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Kardinal Offishall On the Music Industry as He Sees It

By Michael Raine

With an artistic ear, scholarly mind, and rich in charisma, Kardinal Offishall has shaped a role in the Canadian music industry we have not quite seen before. From ground-breaking artist – one of the first Canadian rappers to really earn some clout in America – to a mightily influential A&R executive at Canada's largest record label, he is a fascinating person with an unusual depth of understanding of music, the industry, and this country. Here, Kardi shares his story with an eye towards where he fits into greater arc of Canadian hip-hop, and details his approach to an ever-changing music industry and culture.

Crown Lands 40

Are Exactly Who They Want to Be

By Kevin Young

How many bands follow up an eight-minute single with a 13-minute single? Apparently Crown Lands, the Rush-obsessed, half-Jewish/half-Indigenous, politically-outspoken prog rock duo who are strutting their way to stardom. "We're kind of who we wanted to see as kids," explains Cody Bowles. "My dad was a drummer. He'd play 2112 by Rush and, as a baby, I'd be watching him from the floor. I think I always knew I wanted to be a musician."

DIY Guitar Maintenance 44

Your Guide to Keeping Your Axe in Top Shape

By Omar Shabbar

Whether you're picking up your guitar for the first time today, or the first time this year, we all need to get our axes back into gigging shape as live music finally returns. Omar Shabbar, guitar tech at The Root Down Studio, shares the simple tips and tricks that he thinks every guitar player should know about maintaining their instrument. And he also answers few guitar questions from readers!

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World of Prepared Piano

An exploration of this unique & little-understood approach to piano

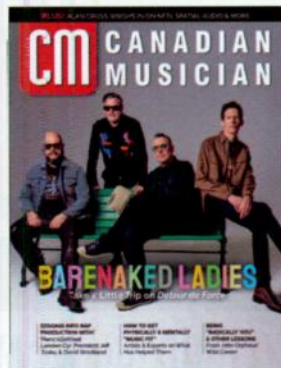
By Kevin Young

Put simply, "prepared piano" means a grand piano that has been altered for some modern compositions by having various objects attached to its strings to change the sound and pitch, and performance on which typically involves playing the keys, plucking the strings, slapping the body of the instrument, and slamming the keyboard lid. The key word there is "typical" because preparations – the type of piano, playing technique, etc. – all vary dramatically depending on the player, the composition, and just how comfortable the piano's owner is with the idea sticking things into their piano.

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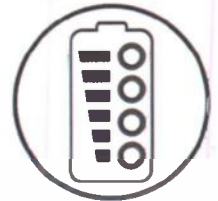
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How Music Professionals Can Support LGBTQ+ Creatives

By Dani Oliva

When I began the process of transitioning a decade ago, there were very few trans and gender non-conforming professionals in the music industry. Without accessible role models, it took me a long time to find my power. Today, I am thankful to advocates like Ashlee Marie Preston who have given me language to talk about my queer identity. Because of their efforts, society's attitude toward queer people has vastly improved: gay marriage is recognized, LGBTQ+ programming is openly available, and many companies have implemented initiatives that acknowledge and protect queer customers and employees.

A significant shift is happening. A prosperous future is blooming, but it will take work to secure queer creators and professionals their seat at the table.

I know this because I'm an artist advocate, music lawyer, consultant, and music manager with more than 17 years of experience. I run a music law firm, Oliva Law Group, P.C. and Dani Oliva Music Consulting, that represents independent artists (who are my fav!), Grammy Award winners, Billboard Hot 100 songwriters, and music companies. I also co-own an Ontario-based music management company, Muk Posh, whose roster focuses on LGBTQ+ and BIPOC talent.

For these reasons, I have a strong sense of how music professionals can support LGBTQ+ creatives. Here are some of the fundamentals:

Commission LGBTQ+ Creators

Too often creatives are asked to work for free in exchange for visibility. Pay creatives. Pay LGBTQ+ creatives. Further, I'd encourage you to pay creatives competitively.

This should be obvious, but what you pay creatives goes beyond their livelihood: you are investing in a broader creative community. Commissioning LGBTQ+ artists ensures that creativity thrives in queer communities and that difficult-to-tell, intersectional stories receive adequate financial support.

