaningful and challenging musical experiences to look forward to will often solidify what you already do. This is not ideal.

Performing and collaborating with others that inspire you, on the other hand, will make you question everything. **Great musical experiences and collaborations help you ask yourself better questions about what you should be working and improving on in the first place.** Of course, the current pandemic limits our projects and collaborations to recording projects, but this can be extremely useful! I always have several recording projects I am working on at any given time and they each make me think hard about how exactly I

want to sound and, more importantly, what I need to do to get there.

To work on effortlessness, in particular, the two areas that seem to matter most are improved sound production and the pursuit of highly developed flexibility. Developing excellent flexibility teaches you to use your air better and bring the notes closer together, putting the entire range of the trumpet within arm's reach.

A good benchmark of flexibility is the ability to do lip trills. Once you can do these consistently, it's like suddenly playing a piano when before you were playing a toy with giant keys; the toy can sometimes be more accurate, but everything else is clunky and limited.

Having excellent flexibility makes the trumpet easy. Fortunately, a beautiful sound is also effortless, although attaining it takes hours/years/a lifetime of work.

A forced sound is unfortunately common on trumpet. This is achieved by playing past the point of diminishing return. It can sound ok, but will never be pure and truly beautiful – and certainly not effortless.

Playing with too little sound is also very common, and also inefficient as the physics of trumpet are heavily reliant on air speed and air volume. (Note, that pertains to the amount of air, not loudness.)

Happy trumpeteering!

This article is based on a post from Chris's official blog at www.trumpetchrisblog.com – a valuable resource for anyone interested in becoming a top performer.



Performing Live as a DJ

Part 2: Constructing a Routine *From FutureDJs: How to DJ*

A routine is a showcase of skill, creativity, dexterity, mastery of the instrument, and compositional technique. It is an art form like no other in that it is judged on the technical ability displayed, the artistry of the performance, and the composition of the routine itself. It is an opportunity for scratch DJs to compete with one another; to showcase a new technique, their own ability, their ideas, to communicate, to perform, to push boundaries...

Techniques in a scratch routine generally include scratching, beat-juggling, and hotcue drumming. DJs will utilize beats, samples, a cappella, and hot cues, and routines can last from 60 seconds to 15 minutes. There is no formula. Structure, much like in constructing a mix, can help organize your creativity as well as be creative in itself.


Routine Structure

A DJ mix is a journey – always moving in a new direction. Think of a routine as being like a story. The pacing and structure of a story affects the impact of the details within it. A good story isn't just about what is told, but the way it's told. A story may centre on a particular character, or an important message. Whether you work from the outside in or the inside out, the overall form will determine how well your ideas are heard.

Typical Structures in Music:

 This comprises two contrasting sections. How these sections contrast is up to you – it may be techniques, sounds, complexity, etc.

 Like any story, themes and characters develop and return. So can your ideas. A story, however, never repeats itself exactly. There is always a reason for the recap.

 This form keeps returning to a particular idea. As above, it helps to develop the A idea to maintain interest. Consider how the other contrasting sections affect the A sections as they return.

 Adding an intro and outro can frame your routine.

Climax

What and where is the climax of your routine? The climax may be the most technically complex section – the most musically intricate, the most impressive, or the most exciting. It is the moment that your routine is building towards – the culmination of all that has come before. As in a DJ mix, the climax is often best left until the final third.



Techniques

Consider separating your routine into sections according to technique. What skills do you have in your armoury? Work with what you know and choose a

suitable level of complexity, then divide them into the sections of your routine. Where are your strengths? It's often good to start simple and get gradually more complex.

Themes

Where does your story take place? Is there a common theme that connects the sections – for example, eras of music, genres, artists, music with particular messages or connotations, etc.? What does your choice of samples and beats say about you as a DJ and performer?

What's the Moral of the Story?

Take a step back from the overall form and think about the point of your routine. What are you trying to achieve? Which messages does your choice of music and approach send to others? What are you communicating?

Listen, Listen, Listen

Ideas rarely spring from nowhere. Research and critical listening will help inspiration strike. Unless you are producing your own sounds, your routine uses music already out there; you have to go find it! You can't make a routine with tracks you haven't heard, so go and listen!



This column is an excerpt from the book *FutureDJs: How to DJ*, published by Faber Music. Get it now at www.musicbooksplus.com.

Jeremy Drury is a multi-instrumentalist based in Hamilton, ON. Best known as the drummer of Juno-winning group The Strumbellas, Jeremy headed to Toronto's Lincoln County Social Club and, with John Dinsmore at the engineering helm, recorded his self-produced debut. Influenced from many years of playing in Toronto's club scene with indie, alt-rock, folk, and punk groups, *Company Store* is a true melting pot of genres. The brand-new solo album is out now. www.jeremydrury.com.

By Jeremy Drury



From Behind the Kit to Behind the Mic

There's a clip of the band doing group vocals in the video for The Strumbellas' "The Bird That Follows Me" from late 2010 where I'm clearly holding a beer in my hand. I look back at this and think about some of the vocal duties I've been called upon to perform with the band, and what started out as shouting "Hey!" a few times eventually transformed into both melodic and harmonic contributions both on record and live, where holding a beer while performing feels like it's now the last thing I'd want to do...

From the Background...

Doing backup and group vocals can be a very forgiving endeavour. With the goal of not having a single voice stick out and a mixer or producer at the helm guiding the group as a whole, it creates an environment that allows (and sometimes encourages!) a bit of sloppiness in both timing and pitch to get the desired effect. The recording process sees multiple layers and passes of the same section that, when blended together, give The Strumbellas their signature gang vocal sound. For a drummer like myself, with little vocal experience outside my home recordings, it was a very comfortable place to be. My confidence found solace in the herd, hidden from view of the onlooking predator.

While you'd always see me at the back of the stage singing along, it wasn't until we eventually moved to in-ears while touring *Hope* in 2016 that I decided it was time to stick a mic in front of me. Being able to hear both the band and my own voice was next to impossible with a wedge monitor when also two feet from a drum kit. The in-ears, combined with having a great monitor engineer help to get a file set up for me, gave me a bit more of that confidence

I was lacking. While there was something of a learning curve to figure out how and when I was going to be able to contribute vocally while focused on the primary function of playing drums, it was a fun challenge that started to fall into place over a few gigs.

Previously, because I had no mic, I'd just be doing my own thing before a gig while others did vocal warmups. It quickly became apparent that I needed to start getting into that routine with the rest of the band. It really wasn't a surprise that there is, in fact, a big difference between singing into the air with no concern for pitch, and making it through even three songs while maintaining any type of control over pitch, breathing, and simply trying not to blow your voice to shreds.

...to the Forefront

Not only did the vocal warmups prepare me for gigs; they also started helping push my range, as some of the exercises were designed to stretch the comfort a touch. It's really quite telling, going through those warmups and getting a sense of where your body is at – knowing if I was hydrated enough, if I'd had enough sleep, or was generally calm and feeling low stress. These things all started to show themselves in the warmups, the performances themselves, and my ability to talk with fans after a gig. This experience has been a great eye-opener as I start exploring my solo career, where I'm faced with my voice being the upfront centre of focus.

Not being blended into group or gang vocals has been such a great exercise in being exposed. There's no hiding. There's no trailing off at the end of a phrase. There's no singing softer to "save" a voice that's been pushed too hard, and there's certainly no room for fumbling with lyrics.

I've very much found that, just like with drums, there's a big element of muscle memory involved, and that regular exercise makes such a huge difference between being able to perform a song or two before the burnout starts to set in, and still feeling limber and loose after a full set.

When it came time to record vocals for my own album, the additional challenge of trying to match my vocals with the music stylistically presented itself. I wanted to dig in a bit more on songs that called for a bit of grit and back off for a softer touch on the ballad. This truly tested my range and ability far beyond what I'd been called on for in the past.

I made sure I was starting my days with the warmups, then the "softer" tracks, then took on the more challenging parts nearing the end of the day, when my voice was both adequately loose and pushing myself too far wasn't going to burn the day if I needed to stop. Learning when to stop was also extremely important. Again, just like any other instrument or working out specific muscle groups, rest is very important.

As I begin my journey that takes me out from behind the drum kit, I feel the work I've done on my vocal performances with The Strumbellas has given me a great boost in both confidence and ability. Like drums, or any other instrument for that matter, there will always be room for improvement, and I know I've got a lot of work to do to get to a place I want to be vocally. I try to work at it every day, and while the growth can be hard to discern from one day to the next, looking back at that old footage with beer in hand (and a glass of water sitting next to me as I write this now!), I know I'm already in a better place both mentally and physically.



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COINCIDENTALLY COMFORTING

Hannah Georgas' *All That Emotion* Is an Album for the Times

By Adam Kovac

Hannah Georgas is doing okay today.

That's not really a given for anybody. As I write this, COVID-19 is still a problem. Kids are heading back to classes, but they are expected to stay distant and their parents are trying not to panic. Too many Canadians are mourning lost loved ones and friends.

And that's on top of everything else going on in the world. The protests that brought renewed attention to Canada's troubled relationship with Indigenous peoples seem like they were a decade ago; they were actually at the beginning of this year, and it's not like reconciliation has miraculously happened. Climate change is still out there, Black people are still fighting to make sure their lives matter, demagogues have taken power over an alarming amount of Europe, Australia is healing from wildfires, the Middle East is... the Middle East, and the Narcissist in Chief down south may or may not close enough postal offices to ensure his reign continues come November.

But all that being said, Hannah Georgas is doing okay – at least as okay as any of us can be doing.

"I have days where I'm like 'Holy crap!' Like there's just so much that's going on and it's very overwhelming and I do notice that I have this underlying stress and things sometimes that I'm not even aware of. There's a lot of good that's going on in the world [but] it's just a very heavy time and it's a lot to take in. So some days are easier than others, but overall, I feel like I'm okay."

The world is coming to a near-end at a particularly inopportune time for Georgas. The Vancouver native's fourth full-length album of original music, *All That Emotion*, dropped in early September after being delayed several months. The pandemic means that, as with most musicians, touring is out of the question for the moment. That sucks, because even for someone as accomplished as Georgas, who has been nominated for Junos and longlisted for the Polaris Prize and won her share of other awards, *All That Emotion* is a career highlight.

It's been four years since the world has heard new original music from Georgas, but while her latest songs are largely about making sense of pain, her fans will have

to enjoy them from the same place where Georgas is now that she's not on the road: home.

It may have been four years since Georgas' last album, but it's been anything but a quiet time. Over that span, Georgas has released the digital-only collection *Imprints*, featuring an array of covers of other female artists. She's also hit the road on her own and then again as a touring member of The National.

Georgas' close relationship with the indie mope-kings is obvious on the new album. As with The National, much of the focus of *All That Emotion* is on atmosphere and mood. Songs go by dreamily, carried on waves of mid-tempo, no-frills drums and layers of sounds: a guitar line here, a wash of keyboards there, all adding up to form a pop symphony.

The aesthetic similarities are no surprise, given that *All That Emotion* was produced by The National multi-instrumentalist Aaron Dessner – a collaboration that was a long time coming.

"I reached out to Aaron back in 2015 about the idea of trying to work together in some capacity on music," recalls Georgas. "I kind of drew to him randomly because I love what he's worked on and I'm a big fan of the band. He responded and just asked for me to send him some music."

"There's this emotional connection that I have with everything that he makes," she elaborates. "I'm just really drawn to his choices for production and I really, really wanted to just try stuff with him – especially with the music I was writing and making. I thought he would add a really cool element to the songs. I listened to The National for years and years and years and I'm always blown away by it and how beautiful and simple the production is, but it's still so lush and sounds so good."

The pair's creative relationship blossomed over email, as Georgas sent over demos for songs that wound up on her 2016 collection, *For Evelyn*. While they discussed entering the studio together, Dessner's busy schedule made that a temporary impossibility. But as the touring cycle for her album came to an end and Georgas

began working on a new set of songs, the musical stars aligned. On *For Evelyn*, Georgas began writing primarily on piano in contrast with her previous records, which were written mainly on guitar. She maintained that approach on *All That Emotion*.

"I was demoing at home with a little synth that I use," she shares. "I like using this synth because it kind of steers me away from the way I normally go or the things that I gravitate to, to go about writing a song. Sometimes I would just start playing a beat and then that would inspire a melody and then from there, chords would come in and things like that. I tried different ways to be creative in the demoing process, but I still think piano is my main instrument and what I'm most comfortable with."

Georgas and Dessner – who more recently produced Taylor Swift's massively-successful 2020 effort *Folklore* – found a rhythm that allowed them to work quickly on arrangements while still making sure each song centred around the key components: Georgas' understated piano parts and lilting vocal melodies.

"We would track me on piano and singing the song and then from there we would build a foundation on top of that," says Georgas. "We would create drum loops. Really early on in the process we brought this fellow named Jason Treuting into the studio to play drums, who plays for this really awesome drum quartet named Sō Percussion and he is just, like, one of the most fascinating drummers I've ever heard and seen."

"From there, we would spend basically a day where we'd open up, like, two songs at a time, and we would just start painting and adding overdubs to each song, and then take a break and move on to the next song and then come back, take a break, on to the next song... And then at the end of seven days, we had opened up, like, 11 songs."

Simple and lush is an apt description of *All That Emotion*. On the album, songs are often propelled by static drum loops. Gauzy keyboards alternately move the melody forward and provide the stirring atmosphere while sparse single-note guitar lines echo around the stereo spectrum. Where *For Evelyn* had danceable beats and thrumming synthesizers, *All That Emotion* dials it back down, leaving the songs to speak for themselves. The soundtrack for the quiet evening of reflection rather than a big night out.

Which is fitting, since as we speak, few people are able or wanting to hit the clubs. There is a downbeat aura to *All That Emotion* that speaks perfectly to the COVID-19 era. The song of the summer might be Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's "WAP," but club bangers seem somehow offensive when there are no clubs to bang.

Georgas' latest fits more into some of the other critical darling-esque releases that garnered glowing *New Yorker* writeups this summer: Fiona Apple's *Fetch the Bolt Cutters* or Phoebe Bridgers' *Punisher*. Death tolls and the battering of the daily news cycle aside, the summer of 2020 is by and large a time for, if not outright depression, at least quiet contemplation. *All That Emotion* might not call out humanity's sins and hubris by name, but the vibe is quietly reflective nonetheless. In terms of scoring the reckoning we're all going through, we could do a lot worse.

Of course, the songs were written way before terms like "social distancing" entered the popular lexicon. But Georgas says the lyrics address issues specific to her – namely, self-doubt and a tendency to overanalyze – so the larger themes couldn't be more timely.

"I definitely wrote everything in a concentrated period of time in 2018. And I feel like a lot of it, all of the songs that I wrote, have to do with resilience and kind of finding hope and a way out on the other side of tough situations; with self-reflection and getting up every day when things aren't so easy. There's a lot about heartbreak and just a lot of self-reflection about who I am and why I act the way I do and the habits I have."

There's a universality to this type of self-flagellation. Who can't identify with a lyric like: "Say everything you need to say / Hey, I can be your punching bag"? Everyone has a toxic relationship with a significant other, or a parent or a sibling or a friend somewhere in their past. While Georgas says she had very specific incidents in mind while writing, there was a conscious effort to generalize the feelings behind those moments.

"I do write with the intent of wanting people to draw their own experience from [the lyrics] – like I don't want to give too much away, I guess. But I feel like as a music listener, I find my own experiences in songs that I love and it may not be the same as what that writer was intending to say, or what exactly they were going through, but they spoke to me somehow and that's how I try to kind of get things out with my process."

Still, hints of Georgas' own past peek through. On "Same Mistakes," she muses about her childhood, crooning about how she "grew up in a family of wolves."

"I come from a very big family. I have a lot of siblings and I just feel like a lot of the time I was trying to defend myself," she says, chuckling. "There's a lot of disfunction in my family at times, which I'm sure everybody has experienced. That's where that was coming from. I felt like it was harder to be at home growing up than it was to be outside of my home and be in school. It's hard to process when you're a teen or a kid; it's not easy."

HANNAH GEORGAS



PHOTO: VANESSA HEINS

All That Emotion is an album about healing from those old cuts. But healing is a challenge when the world seems like one big, infected wound; when leaders have been anything but, when we fear for our lives from enemies both invisible and systemic, when fears for the future are overshadowed by the terrors of right now. So how do you heal when every day feels like a brand-new cut?

"It's surrounding yourself with the people that love you and that are essentially family. Being able to talk things through is like a huge thing for me. And yeah, therapy. I keep telling myself like, 'I need to go to therapy.' I think everybody needs to go to therapy. It comes in so many different ways. It's like, getting out for a walk, it's getting exercise, it's eating well, it's talking to friends. It's going to talk to a professional. It's making music, it's doing those types of things like learning and listening and also like, shutting off, too – taking time for yourself to process things. That's kind of where I find my mind's at."

Having time to find your centre is a good thing. But musicians have to eat, and, as with many other Canadians, revenue

streams have dried up. A lucrative festival season has gone by with no festivals. Georgas, like everyone else, is trying to re-figure out what exactly her career is right now. Despite having a new album out,

"I feel like a lot of it, all of the songs that I wrote, have to do with resilience and kind of finding hope and a way out on the other side of tough situations; with self-reflection and getting up every day when things aren't so easy."

the creative well hasn't run dry; she's still writing while she's at home. After all, it's not particularly hard to find a need for catharsis right now, though she admits that she's coming to terms with the fact that some days are just more fruitful than others.

But the creative side isn't the issue, as the world just keeps churning out more

topics for songwriters to mull over. The business side is what's been thrown into chaos. Outside of the occasional drive-in show or gimmicky stunt by has-beens like Vanilla Ice, the concert business is still at a standstill as Georgas speaks with *Canadian Musician* in late July.

"Everybody's trying to pivot and find out how to do this with untethering touring from the picture. It's different. We're figuring out livestreaming stuff and other ways to do some shows without being able to have performances in venues and without a way to promote your record in the towns you're in. It's tricky but I feel like I'm doing a lot at home.

"We're all just figuring it out, one at a time. The good thing about the situation we're in is people are wanting to hear music right now. I think the livestream thing is hard because I think people are also tired of being on their phones, or at least I am. But people want to hear music, so I think there's ways and we'll figure it out. But I don't know."

When *For Evelyn* came out, Georgas described the album as being about overcoming fear. *All That Emotion* is about overcoming pain. With plenty of time to re-



PHOTO: DAVID BASTEDO

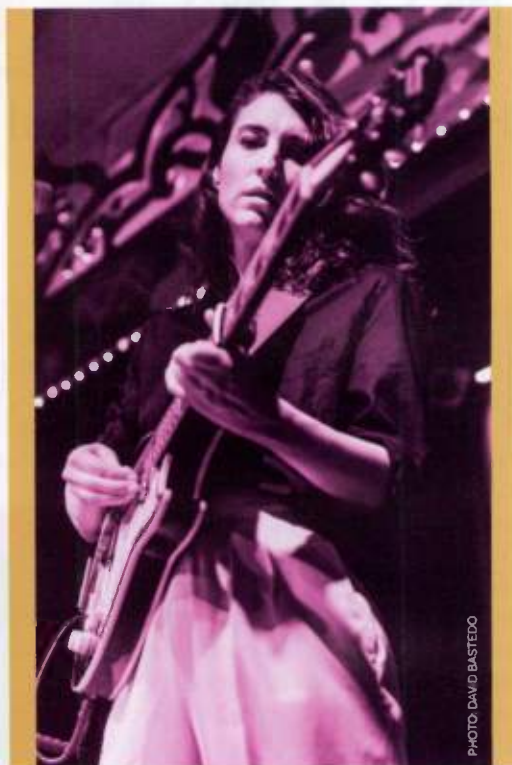


PHOTO: DAVID BASTEDO



PHOTO: VAINESJA HEINS

flect on her life as the world sits around on pause, is there any possibility we might get a Hannah Georgas album for the post-pandemic party that's about happiness?

"I don't know! I like writing and hearing music about these types of things. Maybe I'm just a grumpy or sad soul or something, but hearing music

about these types of things makes me feel good for some reason. It helps me. I'll write about happy things but I get a lot out of real experiences and things that are uncomfortable, so I don't know... Someday, maybe."

Adam Kovac is a freelance journalist based out of Montreal.

TOOLS OF HER TRADE

Hannah Georgas' go-to setup for live performance

- Harmony Stratotone Electric Guitar
- Fender Blues Jr. Combo Amplifier
- TC Electronic Hall of Fame Reverb Pedal
- Diamond Pedals CPR1 Compressor Pedal
- Overdrive Pedal
- Roland VR-09 Live Performance Keyboard
- Wurlitzer Electric Piano
- Sennheiser e835 Vocal Mic

BABY ON BOARD

How do professional musicians with kids make it work?

If you have a child, or especially more than one, you've had this realization: you had no concept of how free, flexible, and relaxed your life actually was. Yes, kids bring an oddly-indescribable type of happiness into your life, but that is mixed with thoughts of, "Can we afford a kid?" and "What does this mean for my career?" It's all part of that constant mental conversation we have with ourselves. It doesn't really matter who you are; children add a literal lifetime of unpredictability into the mix – and this is true whether you're a banker or a builder.

But let's be real. Some jobs are easier to balance with parenthood than others. Adding the unpredictability of parenthood to a professional musician's already unpredictable work life makes for one hell of a balancing act – but one people have been ably performing for decades.

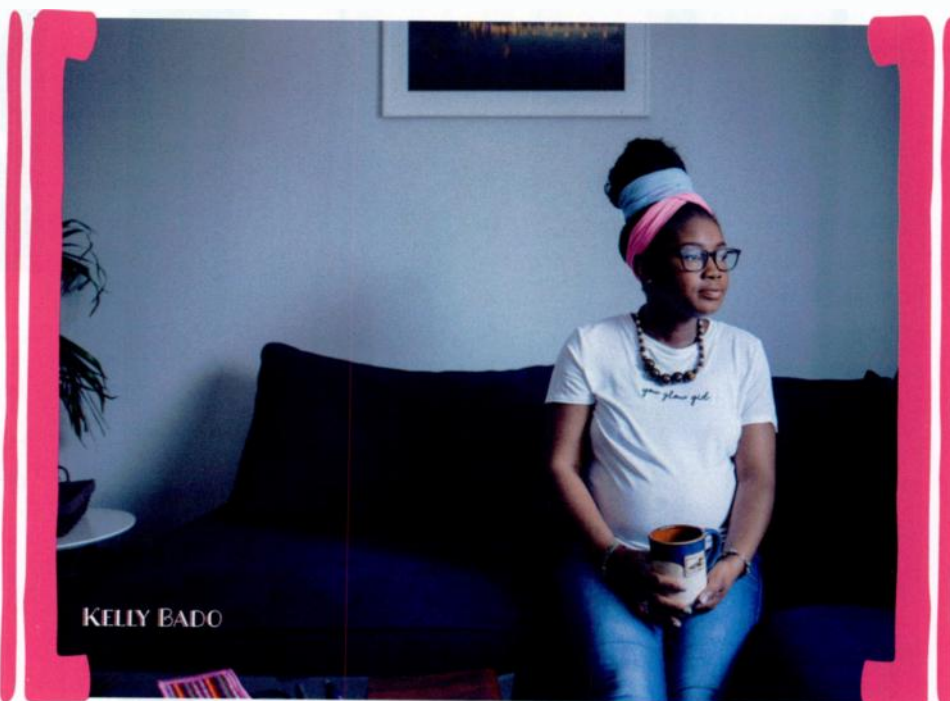
There's rarely a "perfect time" for a baby

When you're expecting a child, or even discussing the prospect, a commonly-shared bit of wisdom is that, for most people, there is no such thing as the perfect time. Whether it feels like your career is going up, down, or sideways, there is always a reason to think that later would be better. What you're often told is some version of, "If you have a kid, you'll figure it out one way or another." And like so many of those parenting clichés, well, it's mostly true.

"The band was literally taking off. All these doors were opening and everything was happening; all this great stuff was coming our way, and we were travelling and having this intense, *intense* point in our career. That's when I found out I was pregnant," recalls Walk Off the Earth's Sarah Blackwood about her first pregnancy in 2012. She and her partner/bandmate, Gianni Nicassio, now

have three sons: Giorgio (seven), Luigi (five), and Romeo (three). "I actually knew I was pregnant while we were on tour and I was like, 'I'm not going to do a pregnancy test until I get home because a tour is already so exhausting. It was like, 'I cannot know that

"For me, it was a very high-stress time. But at the same time, I didn't know where I was going to go. I was still signed and things were relatively positive and I had some type of trajectory. ... But in retrospect, I could see that things were crumbling," he



on top of this right now!"

For Jarrel Young – a chart-topping DJ, producer, singer, and songwriter who just launched a solo career under the moniker Jarrel The Young – his three-year-old daughter arrived at a turbulent time in his career. He and his creative partner in the duo Young Wolf Hatchlings were signed to a major label, had recently won an ASCAP Pop Award for the Fall Out Boy track "Uma Thurman," and had worked with a number of other high-profile artists. But Young could feel their group's momentum was waning and that was exposing simmering problems between them and with their business team.

shares. "Obviously, I think the main thing for anybody who travels like I do is just being around. You want to be present for everything. Luckily, as I was saying, things were slowing down, so it never really came to it, but I think my biggest concern was not being there and not being able to support my family the way I needed to. I think a lot of that was me compensating for not necessarily having a lot of other things figured out. I didn't know where the next set of money was coming from and I didn't know what the next steps would be, concretely, but I really wanted to make sure that I was going to be there emotionally and support-

wise for my family.”

For Kelly Bado – an acclaimed Manitoba-based singer-songwriter currently nominated for Francophone Artist of the Year at the 2020 Western Canadian Music Awards – she and her husband found out they were expecting their son, who’s now one, just before Bado was about to begin a year of recording and promoting her debut LP. At the time, she had just received a grant to make the album and didn’t know what to do.

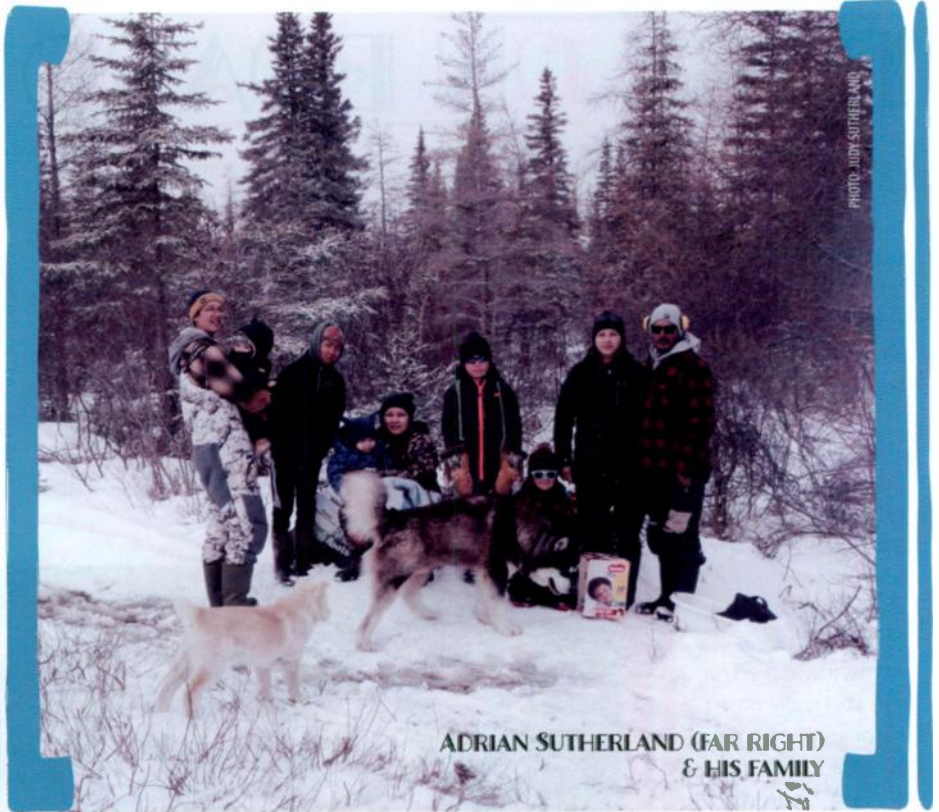
“I got the grant and I got pregnant and, you know, it’s hard to get grants sometimes, especially at a level where it’s going to be my first full album. So, I felt like, ‘If I say I’m taking a year off, then I’m losing the opportunity; what am I going to present for people next year to give me the grant?’ Like, I am going to be off the radar and all that. I felt I had no choice but to find a way to continue the music with the baby, so then my fear was, am I going to get hired once people know I’m pregnant? Once they know I have a baby, is that going to require that they give me extra because I need care for the baby? How am I going to manage?” she reveals.

Learning the balancing act

“They were kind of like, ‘OK. Shit. What are we going to do? What are you going to need? Can you play shows? What are the cut-off dates and what are the times when you’re not going to be around?’ and all that,” Blackwood recalls about bringing the news of her first pregnancy to the rest of the band and Walk Off the Earth’s management, agent, and label.

Blackwood found out she was pregnant soon after WOTE’s cover of “Somebody That I Used to Know” went viral and they dropped their first original single, the double-platinum-selling “Red Hands.” Given that, there were a lot of shows and other promotional commitments in the works, including shows planned for right around her due date.

“They were like, ‘Well, what if we found someone to replace you for a few months until you come back?’ I know how important it is to be the face of something or to maintain that and I was like, ‘Are you fucking kidding me? No. Who are you going to replace me with? Beyoncé? Who are you going to get that is going to work an audience the way that I can? That is an insanely stupid idea and will hurt the band,’” she recalls, laughing about it now, but no less sincere in her conviction. “Our fans want to know who we are. They don’t want to see



a replacement. They’d probably rather wait a month and come see us when I can be there. So, we obviously steered away from that [laughs]. I just said, ‘Look, I am going to need a little bit of time, probably around three weeks to a month depending on what kind of birth I have. I’ve done the research and asked a ton of questions and I know I can bring a baby on tour with me.’

And so they did. Walk Off the Earth have toured regularly with Blackwood and Nicassio’s kids in tow. When their second and third sons were added to the entourage, Blackwood says it was, well, “easier” isn’t the right word, but at least more routine. “After the first [child], though, that was the biggest adjustment because that’s when your life takes a huge 180. I think it was the hardest at that point,” says Blackwood. “Like, when we would go on tour or when we would have to go to work, everybody still got to do their regular schedule and get their regular sleep, but my sleep was taken out. Honestly, it’s the sleep thing. Lack of sleep is the hardest thing to deal with.”