Champion LGBTQ+ Experiences

Queer perspectives are extremely valuable. Queer people, simply by existing, challenge heteronormative ideas about gender and sexuality. Their unique life experiences make them more aware of the nuances, subtleties, and complications of gender, sexuality, and identity.

So, invite LGBTQ+ folks to your writing sessions (and compensate them). Partner with them on music projects. Hire them as producers. Watch the magic results! Queer people make everything better, and your projects will benefit from their perspective.

Educate Yourself & Others

Instead of asking queer people to educate you about the wider LGBTQ+ community, take time to learn about queer people and their history. Not sure what genderqueer means or how to use gender neutral pronouns? Lots of information is available online. Share this information with friends! You'll find that queer people contain multitudes, and you may even learn something about yourself, too.

If you own a business, you can go a step further. You can create an equal opportunity/non-discrimination policy. Own a rehearsal studio, music company, recording studio? Post safe space signage in your workplace. Make it undeniable that everyone should feel safe and welcome. If you haven't already, switch to gender neutral bathroom signs then watch your employees and projects ascend! To create art, people need to be open and receptive. To be open and receptive, they need to feel safe.

Celebrate LGBTQ+ Joy

Among the most important things you can do to support LGBTQ+ creators is to spread messages that inspire young people to embrace their identities and thrive. Do that by celebrating queer joy and successes.

I am constantly in awe of work by LGBTQIA+ creators and creators who uplift LGBTQIA+ art and storytelling. Here are some of the creators that I'm currently celebrating:



Canadian rising star IDMAN recently signed a record deal with Arista Records, in partnership with Golly Geng, a Toronto-based independent record label and multimedia group. IDMAN just released her single "Down for It," alongside a brand-new video, and I can't wait to see what this brilliant group will come out with next!

Along with U.S. writer Amos Mac, Canadian filmmakers Chase Joynt and Aisling Chin-Yee recently debuted their film *No Ordinary Man*, which is about the extraordinary life and career of jazz musician Billy Tipton. The movie explores the broader context of transgender representation in media. Canadian artist Rich Aucoin is the composer of the film, mixing both Tipton's work and his own.

Canadian Indigenous artist and actress Jayli Wolf's self-directed EP, *Wild Whisper*, about the Sixties Scoop, sexuality, and mental health is a visual masterpiece.

Canadian artist Vivek Shraya, whose body of work crosses the boundaries of music, literature, visual art, theatre, and film, is currently adapting her debut play, *How to Fail As A Popstar*, for television with the support of CBC. Can't wait for that!

I want to thank Evan Kleekamp for their time, input, and for editing this piece.

Transcend and transform,
Dani

The Overlooked Importance of Email Marketing for Musicians & Music Companies

By Manus Hopkins

For the educational component of NAMM's 2021 *Believe in Music Week* virtual event, Ayana Webb, owner of The Musical Webb and The Digital Webb recorded a seminar called "Email Marketing Tips to Increase Sales by 3x." Webb decided to deliver a presentation on this topic because she says that even with all the different social networks musicians and providers of musical services rely on today, "email marketing is still the most powerful way of generating sales."

In the video presentation, Webb touched on the algorithms that dictate who sees what on social media, noting that while an artist or company may have thousands of followers on social platforms, it is far fewer of them: who actually see and respond to each post, whereas with an email list, nearly everyone who receives updates will open them, bringing a higher engagement rate.

"If you have an email list with the same number of people [as social media followers], if you send out one email, everyone single person gets it," she tells *Canadian Musician*. "So, you have a much bigger reach, you have a higher response rate, you have more sales, and you get more people to access your content if you leverage email marketing."

With email appearing dated and ineffective compared to more modern social platforms, the potential for success when it comes to email marketing is often overlooked and underappreciated, according to Webb. Many people don't consider how valuable a tool it can be, in part because getting emails all day can be a nuisance. This is why it is important to put quality over quantity

when it comes to amassing a following, and make sure all the people on an artist's or industry figure's email list are people who are genuinely interested and want to see new content.