Nonetheless, Blackwood acknowledges that WOTE are lucky to have the resources at their disposal to make touring with children doable, such as having a nanny on tour and a second tour bus for the family. She often thinks about what would’ve happened if she had gotten pregnant earlier. “Gianni and I both played in bands before WOTE, and

even WOTE’s early years were all about touring in a van and sleeping on people’s floors and playing shows for seven people. You know, just the grind of the road and I think, absolutely, if we were at that point and I had gotten pregnant, there is no way I would’ve been able to do tours.”

It being early in her professional career, Bado did not have the luxury of a travelling nanny or private tour bus. For her, the first six months of her son’s life were a major adjustment. She took off the first few months after giving birth, but then jumped right back into recording and performing.

“There already were opportunities for me to showcase and there were showcases happening that I really didn’t want to miss,” she says. “Definitely it was hard when I was travelling with him before COVID. It was an adjustment. The hard part is that I was alone. I had to carry the baby all through the airport, I had to find his things, I had to feed him, and then I had to go perform and then talk to the musicians, etc. It was a lot because my husband couldn’t come with me, nobody could come with me, it was just me.”

At that time, organizations like FACTOR and Musicaction did not include childcare as an eligible allocation for grant money. Such grants could be used to pay touring musicians or sound technicians, but not someone to look after your kid while you’re

BABY ON BOARD

at soundcheck. So, while Bado was lucky to get grants to help her attend showcases in Montreal, Ottawa, and New Orleans, she was on her own for childcare, which was a strain. Thankfully, beginning in 2020, those organizations now include childcare as a touring expense that the grant can be used to pay for.

"I felt really exhausted after the few showcases I had. I was too exhausted. Like I said, just having to carry him alone and no grants to pay for help, and all the physical effort that this required

and the fact that he was crying because he felt like he was not home, it was hard on me. So, I really wasn't helping my case either way," Bado says she realized in retrospect. "I feel like if I had taken that year – and it sucks that it took COVID for us to realize this – but I would've had the year to take care of myself, take care of the baby, spend beautiful time together, and take my time to prepare grants and an album. Nothing would be rushed. I really felt like I was rushing because I was

expecting and things had to be done before the baby comes."

The efficient use of his creative time is the big lesson Young learned in the first year of his daughter's life. For years, he was a studio rat, spending all night tinkering away on a track until it fell into place. It was an approach that worked for many years because he had the luxury of time, but time is a not a luxury parents have. As such, he's learned to do a lot more prep work before going into the studio to maximize that time.

"In the beginning it affected my creativity a lot because I almost didn't know how to be efficient. Part of being a professional songwriter is being proficient and being professional. Those are great things, but a lot of music-making for me came from playing in the sandbox. Like, I was confident I would get it at some point between now

and tomorrow if I'm in the studio for 20 hours, you know what I mean? I wasn't as confident in, 'I'm going to get it in six hours.' So, I struggled a little in the beginning to be proficient in shorter periods of time and then being able to turn that creativity on and off," he reveals.

It was the same experience for Blackwood and Nicassio, who would often pull all-nighters in the studio or work 18-hour days to shoot and produce a video in their childless years.



WALK OFF THE EARTH'S SARAH BLACKWOOD & GIANNI NICASSIO WITH THEIR SONS

"Obviously, once I got pregnant, that started to change – even just naturally because my body was like, 'You can't do this; you need to get on a better schedule,'" she says. These days, they set stricter parameters on their schedule, and it's about "meeting in the middle with what our management and team is expecting or hoping we'll do and what we actually are comfortable with doing."

Young says the turning point for him, in terms of finding a healthier work-life balance, came when his daughter was about a year-and-a-half old. With a family vacation approaching, he'd been working non-stop to finish a Young Wolf Hatchlings album as well as one he was producing for R&B artist Zolo. The albums got done, but it left him burnt out.

"I had a nice balance going on when I was a free dude, but when you add the weight of a

child on top of that, things shift and I got really unhappy and really unsatisfied and stressed out. That is when I realized I needed to change," he says. "To be honest, I wish I could tell you I came back from that trip and was in a perfect flow, but I'm still learning to be a better dad and a better professional every day. It's a process and a commitment."

"I think one of the challenges I was having as a father and husband is, when I was coming home from any tours, it was adjusting back to family life. I was finding it really, really hard adjusting back. Because when you're out travelling, you're alone and just responsible for yourself. You have a busy schedule and are doing stuff, but it was adjusting

back to home life and making meals for the kids and getting them up for school and helping them with homework. Those things were really challenging for me initially," says Adrian Sutherland of the band Midnight Shine.

In a number of ways, Sutherland's experience balancing a music career and family life is very different than most. For one, he lives in the fly-in Cree community of Attawapiskat in Northern Ontario, which means travelling takes on a whole other level

of hassle and expense. But importantly, Sutherland and his wife already had three kids – and a fourth came shortly thereafter – in 2009 when he decided to pursue music. His wife, Judy, was supportive, but also understandably worried about him leaving a well-paying (albeit time-consuming and stressful) career for the financial instability of a music career.

"It's always been a tough conversation, to be honest. As parents, your biggest priority, first and foremost, is always the kids, and a lot of times parents end up sacrificing things that they love to do and dreams that they may have. I think if anyone sacrificed a lot, I would say it's my wife – especially being committed and allowing me to pursue this music career and the support I've had from her has just been amazing. But those

conversations have always been difficult ones. You know, I think for a while it was difficult for her to understand because there was really no monetary value in what I was doing for a long time," Sutherland shares. He also concedes that had his kids been younger, rather than in their adolescent and teen years when he took on music fulltime, he may have never made the jump. "I think it would've been a lot more difficult and probably put a lot more strain on my relationship. I don't want to say it would've been impossible, but certainly a lot more difficult."

Seeking out advice

As a parent, there's no shortage of advice you're given, often unsolicited. Some of it you take to heart, some of it you disregard, and some of it you disregard before realizing you should've taken it to heart.

"I thought, 'What about women who are artists?' So, I talked to some friends and there were some hard stories that I heard, like: 'I had my baby and was separated at the time and had to take him to the bars and perform.' Other nice stories were more where it's a couple but they're both singers. That was the best scenario because they're both traveling with the kid and they would both go all the way together," recalls Bado. "So, my fear was how I would manage with the baby because as the mother, I am going to have to take the baby with me. Am I going to take a sabbatical year and just not do anything?"

In retrospect, that's sort of what she wishes she'd done – and would suggest to others. Nonetheless, she accepted the grants from Musiaction and Manitoba Film and Music and got the album done. That debut LP will be out Oct. 30th.

"I would recommend that people enjoy their pregnancy and the first months with the baby until they feel like they're ready to go about it, and take that time to do the administrative part. You could work on your social media presence and website, write music, and all these things that are part of the job," she says. "I don't know why I felt like I needed to get the project done. In my head, it was a must at that time. [But] it's okay now; I've done it and I'm proud of it and just trying to get things out."

Young has a similar perspective. Like he

said earlier, it took a couple years for him to learn it the tough way, so if there's one thing he would tell other artists expecting a baby, it's to prioritize time with your family. "Family is number one and there's no restart on that, so focus on what you got to do to take care of your family so that there's no regrets moving forward."

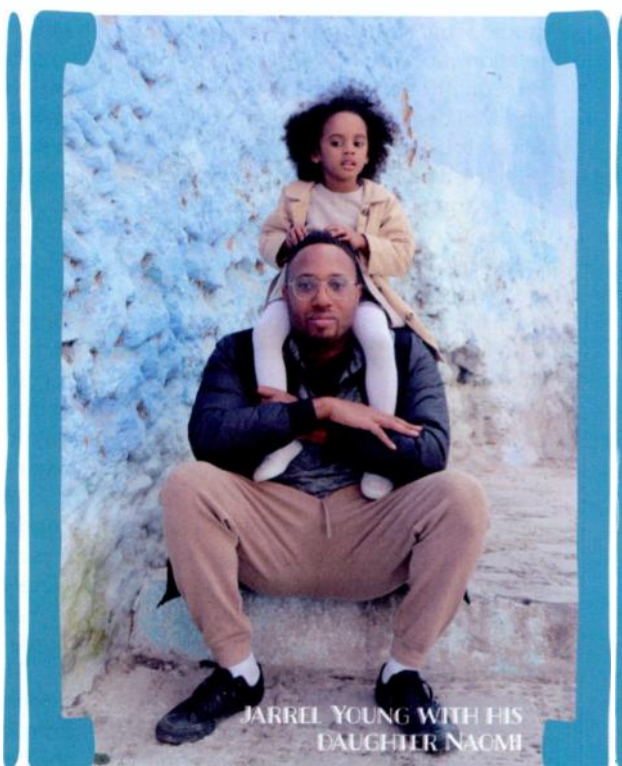
Sutherland seconds what Young says. Part of what he has loved about being a musician versus a corporate professional is that when he is home, he really gets to focus on his family.

"I try to just focus on being a father and husband when I am home. I have a certain amount of time during the day to spend on

frozen meals or things like that help make the process easier along the way and that helps. But I don't know how people do it without a big support system."

Blackwood seconds that notion. Especially on tour, she stresses the need for help, and sometimes that means paying someone. (For risk of being repetitive, it's worth saying again that FACTOR and other such grants are now making childcare an eligible expense.)

"Find those people in your life who are really going to help you, and if you need to go on tour and you have a baby, hire good help. Don't hire a friend because your friend is not going to do the job. You need to hire someone who is a professional at babies," she laughs.



As we end our conversation, I ask Blackwood if there's anything else on this topic of balancing parenthood and a music career that she wants to add before we hang up the phone. It's the kind of open-ended question I often toss off at the end of such interviews, and usually, it doesn't solicit much. But this time, Blackwood left me with maybe the most important message of all, especially for other moms:

"Everyone's story is going to be a little bit different, and sometimes it's possible and sometimes it's not and that is okay. Sometimes you can make it work and sometimes you can't. But, I think everybody deserves the inspiration to know that life as you know it – career, passion, whatever it is that you're doing – it doesn't have to end when you find out that you're pregnant. It is going to change, for sure, by

180 degrees, and it's probably going to be really tiring for a while, but things get easier," she says. "So, I would just say: don't lose yourself. There is nothing sadder to me than when someone has to give up everything. Some people are born to be mothers and are like, 'I just wanted to be a mom my whole life' and as soon as they have kids, they're like, 'This is it; this is my retirement and I'm in my happy place.' This is great. But for people like me, I need to be creating and making music and I need to be doing something that feeds my soul in that other way. So, *do not* feel guilty about that because it's so fucking normal."

Michael Raine is the Senior Editor of Canadian Musician

MacKenzie Porter's Unparalleled Upward Trajectory

BY ANDREW KING

The word “unprecedented” has been tossed around a lot lately. And fair enough, because it certainly – and quite literally – applies to this current moment in time; nevertheless, its newfound pervasiveness sort of inherently dilutes its power, and yet there’s really no better word to describe county star MacKenzie Porter’s career trajectory over the past couple of years.

In July 2020, Porter scored her third consecutive number one single as a female Canadian country artist with the somber but sticky “Seeing Other People” – a feat that did have a precedent, though it came 22 years earlier and was set by none other than international icon Shania Twain. But add to that Porter’s 50 million-plus global streams and the fact that the remix of her super hooky nostalgic smash “These Days” has cracked the Top 15 at pop radio and you’ve got an artist riding a one-of-a-kind trajectory in an increasingly competitive music scene.

Now, the challenge is in maintaining that impressive momentum amidst a – yes – unprecedented time in history strewn with challenges and uncertainty.

“The goal is to have a record out sometime this fall, but things are shifting every day,” Porter tells *Canadian Musician* in late July. “It’s harder to write songs, it’s harder to get bands in to cut things, so it’s kind of weird not knowing exactly what’s happening.”

Still, she’s not phased by the abundance of question marks, and has been writing and collaborating pretty much every day via videoconference to get that collection finished. The other face on the screen through the vast majority of those calls is longtime producer and Big Loud Records Co-Founder Joey Moi, a decorated Canadian ex-pat whose list of studio credits includes names like Florida Georgia Line, Jake Owen, Morgan Wallen, and fellow Canuck Dallas Smith.

“He’s just a killer producer and

kind of my champion in Nashville,” Porter enthuses. “He obviously has an ear for quality commercial radio hits, and that’s always been my path.”

The two first met back in 2015 and became fast friends, often hanging out in and around the recording studio. That soon turned into a working relationship, with Porter signing to both Big Loud Records and Management and Moi becoming something of a Midas-touched mentor.

“He’s been the guy that helps pick all the songs that go on the record, he comes to my band rehearsals to watch the live show and make sure it’s tight... He’s just so invested in everything I do,” she explains. “It’s so nice to have a friend and partner and collaborator at that level.”

Of course, Moi is just as likely to be saying the same about her.

Porter began her solo music career around 2010 and scored a host of early achievements, winning the 2011 Nashville North Star competition, taking part in the first-ever CCMA Discovery Program in 2013, earning a CCMA Award nomination for Rising Star later that year, and opening for the likes of Kenny Chesney and Doc Walker all the while.

Her self-titled debut LP followed in mid-2014 and spawned a few singles that cracked *Billboard’s* Top 50 Canadian Country chart; it even landed her a Juno nomination for Country Album of the Year in 2015.

Around that time, however, her acting career started to take off with key roles on acclaimed series like *Hell on Wheels* and *Travelers*. At first, she tried to balance her burgeoning success in both disciplines, but that proved more challenging than anticipated.

“I was struggling to do it all and do it properly – trying to keep up with everyone else when I was doing both half-time, basically,” she candidly admits. “I’d be on set for 16 hours a day, then we’d fly songwriters up to Vancouver on the weekend for me to write, but I got burned out doing five 16-hour days a week and then trying to

be super creative in a new mindset on the weekend; it just didn’t work.”

So, when she decided to re-shift all of her focus towards her music career in 2018, Moi and Big Loud were ready and willing to jump aboard for the ride.

She came out swinging in late 2018 with “About You,” a song that tells you straight-up it’s “about breakin’ up and wakin’ up / And stayin’ tough and Maker’s Mark toppin’ off a coffee cup” in its incredibly catchy chorus. That was her first number one on Canadian country radio, and then “These Days” and “Seeing Other People” turned that into an ongoing trend.

The track listing and release date for her forthcoming EP have yet to be confirmed, and while it will be Porter’s second formal collection following her debut LP and a string of singles, in a way, it feels like something of a new beginning.

“My first record was totally independent; I’d written all of those songs myself,” she shares. “If I’m being completely honest, I don’t even like to listen to it anymore; it just feels so far from where I’m at now.”

That’s fair enough, especially considering all she’s been able to absorb from Moi and the handful of hitmakers she’s worked with over the past few years in her adoptive home of Nashville. Now, she and her team are poised to continue elevating her profile in Canada while pushing deeper into the ever-important U.S. market.

Regarding the latter, she says the growing strength of Canada’s domestic country music community and industry have started to turn heads south of the border, generating a lot more opportunities for Canadian talent to break through.

“I’ve been living in Nashville now for six years, and I will say that when I first came down, there was such a stigma about Canadian artists in country music. I don’t know if people here just didn’t take it as seriously, but that’s shifted in the last several years. There are many artists – a lot of females spe-



cifically – who are charting and finding success lately.”

Though she feels she benefitted by riding that wave when re-igniting her career a couple of years ago, at this point, she’s one of the stars at its crest, helping to increase its momentum and hopefully return the favour to the next generation of hopefuls. As far as she’s concerned, her success started north of the border and it remains integral to breaking further into other markets.