"If you think about it, we may get a lot of emails that we don't want, but then there are places we subscribe to that we do want to hear from," she says.

Music industry companies can greatly benefit from effectively taking advantage of email marketing and using it to its full potential. By using email marketing, companies in particular can boost sales by making sure none of their consumers miss the unveiling of new products or content or other important announcements, the way they might not catch certain social media posts that don't make it to the tops of their feeds.

Music marketing was not always Webb's field, and her parlay into fusing the world of marketing with music is a story that shapes much of what she does. She was brought up musically, but when it came time to choose a field of study and career path, she originally chose accounting so she could guarantee that she would always be able to support herself financially, something she didn't feel confident she could do if she pursued music.

"I always wanted to do music but I kept running away from it because of people telling me that there's no money in music," she says. "I kind of had that idea in my mind."

In her first year of college, Webb started an accounting internship and got a taste of what the rest of her life would look like





if she opted to confine herself to a cubicle rather than chase her real passion, and she didn't like it at all.

"That was what made me realize that I had nothing to lose if I decided to pursue what I actually enjoy, and figure out the money part later."

Webb then switched into music in her second year, and after taking up teaching piano lessons on the side, launched The Musical Webb, where she was able to offer courses online and reach a larger audience without physical distance mattering. In order to grow her business, she had to pick up some marketing techniques, which she did through practical, hands-on learning. From there, she discovered this was also something she had a penchant for, and eventually launched The Digital Webb, so she could pass along what she had learned about marketing to other music industry workers who could benefit from some education on the subject.

"I was really passionate about business, and being able to merge business and marketing with music," she says, "and to be able to take everything I'd learned as far as marketing for my business, and be able to help other musicians."

Marketing is a huge field and it can be difficult to figure out exactly where to start. Webb's advice for musicians and other people in the music business is to first find an email marketing platform with the necessary features. Platforms like Mailchimp, Aweber, and Constant Contact all have crucial features such as the ability to build sign-up forms for websites, creative email campaigns, and track statistics after emails are sent out. Once the basics are covered, Webb says it's then time to start collecting emails from ideal audiences using the sign-up forms, and she stresses the importance

of only adding people who will be legitimately interested in receiving new content. Fan pages, ads, performances, and referrals are all good places to mine for emails and find new customers.

"Also, stay in contact with them regularly and keep them updated with new content, upcoming events, new music, specials, etc.," she says.

The pandemic brought challenges to Webb's businesses, like any, but also an unexpected silver lining in that the music industry as a whole has been adapting to more online approaches to business, creating a bigger market for Webb's line of work. While the pandemic has highlighted the importance of online marketing strategies for arts and music industry professionals and brought more attention to the need for it, it was still something that was crucial before and will continue to be afterwards. Webb has made the most of these changes, and seized the opportunity to provide help with marketing to those with a newfound interest.

The pandemic essentially cut Webb's number of students in half, as not all of them wanted to continue taking lessons virtually, so she turned her attention to The Digital Webb. Because lockdowns were causing more people to take an interest in online marketing, the company was seeing rapid exponential growth.

"What happened was, on the online side of it, in terms of courses, that actually took off," she says. "That was a big silver lining."

With her focus concentrated on The Digital Webb for now, Webb has been able to provide advice and guidance to music industry workers who haven't maximized the business proper marketing can bring them.

There are several types of marketing music industry professionals can benefit from, that The Digital Webb specializes in teaching and helping with. Organic marketing, paid advertising, referrals, email lists, and social media marketing are all important, and every artist should be taking advantage of all of them, using them each to their full potential and not overlooking any potential avenues for increased sales, according to Webb.

"Most musicians are having a hard time being able to thrive with their music because they lack knowledge in marketing," she says. "A lot of musicians are under the impression that if they make great music, it'll just kind of grow."

While Webb says part of that notion is true, musicians can only go so far without having to gain some marketing knowledge in order to progress further and achieve higher levels of success. Webb calls effective marketing an "untapped area" for lots

of musicians and industry figures, and understanding how to market is essential for those who want to make a living from their music. Email marketing is effective, easy, and sees results, which is why it's something Webb places a particular focus on, especially as it is so commonly overlooked.