“I think it helps me stand apart,” she asserts about being a Canadian artist. “None of my U.S. success would be happening if I didn’t have success in Canada. The fact that we can prove these are viable hits up here is why radio stations in the U.S. are already playing

the songs. Canada will always be incredibly important and central to my career.”

After a successful run with Dean Brody, Dallas Smith, and Chad Brownlee on the *Friends Don’t Let Friends Tour Alone* Canadian jaunt in the second half of 2019, Porter started 2020 with a U.S. tour alongside Big Loud labelmate Chris Lane, then was set to open some Western Canadian dates on Brad Paisley’s world tour. That had her poised for a big and busy summer in North America and some potential shows in Europe and Australia later in the year before the COVID-19 pandemic derailed those plans.

“I think the name of the game now is adjusting every day to whatever the news is about COVID-19,” she says.

“Some days I’m painting baseboards and writing and doing cover videos and am just so motivated; other days, I just need to chill. And I think that’s okay. I need to give myself permission to do that. This is a mental health challenge and something none of us have experienced before or know how to navigate, so I think it’s important to recognize how you’re feeling and take good care of yourself.”

These are unprecedented times, after all, but Porter is keeping positive and productive, well-poised and keen to continue on her impressive tangent, come what may.

Andrew King is the Editor-in-Chief of Canadian Musician.

TOBi

First Toronto, Now the World

The goal is clear: to get his music in the ears and his name on the tongues of music fans in every corner of the world. He'll happily tell you as much, but really doesn't need to; TOBi's music speaks for itself, loud and clear.

What's more, the multifaceted Nigeria-born, Brampton, ON-based maestro is already well on his way to seeing that through. Since dropping his heralded debut LP, *STILL*, via Sony Music imprint Same Plate in May 2019, he's earned a string of successes that many artists could spend a career striving for: king-making collabs with scene heavyweights, sync placements on several major series, praise from influential media outlets and A-list celebrities alike...

And most recently, in a culmination of it all thus far, RCA Records upped their stock in his future and set their sights on the same goal, with SVP Jonathan Master saying: "Over the past year, it has become obvious that [TO-Bi]'s music and brand have an international reach, and we are excited about partnering with RCA to actualize the global vision."

That exciting potential permeates the artist's creative output through both its composition and overall quality. Boasting a wide breadth of influence that transcends era, genre, and ego, his signature sound is nicely embodied by the self-coined term "unapologetic soul music." And while *STILL* and its deluxe May 2020 re-release, *STILL+*, showcase that array of sounds and skill in spades, he's excited about expanding it at both ends with his upcoming sophomore LP, *Elements*.

"I'm definitely being more experimental with the songs, trying and blending different genres I love listening to," he says, and it really is an international affair. Like *STILL* but to a further degree, *Elements* combines tinges of traditional soul and contemporary R&B, early East Coast hip-hop,

Afrobeat, U.K. grime, and a lot more, all wrapped in a slick, modern production style for a result that's as innovative as it is inspired. Look no further than lead single "Dollas and Cents" for a taste.

"I'm basically just showing the breadth of my artistry," he elaborates. "There's definitely a TOBi sound – traditional soul music infused with contemporary sounds – but I'm still growing every day and not stopping any time soon; I'm always open to growth and exploring new things."

A lot of that exploration and experimentation stems from collaboration. While the full guest list for *Elements* has yet to be revealed, "Dollas and Cents" boasts production from U.K. hitmaker Juls, and *STILL+* is heavy on outside talent both behind the mic and behind the boards – including some from his home and native land.

On *STILL+*, for example, the track "24" gets a "Toronto Remix" with verses from Shad, Haviiah Mighty, Jazz Cartier, and Ejjii Smith, and as those names should indicate, it's absolutely thunderous.

TOBi says he was inspired to send out the call by J. Cole and Dreamville Records' *Revenge of the Dreamers* compilations, which are basically the product of by-invitation-only collaborative recording sessions with elite rosters of artists and producers.

"That lightbulb kind of went off and it was like, 'That'd be dope if I did something like that here – not on a full album scale, but at least on a song,'" he explains. "I love that spirit of competition, and those are rappers whose artistry I respect and I knew they'd bring it on the song. That's what I care about, man; I care about a challenge, and I feel like everyone was challenged to come hard."

He adds that, despite all having different styles and occupying different points in their respective careers, there's a special kinship between that group of artists and others in the increasingly potent Canadian hip-hop

and R&B community – one that he finds quite motivating.

"I love seeing my peers come up," he enthuses with some obvious conviction. "There are a lot of artists out here really doing their thing and they're inspiring me and my artistry for sure – Haviiah, Jazz, Jessie Reyez, Loony, Clairmont the Second... I just wanna see Toronto and Canada as a whole be at that level where we're recognized for our variety of artists – not just one sound, but so many different styles come out of that."

"When you're in a market that isn't really mature – as mature as in L.A. or New York – there can be an identity crisis of sorts, but I think we're moving into a stage where we've got artists that are alternative and mainstream and different and eclectic actually gaining success outside of Canada on a global stage."

Again, that's his stated mission, and it's not entirely self-serving. "I want to do that for myself, and then with it, open the lanes for people that don't make songs that fit a certain mould; they can just be free and express themselves however they want," he says. "I see us getting there for sure. It's already happening..."

Watching that scene-wide momentum grow in real-time and knowing that he's responsible for generating some of it admittedly brings the artist some joy, and fittingly, considering the trying times we're all facing together and more acutely as specific groups we belong to, that's the central theme of his lyricism on *Elements*.

"Where I'm at right now is focusing on the things that are in my control – my personal joy, my personal well-being. Nobody can take that away from you, so even when it feels like the walls are crumbling outside, it's like, what's going on inside your personal space? It's about feeling the different parts to your identity and exploring how multi-faceted we all are. That's why it's called *Elements*; within each person, there are so many unique elements that contribute to who we are."

An undeniably gifted writer whose poetry predates his musical output, TOBi built his lyrical foundation by writing honestly and impenitently about what he feels in any given moment, so maybe needless to say, he's had no shortage of emotion and experience to draw on through the first half of 2020. But while some of those subjects may be penetrating the wider public consciousness for the first time, he can't help but feel somewhat pessimistic about any lasting impact.

"The truth is, I think a lot of the social injustices we've witnessed in the past couple of months, it just feels more pronounced because we're all stuck inside and see it every day on camera, but it's been happening for years. It just 'feels' more urgent now because we don't have many distractions; we don't have festivals to go to or movies to go watch to distract us."

That's understandably frustrating for someone who's been delving into these issues long before they might have started trending on Twitter. "It's like, when does it stop? When does a real change occur where you don't have to keep putting this message out into the world? That's probably the toughest part of it."

But as a person and artist, TOBi resents being defined by his struggles or pain, and so much of *Elements* and the music he's been writing more recently focuses on the positives – not to dilute or sugar-coat anything, but in essence, to highlight Black joy as a type of resistance.

"My family, my community of artists, my community of friends... They're people who really bring hope to the world based on their actions, based on their initiatives," he enthuses. "I'll always retain hope. Always. I believe there are more people willing to make this world a better place than not, and that's really inspiring and it's hopeful."

Indeed, there's plenty of hope and inspiration in his impressive rise over the past 18 months or so, for himself and others looking to follow his lead, and reaching its peak – that primary objective of global recognition – will take hard work, focus, and of course, great music; basically, more of what's brought him to this point thus far.

Andrew King is the Editor-in-Chief of Canadian Musician.





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PRODUCTIVITY & PROGRESS IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

Canadian Musician's 2020 Keyboard Special

BY KEVIN YOUNG

PHOTO BY BRYAN GERALDO FROM PEXELS

By now, you've likely had enough of 2020. Most of us have. As musicians, we're going to be among the last to get back to business "as usual" and, as so many have pointed out, what that might look like when it happens is literally anyone's guess.

If there is anything positive about the year thus far, however, it's that people have become more willing and adept at adapting to "interesting times" and that, when we say things like 'We're all in this together,' we mean it – not just when it comes to washing hands and wearing masks, but also in terms of advocating for positive change for the many who are marginalized by systemic inequities in our society.

CREATIVITY, PRODUCTIVITY & EXPLORATION

Put mildly, the global pandemic has changed our perspectives. As Sydney, BC-based pianist Michael Kaeshammer puts it: "I've never spent this much time trying to think outside of the box. Whenever things go back to whatever normal will be, people will have put a lot of thought into new ideas and that will stick. If there is a bit of a silver lining, that could be it."

He's taking his derailed plans in stride. After all, 2020 was going to be a big year in a career full of

them. In the first half, he dropped a live concert album and film, the latter of which premiered on PBS, and then had the stage set for his next studio album later in the year. That's since been pushed back to spring 2021.

During the pandemic, Kaeshammer focused on projects he'd previously had little time for, among them writing a book about his experiences touring through China and Mongolia. "And I've also always wanted to put more effort into my classical playing, so it's definitely been great to work on

that," he tacks on.

Blue Rodeo keyboardist Mike Boguski has also spent a serious amount of time practicing: "I went right back to the woodshed – taking stock of who I am as a player, how I perceive myself, and how I can go deeper with what I naturally do."

Following the release of his second solo album, *Detour*, in late May, Boguski had initially hoped to be touring with his trio to support the record; instead, like so many others, he's embraced livestreaming. "Everyone is glued to the screen, so I reconfigured my studio so I could at least perform with my bass player. And to be honest, when we did our first livestream, we had 65 or 75 people," he says, noting that's better attendance than some actual live gigs he's played in the past.

While being more or less confined to your home may provide opportunities for professional development, financially, it's a horror show.

Like Boguski, R. Grunwald – who's performed with literally

PHOTO: SCOTT LAZER



Ruth B

IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

hundreds of artists live and on record over time – also dropped a solo album during the pandemic. Called *Oma*, it's his first collection of original solo piano songs with a strong focus on anchoring melodies that draw the listener in.

With his gig schedule on hold, he's had to find other work. "My partner is a contemporary dancer, so we're struggling to be creative, maintain our existence as artists in our respective fields, and take care of our 10-month-old. I'm working with cantors who sing in synagogues across the U.S. They're doing choral music individually and sending it to me to mix, edit, and make it sound as if they're singing together." While it's definitely not business as usual, he adds: "It's a ton of work and it

is keeping me going."

For bilingual Winnipeg-based singer/songwriter Rayannah, the pandemic hit after the release of her debut full-length record, *Nos Repaires*, but at a time when she was hoping to expand her reach and capitalize on some industry recognition and accolades. In 2019, Rayannah was awarded Western Canadian Music Awards for Francophone Artist of the Year and, with co-producer Mario Lepage, Producer of the Year, together becoming the first francophones ever to receive the latter.

When the pandemic was first declared, she says: "I was learning how to set my space so I could do live videos. It was that first knee-jerk reaction of feeling that you have to respond and do some-

thing. Now that that's passed, my team and I are starting to design other performance opportunities that play into this situation and come at it from the place of, 'Let's just be super creative, see what we can do, and how we can involve other people.' I was also thankful that a lot of the organizations I was working with found ways to honour contracts. But now, I'm going to be doing a little less digital performing so that I can do some writing."

"My team and I are starting to design other performance opportunities that play into this situation and come at it from the place of 'Let's just be super creative, see what we can do, and how we can involve other people.'"

-Rayannah

Of course, how well we cope largely depends on our individual circumstances.

"I've been pretty isolated," says Matthew Cardinal, keyboardist and bass player for Polaris Prize-shortlisted trio *nêhiyawak*. "I do have a roommate and I've seen friends for [socially-distanced] visits and had a lot of long phone catch-ups with musician friends from across the country, but it's intense. I had a bunch of summer solo shows and *nêhiyawak* gigs canceled, but I have been busy doing livestreams, pre-recorded videos, and some scoring as well."

While the band's stunning 2019 LP *nipiy* continues to garner well-earned accolades, Cardinal is also currently at work on a solo record. "I've been gigging under my own name since 2012 or 2013, so I'm used to making and writing music on my own, but I really miss performing in a room with people."

In short, everyone that *Canadian Musician* spoke with is finding ways to remain productive and creative, which begs the question: Given the amount of time we spend alone with our

PHOTO: HEATHER POLLOCK



**Blue Rodeo's
Mike Boguski**



**Matthew Cardinal of
nêhiyawak**

instruments, are musicians in general better suited to cope with isolation than others might be?

“One hundred percent,” Grunwald says. “We’re experts at uncertainty and not knowing where our next round of work is coming from, so absolutely. I think we’re better suited for that kind of thing; however, this is the first time we’re faced with uncertainty of this magnitude.”

For some, the pandemic lockdown hit when they were either on tour or working away from home. That was the case for Aquakultre bassist and synth player Jeremy Costello, and although he was eventually able to return home to Halifax, he spent the early days of self-isolation in Toronto, staying with musician friends. “We were all in the same boat and it was like, ‘What do we do now?’ Collectively, we were all a little directionless, so we entertained

each other and spent a lot of time jamming. We had a pile of gear that we could throw together, so I’d bring synthesizers into the living room, plug them into the stereo, and we’d watch YouTube videos and score them – not necessarily making recordings, just enjoying the improvisational aspect of it.”

Tools, Tech & Toys

It’s clear in speaking to each of these players that they all share a deep, personal relationship with their instruments of choice, and that relationship is something all of them have been relying on heavily over the past few months.

When it comes to describing

that relationship, perhaps Edmonton-based singer/songwriter Ruth B. puts it best: “The piano, for me, is my perfect dance partner. I’ve always had that image in my head [of] dancing with the piano. It’s like a partner. As I’ve grown as an artist, I’ve used other instruments, but for me, the piano is always the best.”

That idea has only been reinforced throughout the pandemic. “Musically speaking, I actually feel like I’ve gotten back in touch with how I started making music, which was just me and my keyboard,” she adds.

Granted, we all have our favourite axe(s)...

Costello and I discussed the Hammond organ he inherited from his neighbours – technically his first instrument – as well as the Mini Moog Model D he used during sessions at the National Music Centre (NMC) studio where the band recorded their heralded and Polaris-longlisted album, *Legacy*.

Grunwald tells me about the modular synth he’s been building and hopes to use for his next solo record and subsequent live performances.

For Cardinal it’s his Moog Rogue and PH Engineering OP-1.

“If I could influence someone to start making their own art, that would be amazing. That’s why representation is so important – because if you see someone that you can relate to doing something you want to do, you realize that you can do that, too.”

-Matthew Cardinal

For Rayannah it's the Dave Smith Instruments Sequential Prophet 6, "a beautiful instrument," she says, describing it as her "gateway to getting into synthesizers" and incorporating them into the ever-evolving system of looping devices she deploys when writing and playing live.

Some players, however, found themselves parted from their main instrument - notably U.K.-based Canadian expat Rachel Mahon, the newly-minted director of music at Coventry Cathedral - home to the pipe organ on which she recorded her recent album, *Canadian Music on the Organ of Coventry Cathedral*, for the Scottish label Delphian.

Mahon is in a unique situation. She's on furlough in the U.K., which provides her with a partial salary but requires her to forego working at the cathedral or with her colleagues entirely. "Early on, we thought this would last a week or maybe three, at most," Mahon says. "Then we thought, worst case scenario, six weeks." Initially, she and her husband (also a professional organist) began putting together theory videos for students to work on, "But because of the furlough conditions, we had to stop working on those. I have been practicing every day, but I don't have an organ at home. That's tricky, but I do have multiple keyboards and I've also been gathering some ideas for what I want to do when I'm allowed back at work."

Aquakultre's Nick Dourado & Jeremy Costello



PHOTO: MING WU

When it came to geeking out about gear and music with members of our panel for this piece, however, my lengthy conversation with Costello's Aquakultre bandmate, keyboardist and saxophone player Nick Dourado, was the widest-ranging.

It begins with the recording of *Legacy* at the NMC and Dourado's unmitigated joy at having access to so many vintage keyboards over the band's 10-day album session. "We were so lucky to make our record there. On the song 'Wife Tonight,' I'm actually playing a real [Hohner] Clavinet," he says enthusiastically. "Even though I'm a full-blown, card-carrying Stevie Wonder fanatic, it's the first time I've played a real Clav. Three of the greatest Clav masters, and specifically Clav masters, are Stevie, Herbie Hancock, and Sly Stone. They were obsessed with the Clav, and I get why now: because the

actual instrument, when you're touching it and igniting the mechanism, it just feels so intuitive and sounds so cool."

From there we move on to Dourado's wide-ranging musical background, as well as the music and musicians that have inspired him over time.

Since he began studying classical piano as a child in his hometown of Calgary, Dourado has delved deep into rock, jazz, and - while living in Halifax - heavy-duty improvisational tech-

"I think that's the power of music - being able to touch people ... so people listen and have empathy and understanding of what others go through."

-Ruth B.



R. Grunwald

niques with veteran jazz drummer Jerry Granelli. "It seems like a long journey," he says, but he sums it up succinctly, saying: "When I first started playing the piano, I was really inspired by The Beatles and then Billy Preston. From Billy Preston I learned about Stevie Wonder, and through him I learned about Duke Ellington..."

Going forward from there, we cover a lot of ground: Dourado's classical training with a teacher who could tell he was using the wrong finger even when he was practicing in a different room; his indie, classic rock, and punk influences; his reverence for Mingus, Monk, Mary Lou Williams, and Art Tatum, among others.

But we also talk about issues surrounding the music industry and race, questions of consent and the recording/appropriation of ethnic musical traditions, and the potency of music as a revolu-

tionary force, among other things "My parents weren't born in Canada," he says at one point. "They came here from Goa, but my dad grew up in Tanzania and my mom grew up mostly in Mumbai, so for that reason, I was always really curious about the music from the rest of the world."

Even so, Dourado had a revelatory moment about race and music relatively late in his musical education, owing to an elective course in jazz history he took while studying engineering at Dalhousie University.

It's something he brings up during an interview posted at Musicworks.ca with writer, musician, and composer Nick Storrington, and, as Storrington notes in his piece, that took place during a lecture "delving into slavery, slave music, and North American racial politics." As Dourado says to Storrington: "I knew about jazz, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, and Stevie Wonder, but I didn't get that it was all an artifact of some of the hardest shit that people ever went through in the world."

Revelation, Inspiration & Self-Examination

These are some of the words



Michael Kaeshammer

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Rachel Mahon

musicians often use to describe moments of consequence in their development. Just as we've adapted to life without live music during the pandemic, at each point in our journey as players, we take in often unwieldy chunks of information - be it music theory, technique, or the workflow and quirks of a given keyboard instrument - and adapt accordingly.

However, if we don't put that information to practical use - get it into our hands and fingers so completely that it becomes a natural, instinctive part of our practice, performance, and composition - we won't progress, or at the very least, we'll progress much

more slowly.

There is no shortage of instances in recent history where we, as a society, have been provided with ample and clear evidence that some of us have a certain innate degree of privilege and others don't - a situation that is just as prevalent in the arts as it is in other areas of society.

The murder of George Floyd on May 25th in Minneapolis, MN, is only the latest of similarly tragic incidents that provoked widespread outrage and pleas for real, comprehensive, and lasting change. Many people have said that

"this time, it's different; this time, we're going to do something." And so we should. As musicians and artists, we should take responsibility and use the platform and skills we have to educate, inspire, and motivate others to take action as well.

For Ruth B., that need to do something manifested itself, in part, in the form of "If I Have a Son," a song written in support of the Black Lives Matter movement that, for her, was a means of processing the events taking place in the wake of Floyd's death.

Much like the song that launched her career in 2014, "Lost

Boys," Ruth B. says: "It just kind of happened. It's a reflection of how I was feeling in the moment. For me, it was derived from experiences I've been through and my friends have been through. And I want to be part of the change - to make sure that no one feels this way. I think that's the power of music - being able to touch people ... so people listen and have empathy and understanding of what others go through.

"I think it's such an important time to use your platform and your voice in whatever way you can to raise awareness," she continues, "doing what you can, in whatever way you can, whether that's making music, donating, or going to a protest. Now, more than ever," she sums up, "people are really wanting to see change."

In order to see that change, however, we - all of us who are willing - need to take responsibility and actively, constantly, take part in generating it any way we can.

As for how to do that: "Among my circle of friends that's a big question right now," Grunwald says. "Everybody's got to take that on right now, especially people with privilege. It's our responsibility to stand up and say, 'We

"Ask yourself if you're doing all you can to really enact change."

-Mike Boguski



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need to shift things.' What I think we should all be trying to do – at the very least – is asking ourselves, 'Are we responsibly representing all the voices that need to be in the conversation?'"

"As complex and difficult as they are, we have to have these conversations," Rayannah puts in. "I'm well aware of my participation in systems of oppression, as well as the way those systems push me down. As a woman, I face a lot of sexism in the music industry, but I also know that, as a white person, I benefit from the structures that we have in place more than others."

With that in mind, she adds: "My team and I have had many conversations about how to make it very



Rayannah

PHOTO: JEN DOERKSEN

clear to the people we work with – be it on the industry side or musicians I employ – that their safety is a priority; that we are a united front, and if anyone experiences racism or gender- based discrimination, for

example, we're going to back them up and prioritize the person that's being harmed."

"Ask yourself if you're doing all you can to really enact change," Boguski says when I ask him

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about The Cold Manitoba Project, which aims to raise awareness about, and funds for, the Native Addictions Council of Manitoba. The initiative, Boguski explains, is his response to Gord Downie's call for all Canadians to do whatever they can to help move towards healing and reconciliation with Indigenous people through awareness, education, and action.

"Awareness comes first," Boguski notes, "but you can also do something tangible, something personal. Music is a platform that can be used to amplify important social messages that need to get out, but it's up to the individual to find their path. Every musician has to ask themselves deeper questions like, 'Why do I live in this

circumstance and why does my brother or sister have to struggle because they've been born with different coloured skin or in a different culture?'"

In Canada we often pride ourselves on the "patchwork" or "mosaic" makeup of our nation. Let's think of it as a massive continent-spanning quilt with room for everyone underneath. Cozy enough for some, but far less so for those at the edges, freezing their asses off.

In recent times, there have been some efforts to move towards cultural equity. For his part, Matthew Cardinal believes that more people are becoming aware of and willing to promote diverse voices, slowly and surely. "I think more

people are making music and, in general, more styles of music," he says, and there's definitely more representation happening in the scene at large than there was." But often, he notes, when people think of Indigenous popular music, for example, they envision folk or country or bluesy rock. "But there's hip-hop and electronic and experimental music. And if I could influence someone to start making their own art, that would be amazing. That's why representation is so important – because if you see someone that you can relate to doing something you want to do, you realize that you can do that, too."

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



BACK TO SCHOOL BACK TO MUSIC WITH KORG PIANOS

Donny Anderson is a platinum-selling artist and songwriter. Collaborations and career highlights include his work with Rachel Platten, Alannah Myles, a European number one, a Billboard U.S. number two-charting album, Canadian charting singles, and placements in various films and series. Donny's latest single "Lovin' You" featuring Canadian icon Divine Brown is available now. Donny is currently working on his full-length artist project due for a 2021 release. For more information, visit: www.donnyanderson.com.



By Donny Anderson

From Song Camps to Singles:

The Power of Co-Writes & Collaboration

Songwriting camps are an experience unlike any other – likeminded creative people brought together into a situation that creates an unmatched energy, an incredible high, and usually results in some of the most amazing creative work simply because of this process.

Songwriting camps are an opportunity to either collaborate with people you have never met, or collaborate with familiar people in a different environment than an everyday studio session or co-write. I've been able to participate in songwriting camps all over the world and feel like some of the best songs I've created have come out of them.

The Basics

Whoever is facilitating the camp will choose several writers and artists to bring to a specific location to collaborate. The camps usually range from one day all the way up to a few weeks. Each day, you get paired with different co-writers and producers. Some could also be artists who might be looking for songs for their next release or producers that have ideas for major label artists that need songs. Whatever you choose to write or whoever you want to write for is fair game.

The Benefits

My latest single called "Lovin' You" is a song that was born out of a Songwriter's Association of Canada (S.A.C.) songwriting camp held at Revolution Recording in Toronto. The day that "Lovin' You" was penned, the organizers (Murray Daigle and Bobby John) had put me, producer Arun Chaturvedi, and artist Rykka together. Arun had several tracks prepared to listen to and we decided to work with the track that ended up becoming "Lovin' You." Rykka and

I are both songwriters and recording artists and we agreed that whatever we wrote that day, we just wanted to have fun with it. No preconceived ideas or plans. We wanted to see what happened when we created from that mindset and let all three of us immerse ourselves in the creativity.

Some time after the camp, the organizers and the S.A.C. reached out and asked if the three of us would be interested in releasing the song as a single. They would get behind it to represent their songwriting camps, the process, and support the release. We all agreed that this song had potential and was a great example of what could result from a songwriter's camp and decided to move forward with the release.

Arun and I then got together several times following the decision and tweaked the song into a somewhat different production than what we had, exploring different production ideas and sounds. Through the production process, I had the idea of bringing in my dear friend (and Canadian legend) Divine Brown to help elevate the overall sound with her stunning voice. We have collaborated for many years previous to this, but this was a perfect storm of sound and circumstances to have us collaborate for an official release. Divine came into the studio as Arun and I were finishing up production ideas and added the finishing touches to the song with her vocal, turning it into the release that's out today.

The Release

We intended to put out the single in April 2020. The distribution partner (Flying Colours/ Believe Music) had been secured, and the official release date had been decided. We were organizing release plans as the onset of COVID-19 was happening, so we all agreed it

might be better to hold back the release until May 29, 2020. We thought that the pandemic may have slowed down by then and life would have resumed to a somewhat normal state. As the story goes, life is unpredictable and we had to roll with the punches.

As April passed, I considered pushing the release date back even further but I had already built an entire team around the song. The release was already organized and preparations for PR and distribution had already begun. I owe a huge thank you to the S.A.C., Flying Colours, H.A.U.T.E Creative, and Auteur Research for standing by and helping to navigate such a difficult time and situation to get the single out into the world during such chaos.

All things considered, the release went off without a hitch. Being in such an unprecedented time, I decided to quietly release the single to radio after the initial media push just to see what would happen. "Lovin' You" has unexpectedly found some great success at radio. It made the Yangaroo/DMDS top 10 Most Active Indies in the first week of sending to radio, coming in at the number six most active indie release at radio.

To me, the success of a song not only starts from a seed, but can grow into something that gets people excited and finds its way into the world with a whole lot of potential support behind it. I truly believe in the power of collaboration and the stars aligning to make great things happen. Whether it's a heightened experience with the initial creation process at a songwriter's camp or the people that you surround a song with to help make the journey to release day, there is undoubtedly the most incredible power in co-writes and with collaborations.



The 5 Best Things to Spend Money on for Your Studio

The subject of how best to spend your money to improve your productions will be different for everyone. Maybe you are a weekend warrior who wants to jam with friends every Friday night, or perhaps you are running a post-production business with clients coming by regularly. Maybe you are recording bands in a large space or beat-making in your bedroom. Here, I'll focus on a handful of aspects of enhancing your production workflow that will benefit anyone and everyone.

1. Reflections Aren't Just in Mirrors

Room acoustics affect the quality of what we hear more than our particular choice of monitors, microphones, preamps, or converters. A modest amount of money spent on a combination of absorber panels, diffusers, and ceiling clouds goes a long way to tracking and monitoring in more neutral environments.

One of the most noticeable problems in small room acoustics tends to be in the bass response. Commercial bass traps are readily available and often placed in corners so they remain out of your way while smoothing out the lumpy low-end problems that lead to poor translation and muddy or lean low frequencies in your mixes.

To deal with reflections, there are a wide range of absorption panels. Don't overdo it, though, as too much absorption can make a room sound "dead." Acoustic diffusers work in conjunction with absorption panels by scattering reflections so sound doesn't get focused directly back to any specific area. Diffusion helps retain a natural sense of space and a smooth frequency response. Strategically placed bookshelves, for instance, can act as low-cost natural diffusers.

2. Make Good Monitors Sound Great

It's essential to calibrate monitors so they work optimally with the unique frequency response curve of your studio space. Most modern speakers include some onboard DSP to compensate for things like reflections. These simple EQs are often just two- or three-position dipswitch adjustments. While useful, these EQ controls don't compare with accurately calibrating your monitors using software-based analysis and correction. This calibrates or "tunes" your monitors to your room by taking a series of acoustic measurements around the listening area and calculating a correction curve so that you can mix on your monitors with confidence.

Besides frequency issues, many studios have simple-to-fix problems like unbalanced volume between left and right speakers. Be sure to measure the volume using an SPL meter or room correction software to make sure your levels are perfectly matched. A subtler problem occurs when the left and right speakers have slight timing differences and the sound that reaches your ears is not perfectly in phase between the left and right channels.

3. Ergonomics

We spend a lot of time in our studios — most of it seated in front of our screens and monitors. The chair we sit in is undoubtedly *the* most used piece of gear in our studios. A good chair is crucial not only to our comfort but our health as well. Buy yourself a good; make that a *great* chair. In 20 years, you will look at that chair as the best purchase you ever made.

A good studio chair needs to be comfortable, adjustable, and mobile, since we need to move around while we are working to reach patch bays, outboard gear, etc. Most importantly, we need a chair to support our backs and arms. Good posture is critical to preventing back injuries, as well as carpal tunnel and tendonitis-

related problems. An adjustable armrest is vital to ensure your arms are at a 90-degree angle with your keyboard.

4. Upgrade Your Skills

Never before in history have we had such good tools for creating music as readily available and as affordable as we do now. But we have to learn how to use these tools in order to get the best out of them and out of ourselves.

Do yourself a favour and invest in professionally authored and curated training materials from one of many respected online resources like Groove3. These days, videos are ubiquitous. YouTube can be hit-and-miss not only in terms of quality but also in continuity.

Services like Goove3.com and Puremix.com host industry professionals and skilled educators who share their techniques and knowledge in structured, organized, and complete courses that cover all the bases. For those who prefer reading, Groove3 also provides access to Hal Leonard's curated production library in easy-to-use digital ebook form.

Online education centres are not particularly expensive in the grand scheme of things and will help you bring your skills up to a professional level much quicker than endlessly trolling through YouTube.

5. Listen, Listen, Listen

We all need to derive inspiration from somewhere. Spend some money on a good streaming subscription and access the best music in the world. Given that we all strive to create high-quality material, it's worth paying a few extra dollars for a premium service like Tidal or Qobuz, where you can stream music at high resolution.

Most importantly, make sure to set aside time for listening. Listening to music stimulates not just musical ideas, but production ideas, too.



A Meeting of the Mons

Part 2: Top monitor engineers on establishing a good working relationship with an FOH engineer

Canadian Musician: How do you go about establishing a good working relationship and level of communication with your counterpart at front-of-house (FOH)? What are the traits of a good FOH engineer, and what goes into ensuring a successful, mutually-beneficial experience?