The marketing tactics Webb uses can benefit all kinds of workers in the music industry, and none are exclusive to any segment of the business, she says. Everyone from musicians to detailers to manufacturers interacted with her video.

"For me, that let me know that email marketing is definitely a needed topic for most companies," she says.

Webb's future plans are mainly focused around further expanding The Digital Webb. With interest in the company growing and the pandemic giving artists and music industry professionals time to concentrate their efforts on building online presences, there's no better time for Webb to do exactly that.

Right now, The Digital Webb offers a free introductory mini-course called the "Music Career Starter Kit," as well as courses in fan-base building, money-making, and a course bundle with lessons on marketing strategies and ways to amass followers, fans, and even students for teachers of private music lessons. There are more courses on the way as well, focused on gigging, mastering social media content, finding the best ways to teach students, building an effective website, and more. There's a lot that goes into building a career in any facet of the music industry, but Webb aims to help people in any and all of them, often teaching methods that can be applied to several.

Webb is a perfect example of someone who used the issues posed by the pandemic to her advantage, despite the challenges it brought her. With her innovative thinking and business approach, she seized an opportunity to bring desperately needed services to musicians and industry figures who needed them, while they were able to take the time to learn and apply them, propelling her business forward in the process. The importance of marketing has only grown as the world has moved online — and email marketing is one of the most valuable tools music industry professionals can use.

"Even with things opening back up, I'm still able to grow my business online," she adds. "And it's still growing to this day."

Manus Hopkins is freelance writer and former Editorial Assistant at Canadian Musician.

ASSOCIATION UPDATE

CONNECT Music Licensing & Music Canada

CONNECT Music Licensing and Music Canada have released a new video series that aims to clearly and succinctly explain key concepts and fundamentals about music royalties in Canada. Entitled **Understanding Royalties in the Digital Age**, the series aims to help Canadian artist entrepreneurs collect all the royalties they are entitled to.

Made possible by the support of Ontario Creates, the four-part series of short, shareable videos explores the process of licensing, distribution, and generating income from the broadcast and public performance of music. The videos are: The Anatomy of a Song, Public Performance, Digital Distributors, and The Journey of a Song.

The videos are now available on-demand at www.connectmusic.ca/artist-entrepreneur-virtual-resource-centre.

Western Canadian Music Alliance

Registration is now open for **BreakOut West 2022**, which is taking place from Feb. 2-6 in Winnipeg. Organized by the Western Canadian Music Alliance (WCMA), the conference and showcase festival is open to artists from the four western provinces and the three territories.

BreakOut West 2022 will consist of a four-day music conference and a three-day music showcase festival that provides artists and industry professionals the opportunity to expand their careers through informative panels and keynotes, mentorship meetings, networking mixers, and live music showcasing. Conference sessions will discuss timely topics affecting the current music industry and artists' lives, from advancements in royalty collection, to creative marketing, to the future of tech in music. The one-on-one mentorship sessions offer the chance for artists to meet industry professionals who can guide their music career. The festival is a chance to experience the best emerging artists from western Canada.

Early bird registration pricing (\$199 plus fees and taxes) is in effect until Oct 26, 2021.



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

FACTOR

FACTOR is now accepting applications for funding through the new **Support to Live Music Events program**. In the Fall Economic Statement, the Minister of Finance announced additional funding to support the planning and presentation of events and shows in response to COVID-19. From this, \$15 million is allocated to the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) via the Canada Music Fund (CMF). FACTOR and Musicaction will administer these funds through a new program, Support to Live Music Events. The purpose of the program is to stimulate the employment of Canadian artists and cultural workers, including technicians and other service providers and supporting workers, by providing financial support for live music events featuring Canadian artists that can be presented before an in-person audience and/or through digital dissemination.