DAVE DONIN (Alessia Cara):

I shared this one with David Haines, our FOH engineer with Alessia Cara, and he says: "Mutual respect, clear communication, objectives, and motives, and clear leadership. I find it easier if one soundperson is directing soundcheck rather than two, and I prefer when mons is leading as I find troubleshooting and creative problem solving happens quicker and more efficiently from the one on deck than from the 'voice of God' at FOH, who often isn't privy to the chaos on deck – especially in a rushed festival change-over situation. When mons is driving, operations can adapt on the fly more naturally and efficiently than when directed from afar. Both ends of the snake need work together symbiotically for the greater good, not just for their needs or to satisfy their ego. We all sink if there's a weak link, and we all rise if we support each other."

KATRINA GALBRAITH (Walk Off the Earth, The Tea Party):

I've been lucky enough to work and tour with some great FOH engineers over the years. Working as a team and being able to communicate clearly with the FOH engineer is important. Compromise is also needed – the loud stage volume of a rock band can cause the two engineers to clash.

DEBBIE HUTCHINS (Jann Arden):

Communication and teamwork. Do your homework and then show up and have a good gig. Communication starts before the gig with calls and emails, and then continues at the gig with talkback mics, squawk boxes, or walkie talkies, etc.

ROB NEVALAINEN (Bryan Adams):

I think it's really important for an FOH mixer and a monitor mixer to be on the same page. Quite often, before I begin to work with a new FOH partner, I want to make sure that we are both pointed in the same direction. I understand that we will probably have different ideas or methodologies to achieve our goals, but it is important to work together to make sure we each get the most out of the equipment we have chosen. I always go into it with an open mind, and

quite often I learn things.

MIKE ROWLAND (Daniel Caesar, Marianas Trench):

Great question. There are many factors in creating that solid relationship. Having a respect for each other's position is where it starts. Through open communication, experience, and willingness, you can help each other. Working through technical problems is always a good gauge of this dynamic. Also, more specifically on the sonic front, it becomes more apparent in bigger and more challenging venues. You obviously can't change it but through working together, you can help each other by manipulating that room sonically to ensure it is as calm and controlled as possible, or vice-versa if you need something more on deck or out of the mics.

DAVE THIEL (deadmau5, Lights):

An immediate and clear layout of personal expectations and roles is a must. Whether we're working together for a day or a month doesn't matter; quickly adapting ourselves to the situation and providing a flawless and consistent performance does matter.



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By Alayna Kolodziechuk

Privacy Law for Artists

Part 2: What Musicians Need to Know About Their Privacy Obligations

Artists have more opportunities than ever to connect directly with fans through apps and social networks, and online followers now play a key role in the music business.

Activities from selling merchandise to scheduling tour locations count on online engagement with contacts. Collecting information about an artist's followers (names, contact information, payment information, opinions, and views) can be helpful if not necessary for an artist's career.

In part one of this article, we talked about the history and importance of privacy as a universal human right. The collection, use, and disclosure of personal information for business purposes has to be balanced by certain privacy protections – if you collect information through your website, online store, or social accounts, you are legally responsible for that information and have to meet certain standards in doing so.

In Canada, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) is the national standard. The website for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (Canada) makes available many helpful guides and tools for free.

A General Rule

The less information you collect, the less you have to manage and the less you could ultimately face liability for. You should limit how many people can access the information, make sure the information is only used for proper purposes, and limit how long you plan to keep it. Information should be safely stored until destroyed, encrypted, and/or de-identified.

***Tip:** Avoid being tempted to collect whatever information you can from fans and website visitors. Make sure your website doesn't ask users for sensitive information like specific birth date or gender identity. For demographic indicators, can you collect city/region information rather than a complete mailing address? Will an email address suffice over a physical address altogether?

Legal Requirements

Privacy protection laws require that you:

- Have a privacy policy. To meet legal requirements, the privacy policy for your website/online store will have to clearly let users know things like what information you collect, for what purposes, with whom it is shared, and where/for how long it is stored. Links to the privacy policy should appear on each page of the website. (In the footer is fine.)
- Name a privacy officer. Display contact information for the person responsible for privacy matters.
- Respect requests and consent. Requests for information or withdrawals of consent are addressed by the privacy officer without complication or delay.
- Use security measures. Adequate security measures such as passwords and encryption can prevent data breaches/minimize the harm that can come from a breach.
- Privacy training. Staff or representatives handling data on your behalf need to be properly trained.
- Contain and report privacy breaches. Be prepared with policies and training to identify and contain privacy breaches and report publicly as may be required.

***Tip:** Don't forget about cookies. Cookies are bits of data that improve internet functions by saving data to increase convenience. Online shopping carts work with the use of cookies, as do functions like the Remember Me option for return users. Websites that additionally use cookies to monitor user activity, especially after a browser session has ended, are problematic and should be avoided. Depending on your website, you may need to have a specific cookies policy.

***Tip:** Talk to your web developer about managing your privacy obligations through website features or other software:

- On the back end, you'll want to have

a way to track contacts by their name, date/circumstances of consent, and the scheduled destruction date.

- Users should be provided with the means to access, update, edit, or delete any account or registration information.
- Collecting personal information of minors should be avoided, and in particular your website should not collect information regarding minors under the age of 13.
- If you disclose information to sponsors or advertisers, it should be in anonymous aggregate form only.

Contracts with Third Parties

Privacy considerations are coming up more and more in music contracts. All individuals you hire to conduct business on your behalf should be contractually required to read and follow the provisions of your privacy policy. Violation of the policy should result in termination.

Given recent legal changes, you can expect that members of your team from the label to ticket agents may request your privacy policy because they'll need to confirm on their own behalf that they have the lawful right to access the third-party information you'll be providing. Privacy aspects of music contracts can be complex. You should always have independent legal advice regarding contracts you are entering into.

***Tip:** Have a proper privacy policy in place sooner rather than later so that as your following grows you know you have the consents you and your team need. If you collect information from users that are outside of Canada, laws outside of Canada are likely to apply. Given legal and policy developments, you should periodically review your privacy policies and practices.

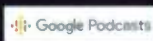
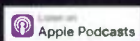
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HOT GEAR



Akai MPC Live II Portable Music Production Centre

Akai Professional has released the MPC Live II portable standalone music production centre powered by MPC software.

The MPC Live II builds on the original MPC Live released in 2017, introducing built-in monitor speakers for a full standalone music-making experience. The 7-in., multi-gesture touchscreen enables producers to access the features needed to create a beat or a recording from start to finish. The MPC Live II also adds five new hardware buttons to improve the editing workflow. With features including mute, time correct, and mix, users can edit and tweak tracks on the go.

As well, the MPC Software 2.8 update turns the MPC Live II into a MIDI sequencing studio centerpiece. Now users can simultaneously connect and route all the MIDI gear in their studio, including class-compliant USB keyboards, MIDI interfaces, and USB to CV modules, enhancing the MPC Live II's I/O capability.

For more information, contact inMusic Canada: 450-619-7710, order-canada@inmusicbrands.com, www.inmusicbrands.com.

Godin Nylon Series Guitars

Godin Guitars has launched the Nylon Series of guitars – a tribute to the long-standing heritage of the La Patrie brand of nylon-stringed guitars, which is now rebranded under the Godin moniker to complement the existing line-up of Godin Acoustic steel-string guitars.

The Godin Nylon Series features unique design and build features, such as high-grade and lightweight tone woods, select pressure-tested solid tops, mahogany necks, a slight fretboard radius for enhanced playing comfort, and high-end optional electronics for live performance. The nylon-string line offers unique models with various body types and sizes for all levels of players, including the entry-level Etude or Motif, the midrange Concert and Concert CW, the higher-end Collection and Presentation, and pro-level Arena models.

Godin Nylon guitars will continue to be made in La Patrie, QC like the previous La Patrie brand guitars.

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



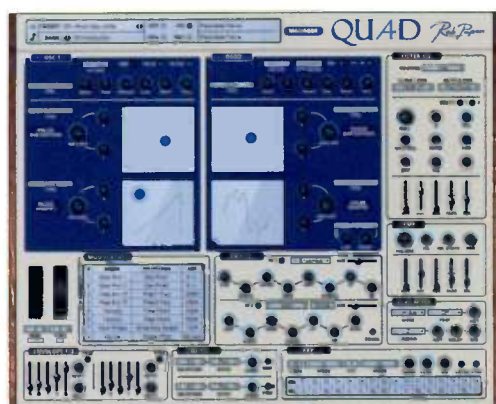
Rob Papen QUAD Virtual Instrument Plug-In

Rob Papen Inspiration Soundware has released QUAD as an AAX-, AU-, and VST-compatible virtual instrument plug-in for Mac and PC. QUAD was originally released as the first Rack Extension synthesizer built from the ground up by the Dutch company for Propellerhead Reason.

Like its namesake Rack Extension synthesizer predecessor, the 16-voice QUAD features two oscillators (OSC 1 and OSC 2), extended – when compared to the original's selection of classic subtractive waveforms – to include a wide range of analog-modelled waveforms with Sine, Saw, Square, Triangle, W (White) Noise, and P (Pink) Noise, Rez 1, Rez 2, Rez 3, HalfSine, SineSaw, SineSqr, SineRez, SawSqr, and SqrRez available alongside Additive Waves and Spectral Waves. As well, each oscillator also has a SUB oscillator offering Sine or Square waveforms when respectively turning the dial to the left or right of the centre position. Turning each adjacent Spread dial generates a multiple-oscillator sound with increased detuning between the oscillators, and each dedicated Drift dial simulates analog drift of the associated oscillator.

As well, the sound sculpting tools that differentiate QUAD from other Rob Papen virtual synthesizers are the Phase Distortion and Wave Shaper at the heart of each oscillator section highlighted in its GUI. Many drop-down distortion types are available, which are then brought to life by two X-Y pads that can be moved through the eight-slot Modulation matrix.

For more information, go to www.robpapen.com.



Cort Gold-OC8 Nylon Classical Guitar

Cort has introduced the Gold-OC8 Nylon, the first classical guitar introduced from its flagship acoustic Gold Series.

The Gold-OC8 Nylon begins with an orchestra model (OM) cutaway design for those seeking playing comfort. The OM body offers a bright and stronger high-midrange emphasis that's more suited for fingerpicking than strumming, while the Venetian cutaway allows easy access to the high frets. Cort says its use of internal hand-scalloped X-bracing delivers a richer tone and more dynamic responsiveness than you would expect from the guitar's smaller size.

The Fishman Flex Blend System translates the guitar's natural tones. The preamp offers an under-saddle pickup with a condenser microphone to provide the tones needed on stage. The system offers ergonomic knobs for volume, tone, and blend control, as well as a built-in tuner.

The guitar features a series-first Engelmann spruce top, which exhibits a rich, full midrange with a clear, smooth top-end that's responsive to a soft touch. Cort treats the Engelmann spruce top using a special Aged to Vintage (ATV) torrefaction process that gives the guitar a big, open tone.

For more information, contact Coast Music: 514-457-2555, info@coastmusic.com, www.coastmusiconline.com.



XILS 201 Vocoder Plug-In

XILS-lab has released the XILS 201 Vocoder plug-in, which can also be used as a simple filter bank/chorus/phaser/delay/reverb multi-effect. The company says it was modeled after an ultra-rare and expensive vocoder unit.

Each of the XILS 201's two filter banks offers 20 frequency bands. Each filter bank can process the incoming signal (usually voice, but any other signal, including drums, can be processed), or the carrier signal. Musicians can use the internal analog synthesizer as a carrier,

which immediately gives the X201 its characteristic and recognizable sound. Any other incoming signal can also be used, like an external synthesizer, another voice, etc. It also hosts a multiband frequency-dependent Envelope Follower engine, which will shape the signal gain according to its harmonic content.

To use the XILS 201, just record a voice, even without actually singing, then choose the internal synth as the carrier. Then send MIDI notes to the carrier to make the voice sing those notes (or chords, because the engine is polyphonic).

For more information, go to www.xils-lab.com.

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HOT GEAR



Gretsch Brooklyn & Brooklyn Micro Drum Kits with Nitron Finishes

Gretsch Drums has introduced two new Nitron finishes to its Brooklyn series: blue burst pearl for the original kit and white marine pearl for the Micro Kit.

Gretsch's Brooklyn drums are manufactured in the company's Ridgeland, SC factory and constructed from six-ply North American maple/poplar. They are finished with the distinctive 3-mm thick, double-flanged 302 counter hoops, which are reminiscent of the ones used by the company until the mid-1950s. The drums produce a distinctive sound and their specifications create a unique tonal characteristic that is slightly more open and ambient when compared to Gretsch's classic full, punchy, and warm sound.

The Brooklyn Micro Kit is ideal for small venues, studios, rehearsal rooms, and other situations where space is at a premium. The kit is built to the same specifications as the original Brooklyn drums.

For more information, contact B&J Music: 800-268-8147, bandj@jamindustries.com, www.bjmusiconline.com.

Eventide ShimmerVerb Plug-In

Eventide Audio has released the ShimmerVerb plug-in, which combines a "lustrous" reverb with parallel pitch shifters to add ethereal layers to make signals "shimmer."

Producers and engineers have previously achieved this effect by using pitch-shifting hardware units in combination with a reverb. This production technique was popularized by Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno on U2's *The Unforgettable Fire*. Now, this well-known sound has been refined and extended with a modern, unified interface that is ideal for adding ambiance to guitars, keys, synths, samples, and vocals. Features have been added such as the ability to infinitely feedback the signal, resulting in cascading reverbs. Feedback can be further fine-tuned by specifying which frequencies are fed back through the low/mid/high crossover network.

The "Ribbon" function – one of the playable, performance-based parameters – is an easy-to-program performance macro allowing users to morph ShimmerVerb's effect between two completely different settings of any combination of controls. Desktop users can plug in a MIDI keyboard and gain tactile command over this function via the modulation wheel.

For more information, contact Eventide: 201-641-1200, support@eventide.com, www.eventide.com.



Gibson Frank Hannon 'Love Dove' Acoustic Guitar

Gibson has released the Frank Hannon 'Love Dove' acoustic guitar, which marks the first signature guitar for the acclaimed solo artist, guitarist, songwriter, and co-founder of the multi-platinum band TESLA.

Hannon used his '70s-era Gibson Dove to write and record numerous songs, including the TESLA hits "What You Give" and "Stir it Up." The new Love Dove model is highly customized, featuring a thermally aged Sitka spruce top married to a maple back and sides, allowing for enhanced response and resonance. A '70s-era Dove bridge with scalloped wings decorated with mother-of-pearl wing inlays adorn the centre, and the Dove pick guard features hand-engraved and painted details. Each Love Dove guitar comes in vintage cherry sunburst and is commemorated with a signed inside label by Frank Hannon and custom Love-engraved truss cover written by Hannon himself.

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



Kawai DG30 Digital Grand Piano

Kawai has released the DG30 digital grand piano. It's designed to provide a more natural and realistic playing experience with the Responsive Hammer III keyboard action and acoustic piano sound of the Shigeru Kawai SK-EX.

The RHIII action delivers authentic piano touch through structural reinforcements that minimize noise and key wobble, as well as a springless design that allows for smooth movement. Complementing these elements, the Shigeru Kawai concert grand piano sound offers both the warmth and power found in the acoustic instrument. The sounds are delivered through a four-speaker sound system developed in collaboration with audio specialists Onkyo. Bluetooth MIDI and audio expand the DG30's functionality by connecting wirelessly with smart devices while using apps, including Kawai's Virtual Technician and Sound Museum apps. Added features include an adjustable metronome, built-in lesson function, and song recorder.

For more information, contact Kawai North America: 310-631-1771, info@kawaius.com, www.kawaius.com.



Polyend Tracker Tabletop Music Production System

Polyend has released the Tracker, a tabletop sampler, wavetable, synthesizer, and sequencer. It's designed to pay tribute to innovative tracker software of the late-1980 and early-'90s while expanding on the creative potential of the format.

The tabletop Tracker removes the computer and puts users into an interactive hardware unit. In doing so, it adds an array of effects to transform any sample into an instrument, along with wavetable and granular synthesis. It is also backward compatible with old-school tracker files (called MODs). With its simple interface and slim portable design, the Polyend Tracker is a full, go-anywhere music production system. Tracker projects hold up to 48 instruments with 256 patterns and 128 steps per pattern. Also, they all play back in the familiar vertical column format of the classic software. It also comes equipped with numerous compositional tools, including automatic pattern filling, per-step effects, sample rolls, and batch and global parameter editing.

For more information, contact Polyend: order@polyend.com, www.polyend.com.

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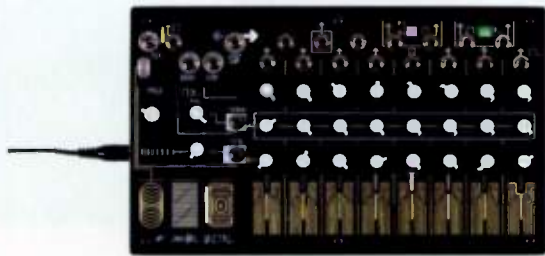
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HOT GEAR



DW COLLECTOR'S SERIES
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DW Collector's Series Private Reserve Exotics

Drum Workshop (DW) is now shipping its Collector's Series Private Reserve Exotics, which are hand-crafted at DW's California custom shop.

John Good, DW's drum designer, traveled the world to hand-curate a collection of select wood species that can be ordered as exotic finishes over available DW shell configurations. Included in the 2020 collection is tortoise shell pommele, moabi, horizontal padouk, vertical padouk, super maple curl, African chechen, and monkey pod. Each Exotic can be custom ordered in hand-sprayed polyester gloss lacquer or matte finish hard satin lacquer. In addition, they can be combined with a wide array of bursts, fades, and transparent lacquers to create a one-of-a-kind look.

Every Collector's Series kit is crafted using a host of available grain orientation lay-ups and patented manufacturing techniques such as Cool Tempered Shells and Timber Matching.

For more information, contact Drum Workshop: 805-485-6999, info@dwdrums.com, www.dwdrums.com.

Make Noise 0-CTRL Controller & Step Sequencer

Make Noise has released the 0-CTRL patchable, clockable controller and step sequencer for voltage-controlled synthesizer systems.

The 0-CTRL is designed to be "patch pals" with the 0-Coast. It is a tabletop device with inputs and outputs that follow Eurorack standards, making it a good partner for a modular system or another patchable tabletop synth. It is fully analog and patch programmable with no menus or modes. Users can sequence and control the pitch, strength, and time of their synthesizer voice, per step. Other features include voltage control over stop and direction, dynamic reset, and pressure and touch gate outputs for human-generated events and expression.

For more information, contact Make Noise: eric@makenoisemusic.com, www.makenoisemusic.com.

Avantone Pro Planar Reference-Grade Headphones

Avantone Pro has released the Planar reference-grade open-back headphones. They're designed to provide the comfort and sonic detail needed by musicians and engineers for long studio sessions, though can also be used by podcasters, live-streamers, and hi-fi enthusiasts.

The headphones feature Avantone Pro's planar drivers, which were introduced in the MP-1 Mixphones. The new drivers improve accuracy, high-end detail, clarity, natural bass, and response time. Traditional moving coil drivers use a magnetic field to push/pull the driver in one direction and rely on the surround's elasticity to return the driver to the neutral position. Planar drivers utilize a technology that mixes principles between dynamic and electrostatic drivers — they are constructed by a precise array of magnets that are evenly spaced across both sides of a thin, electrically-active diaphragm. The company says that due to the nature of this magnetic field's precision, force applied to the membrane is distributed in a symmetric fashion, which produces a signal with very little harmonic distortion and faster response times. And because planars use front and rear magnets to apply equal force in both directions, there is less weight applied to the driver material, which results in a more natural sound with less distortion. As well, the open-back design, combined with a finely-tuned chamber, results in a very flat-frequency environment, without the typical pressure build-up, acoustic resonance, and frequency curve of closed-back headphones.

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

Vidami Video Looper Pedal

Vidami has added QuickSearch functionality to its namesake hands-free video looper pedal that integrates with YouTube and other online video players.

The Vidami hands-free video looper enables users to speed up, slow down, loop, and pause online tutorial videos in order to help players stay focused and in the flow of learning by keeping their hands on the instrument and off the computer. With the new QuickSearch functionality, musicians can now press and hold the 'forward' button for a full second to scroll forward and stop wherever they'd like by tapping the 'play/pause' button. This new feature makes it easier to quickly navigate to any section of a video, helping to further streamline the learning process.

As well, Vidami has expanded its compatibility with the release of its new Safari Extension. Users of Safari on macOS 10.13 or later can now access the new Safari Extension via the "Downloads" page on the Vidami website. This extension offers all the same features as the Vidami Chrome Extension.

For more information, contact Vidami: info@vidami.com, www.vidami.com



Fender Jim Root Jazzmaster V4

Fender has released the Jim Root Jazzmaster V4, the latest iteration of its collaboration with the Slipknot guitarist. The newest model in Fender's Artist Signature Series, it's designed to capture the fast and aggressive yet fluid playing style Root is known for.

The latest version of Root's signature Jazzmaster, the V4 guitar has just the essentials with a volume control and three-way switch to complement the sleek look. New features inspired by the guitarist's preferences include: Jim Root signature active EMG pickups, a hardtail bridge, and a single-knob volume control with a three-way switch for simple access to tones. The white neck binding with white pearl-oid block inlays reflects in dark light so players don't have to worry about losing their place.

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



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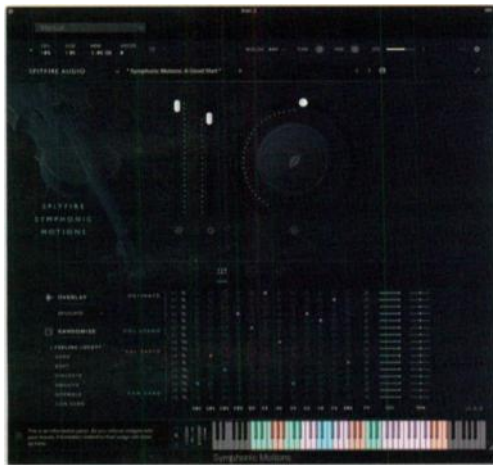
PreSonus Atom SQ Hybrid MIDI Controller

PreSonus has released the Atom SQ performance-based hybrid MIDI controller. Being part sequencer, part performance pad, and part keyboard, the company says the Atom SQ is its most flexible MIDI controller to date.

With the Atom SQ, musicians can build patterns quickly with the TR-style step sequencer and finger drum grooves with the responsive pads. They can also launch expressive arpeggiations or lay down basslines and melodies from the same controller. The PreSonus Atom SQ features deep integration with PreSonus Studio One and Ableton Live, presenting a seamless extension of those DAWs' capabilities. And, with eight assignable rotary controllers and an expressive touchstrip, it is customizable to fit the user's performance style.

The Atom SQ is equipped with 32 velocity- and pressure-sensitive pads, laid out in a TR-style staggered configuration. It also has a slew of "new-school" features, including a context-sensitive screen that changes its display depending on what the user is doing, and backlit RGB LED pads for colour coordinating samples and loops.

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



Spitfire Symphonic Motions Virtual String Instrument Plug-In

Spitfire Audio has released the Symphonic Motions virtual instrument plug-in.

This new addition to the Spitfire Symphonic Range is meant to offer the flexibility and ease to design expressive shorts and intricate rhythmic patterns, enhancing the realism of scores. Symphonic Motions features top string players from London performing a range of rebowing movements, rhythms, and playing techniques, all recorded in The Hall at AIR Studios. These performances are presented in an easy-to-use grid interface inside the dedicated plug-in for instant access to almost infinite combinations of tempo-locked rhythms, techniques, and realistic rebowing.

The grid interface, inspired by the EMS VCS3 synth, positions "pegs" via an onscreen 12 x 40 grid arrangement, giving access to recordings across 12 intervals, organized in a grid with a wide range of possible configurations. Users can instantly select which technique sits on each of those 12 key ranges, toggle their pegs, or generate randomized combinations for instant inspiration.

For more information, go to www.spitfireaudio.com.

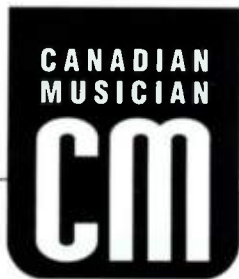


AMS Neve 1073 OPX Preamplifier

To mark the 50th anniversary of the 1073 microphone preamp, AMS Neve has launched the 1073 OPX, a new octal microphone/line/instrument preamp designed to meet the needs of modern studio environments.

Designed and still manufactured in the U.K., AMS Neve's 1073 remains one of the most popular mic preamps for top-end producers and engineers thanks to its unique tonal quality and ability to deliver warmth, low-mid punch, and subtle harmonic distortion. With the launch of the 1073 OPX, AMS Neve has taken its '70s classic and updated it for today's workflows by packing eight 1073 remote-controlled preamps with Marinair transformers into a 2 U rack unit. Front and rear connectors give comprehensive connectivity to any studio/live/broadcast environment while modern remote-control software gives two-way control with total recall of all settings. Input sources benefit from the transformer-coupled input stage and can be connected directly to the front-mounted mic/line/DI input for recording in the control room.

For more information, contact Systemes Guinois: 514-931-2000, info@systemesguinois.com, www.systemesguinois.com.



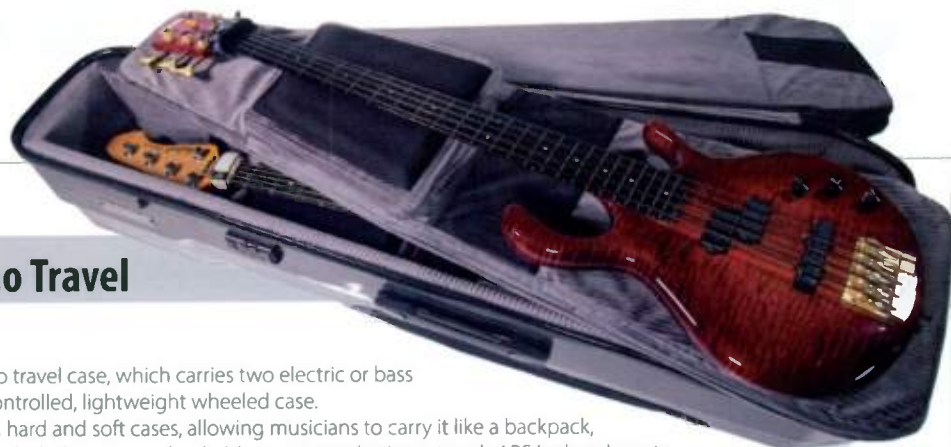
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To view the online version of *Canadian Musician*, please go to: www.canadianmusician.com/online.

HOT GEAR



Gruv Gear Kapsule Duo Travel Case

Gruv Gear has released the Kapsule Duo travel case, which carries two electric or bass guitars in a well-protected, humidity-controlled, lightweight wheeled case.

The Kapsule Duo is a fusion of both hard and soft cases, allowing musicians to carry it like a backpack, traditional suitcase, or roll it using the included snap-on wheels. It's constructed using a tough ABS/polycarbonate shell combined with a thick layer of lightweight expanded polystyrene for excellent shock absorption. The interior is further lined with foam and a soft fabric lining throughout, keeping guitars safe and secure while traveling. The Kapsule Duo features a deeper protective shell than the original Kapsule, wherein each instrument is isolated with a generously padded divider. The case features a unique Iso Chamber that suspends and isolates the instrument's headstock, keeping it safe from impact damage during transport. It also includes multiple storage pockets. The included two-way humidity control packs provided by Boveda absorb or release moisture as required to ensure the optimal humidity.

For more information, contact Gruv Gear: 714-253-4788, customercare@gruvgear.com, www.gruvgear.com.



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Vale Abbott, Graduate, Independent Music Production
Photo by: Roberto Vazquez, Graduate, Photography

Radial HotShot 48 V Microphone Switcher

Radial Engineering has released the HotShot 48 V microphone switcher. It allows a live performing artist to seamlessly redirect a condenser or dynamic microphone signal away from the main house system to the stage monitoring or in-ear system for discrete communication with band members or technicians.

The HotShot 48 V features a transformer-isolated XLR input and two independent XLR outputs. The balanced input accepts both mic and line-level sources, enabling the connection of microphones, an effects device, line-level output of a vocal processor, or any other balanced signal in the audio chain. The HotShot 48V's footswitch operates in either momentary or latch switching mode, and LED indicators display the selected output. 48 V phantom is supplied, and the unit is powered by an included 9 V PSU.

For more information, contact Radial Engineering: 604-942-1001, info@radialeng.com, www.radialeng.com.



Zoom H8 Portable Recorder



Zoom has introduced the H8 portable recorder, the new flagship product in its H Series.

The H8 comes with a stereo X-Y pair of microphones but, as with the previously-released H6, these can be swapped out for a range of newly-developed mic and input modules. Options include a four-capsule ambisonic array (which the H8 can decode into a variety of stereo and multi-channel formats), and the Expander Capsule, which provides four additional mic inputs. Most of the H8's recording sources connect to the octagonal centre section, which comprises two combi inputs for mic/line/instrument signals, plus four XLR mic inputs. With the Expander Capsule fitted, the H8 can capture 12 microphone signals simultaneously.

The unit has a large colour touchscreen while the bottom edges house the SD card slot, USB port, and headphone and line output mini-jacks. The touchscreen allows access to all of the H8's recording controls and software features, and Zoom has developed three different apps for podcast, music, and field recording.

For more information, contact Intellimix: 514-457-9663, zoom@intellimix.com, www.intellimix.com.

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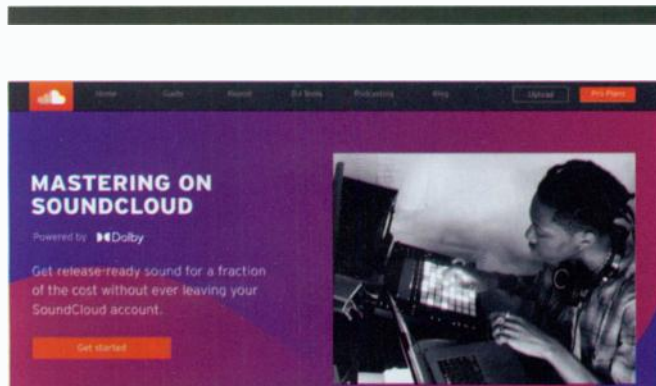
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TECH TOOLS



Songwriting University enables songwriters at any level to collaborate, learn from, and write a song with a professional songwriter via live video from anywhere in the world. The company's growing faculty of Grammy-winning songwriters has over 3,000 major song cuts and over 100 number-one songs in country, pop, Christian, and foreign music combined. Their writers have written with or for Aerosmith, P!nk, Garth Brooks, George Strait, Dolly Parton, Smokey Robinson, Rascal Flatts, Kenny Rogers, and more. As well, Juno Award-winner Suzie McNeil was recently added to the roster. www.songwritingu.com.



Mastering on SoundCloud, powered by Dolby, is a new mastering tool directly integrated into a creator's SoundCloud workflow. It's designed to be easy to use, enabling artists to choose from a custom suite of mastering styles and generate masters without leaving their SoundCloud account. It's powered by Dolby's audio technology and costs \$4.99 per mastered track. As well, SoundCloud Pro Unlimited subscribers get three free masters every month. creators.soundcloud.com/mastering-on-soundcloud.



The **Audiobridge** music recording app is designed to lower the barrier to entry when it comes to high-quality music recording. Its creators call it the "first fully-guided music creation platform." Built solely for mobile and tablet devices, the Audiobridge platform is meant to be intuitive and much simpler than popular DAWs, allowing artists to edit tracks directly on their device. Currently, through the company's Wefunder campaign, creators can also own a stake in Audiobridge. www.audiobridgeapp.com.



SoundGym has launched **ToneGym**, an online ear-training platform that enables musicians to improve their skills, connect, compete, and help each other through "deep gamification" and deliberate practice methods. Each member gets a personalized ear-training program and a daily workout that fits their musical skills. Training sessions are made of ear-training games and music theory exercises that help users to develop musical intuition. By playing multi-level musical games, members improve core skills such as interval detection, scale recognition, chord progression, sense of rhythm, and more. www.tonegym.co.



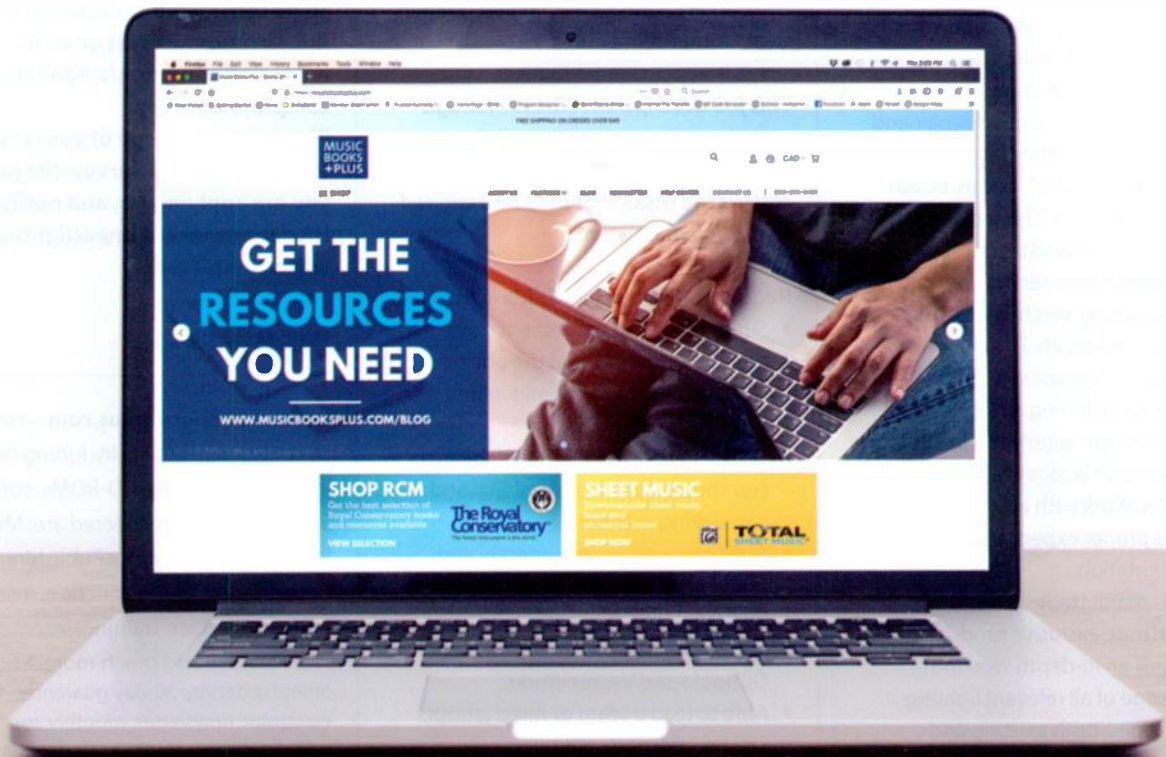
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EMPLOYMENT

Tradeshow Support Specialist – A.C. Group

Position Summary

The Tradeshow Support Specialist will be responsible for the technical coordination and preparation of A.C. Group's North American trade shows. In addition, this position is responsible for providing technical sales demonstrations/product training to A.C. Group's employees, client base, and potential clients.

Primary Responsibilities & Duties

Tradeshow Support

- Coordinates the technical aspects of major tradeshows in Canada, the U.S. and Latin America.
- Prepares the 3D renderings for tradeshow booth design and layout, including tradeshow floor planning.
- Attends major tradeshows to supervise the assembly and disassembly of the trade show booth with efficiency and care to the products and booth (supplies) in the packaging and transport of the goods to and from the site, including directing onsite crews to assemble and disassemble our booths.
- Arranges the necessary paperwork for the TIB and trucking logistics.
- Maintains the tradeshow inventory to ensure it is always in good repair and inventory is accurately balanced. This includes the product, booth, booth supplies, tools, etc. This includes a yearly inventory count and reconciliation.
- Orders tradeshow services as required (labour, rigging, electrical, lead retrievals, hotels, etc.)
- Reports the expenses from the tradeshow including all services and show costs and supply the Marketing Manager with budgets and final numbers. Work with accounting to provide proper expense/payable documentation.
- Attends major tradeshows to demonstrate exclusive products.
- Maintains an in-depth working knowledge of all relevant lighting technologies both existing and pending.

- Assists with the coordination of all Open House or Dealer/Client training sessions with our sales force.
- Assists with coordinating product, Dealer/Client, and staff training sessions.
- Assists in tradeshow research, sourcing supplies (booth supplies, etc.) as required.

Marketing Support

- Assists with video and photo shoots by preparing products and related items.
- Keeps track of literature inventory on all products and new products for distribution at trade shows.

Sales Demonstrations & Product Training

- Conducts demos and training sessions to ensure product knowledge and visibility of both the Company and our key brands to internal and external audience in the following order of importance: Exclusive product lines and non-exclusive product lines.
- Travels to meet with current and potential clients to demonstrate the products and to promote or train on the features of the product lines.
- Updates educational material to include PowerPoint presentations, video accounts of training techniques or written procedures.

This job description reflects management's assignment of essential functions. It does not prescribe or restrict the tasks that may be assigned to this job at any time.

Required Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Superior time management skills, multitasking skills, and the ability to prioritize tasks with minimal supervision.
- Strong verbal skills with the ability to communicate in a professional and compelling manner.
- Ability to work independently and under pressure to meet tight deadlines.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) and Vector Works.
- Able to lead a team of hired labour.
- Strong interpersonal skills.

- Team player that is capable of thinking outside the box.
- Gathers and analyzes information skillfully.
- Ability to make sound, timely, and accurate judgments while supporting reasoning for decisions.
- Professional and responsive with a positive work attitude.
- Resourceful, flexible, and well-organized.
- Ability to maintain filing systems and electronic databases.
- Ability to stoop, kneel, or climb and on occasion lift up to 75 pounds.
- Close vision and ability to adjust focus is required.

Education & Work Experience

- Minimum of 3 years related experience and/or training in stage lighting applications, principles of lighting, and organizing events.
- Minimum of 3 years working knowledge of patching and programming robotic and conventional stage lighting fixtures.

Conditions of Employment

Additional hours may be required for Tradeshows, Travel, Year-End Inventory, or other such peak periods and/or events.

To be considered for a position within A.C. Group, you must go to this URL: www.cindexinc.com/c/93A71B and complete a Survey.

Please attach a copy of your resume to the completed Survey, the position you are applying for, and notify our HR department at hr@aclighting.com when completed.

WEBSITES

www.musicbooksplus.com – Features over 15,000 products including books, instructional DVDs, CD-ROMs, software. Some of the areas covered are: Music Business, Songwriting, Publishing, Recording, Audio Production, Instrument Technique, Voice Training, Internet Promotion ... and much more. Secured online ordering, 30-day guarantee, free electronic newsletter, monthly specials, worldwide shipping, Gift Certificates

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If you are an unsigned Canadian artist and would like to be featured in Showcase, visit www.applyforshowcase.com. Submissions are free - all you need is a ReverbNation account with a high-res photo.

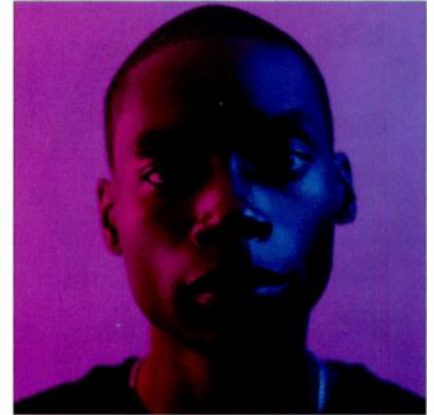
By Andrew King

ANDRE CAHOUN

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To only call Andre Cahoun a musical artist would be to sell him short; really, Cahoun is a talented multi-disciplinary creator who happens to make catchy and compelling music anchored by slick productions and sincere convictions. His debut EP, *Short Term*, covers a good amount of stylistic and sentimental ground across just four tracks; however, it's best consumed as a whole in Cahoun's ambitious and affecting short film of the same name, which he wrote, directed, edited, and stars in. The 10-minute piece combines the EP's four offerings with gripping visuals from Director of Photography Julian Lomaga, resulting in a one-of-a-kind narrative journey.

It's fitting that an actor, filmmaker, singer, songwriter, and record producer would have a knack for pairing sound and picture in such a cool and creative way, but again, the music more than stands on its own outside of the grander project. Songs such as "Awful Misery" and "Now" boast simple but seductive backing tracks with Cahoun's gentle crooning and undiluted lyrics that you can – and should – sink right into.



There's a lot to like in Heather Janssen's signature sonic concoction, which combines tinges of influence from many of music's most celebrated performers – silk-voiced jazz crooners of decades past, folk music's best storytellers, contemporary indie pop innovators, and lots in between.

Janssen found a following relatively quickly by posting a mix of original songs and reimagined covers to YouTube through her teens. She's maintained that mix in recent years, though the quality of the now-twentysomething's own compositions has increased considerably. Take her latest single, "Keeping Secrets," as an example. The fully-produced track is as good as anything crowding the Top 40 these days (try getting that hook out of your head), and the recently-posted "Live at Peartree Studios" version on her popular YouTube channel shows she's got the chops and charisma to recapture and reimagine its magic whenever and wherever she wants. She's got a brand-new collection of singles dropping throughout 2020, so keep an ear out as there's something to satisfy everyone sewn into her style.

HEATHER JANSEN

What:
Alt-Pop
Where:
Hamilton, ON
Visit:
www.heatherjanssenmusic.com

SARGEANT X COMRADE

What:
Lo-Fi Soul
Where:
Calgary, AB
Visit:
www.sargeantandcomrade.com

Boasting one of the freshest musical fusions to come out of Canada in recent memory, Sargeant X Comrade combine crafty vintage vinyl-sampled beats from producer Evgeniy (aka Comrade) with Yolanda Sargeant's smoky, sensuous vocal prowess. They've filled their bandwagon with intrigued listeners pretty quickly thanks to a string of singles throughout the first half of 2020, leading up to the June release of their debut LP, *Magic Radio*.

The LP makes clear it's not just the taste-making public joining the movement, with hip-hop heavyweights like Planet Asia, Kool Keith, Moka Only, and Choclair lending their talents to the collection. That's some fine icing for the cake, but rest assured this would be almost as impressive of a debut without them. With the masterful command of icons like Nina Simone and Erykah Badu, Sargeant effortlessly sways from stirring wistfulness to upbeat bliss while Comrade's productions harken back to the glory days of '90s New York and Detroit hip-hop with a modern touch that makes them compelling enough to stand on their own. There is a steep upward tangent that, if they continue producing this level of output, will only get steeper in the coming months.



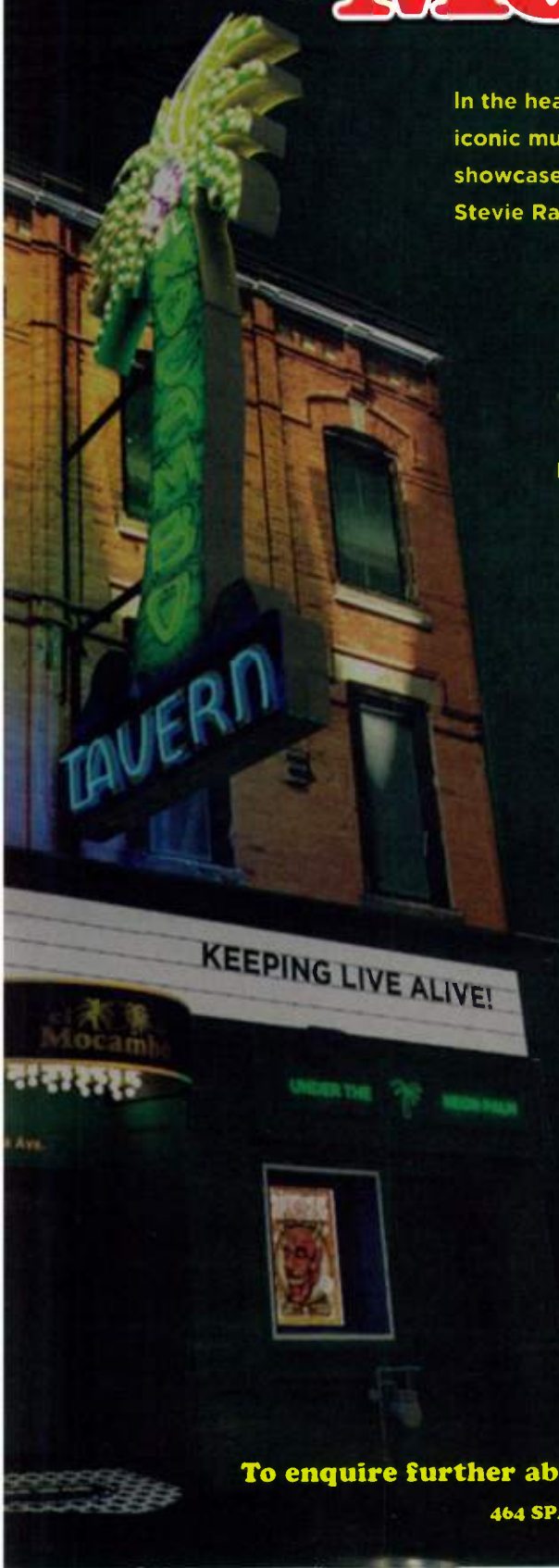


elMocambo

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In 2014, after years of neglect, Toronto financier and philanthropist Michael Wekerle announced that he was buying the building and vowing to restore the El Mocambo and its neon palms to their former glory.

Hiring an A-list team of music industry veterans to bring his vision and the club back to life, Wekerle has made good on his vow. Some 70 years after its founding, the world-famous El Mocambo has returned in a spectacular fashion, with state of the art *live streaming* audio and video control rooms, two expanded performance stages, improved sight lines and best-in-class *in-house* PA & lighting.



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