The funding will mitigate the significant financial risks associated with presenting live music events in the current uncertain climate. Events supported through the Canada Music Fund (CMF) are expected to generate earning opportunities for artists and cultural workers in the live music sector. Priority will be given to equity-seeking populations and Indigenous-led organizations as well as applicants that do not traditionally receive CMF funding but were eligible for the 2020 Emergency Support

Fund. All applicants must be Canadian/Canadian-owned and must support the career development of Canadian artists and/or offer musical programming by Canadian artists. Those eligible to apply include artist-entrepreneurs, artist managers, booking agents, concert promoters, music venues, and music festivals.

Applicants may apply only once during the fiscal year (2021-22) until March 1, 2022. The maximum request is \$100,000 per eligible applicant for one or multiple projects.

For more information, go to www.factor.ca/live.

Music Nova Scotia

After a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19, **Nova Scotia Music Week (NSMW)** is heading back to Truro from Nov. 4-7 for the 2021 edition of the event. The festival will feature over 100 Nova Scotian artists across multiple stages throughout Truro.

At this time, Music Nova Scotia is planning to host NSMW in person in Truro. Artists who are selected to perform will have a showcasing opportunity this fall, preferably in person, but plans exist for a hybrid and/or digital event should the need arise.

While some conference events are specific to the industry, all components of NSMW are open to the public. Anyone can purchase a delegate's pass and all events are open to the ticket-buying public. The showcasing festival and concert components are aimed at presenting

the talents of Nova Scotian artists to the public and industry professionals, while the awards presentations are a celebration of achievement and provide heightened public recognition. Conference topics range from presenting core industry know-how to exploring current and emerging issues facing the music industry, along with potential approaches and solutions.

In total, more than 1,000 musicians and music industry professionals are expected to attend NSMW. As always, it'll showcase talent, provide education, facilitate connections, and celebrate Nova Scotian culture and hospitality.

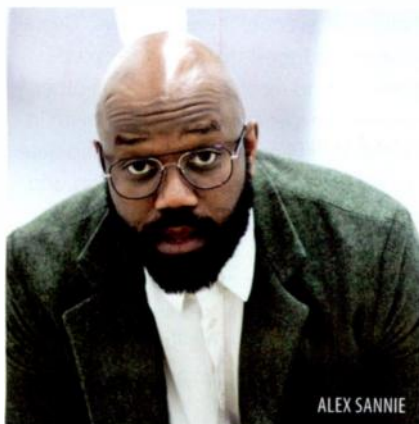
For more information, go to www.nsmw.ca.

Ontario Creates

Ontario Creates is accepting applications for the **Ontario Music Investment Fund (OMIF) Live Music stream**, which supports businesses and organizations that produce or promote live music events featuring Canadian artists, including eligible music festivals and concert series. The OMIF Live Music stream will provide funding to increase the number and quality of live music experiences (e.g. events, festivals, and concerts) that can be experienced in Ontario.

Funding is provided in the form of direct grants towards the costs of eligible activities. The OMIF Live Music stream requires applicants to provide a matching contribution to ensure that maximum return on investment is achieved from provincial investment. Applicants must demonstrate clear, measurable outcomes that align with the objectives of the OMIF Live Music stream.

The deadline for eligible applicants is



ALEX SANNIE



TYLER MESSICK AT NOVA SCOTIA MUSIC WEEK

Oct. 6, 2021 at 5 p.m. ET. For more information, email omo@ontariocreates.ca or go to bit.ly/CM-OMIF.

Manitoba Music

Manitoba Music has hired **Alex Sannie as its industry development coordinator**. In his new position, Sannie will be helming the association's professional and industry development program, including workshops, conferences, mentor sessions, and more.

Sannie is an accomplished and award-winning music producer, performer, and presenter with 20 years of experience creating music. He's most well known as the producer and member of the hip-hop group The Lytics. Performing all over the world, The Lytics have played major music festivals and countless concerts. As the producer of The Lytics, his music has been featured in major Hollywood films, television shows, and ad campaigns. Along with the other members of the group, Sannie has worked in the studio or shared the stage with industry heavyweights like Nas, Jurassic 5, Sam Kuti, Childish Gambino, A Tribe Called Red, Shad, Kevin Hearn (of Barenaked Ladies), and Mike D of the Beastie Boys. Sannie was also recently named education program coordinator and head instructor at The Indigenous Family Centre.

"Alex brings years of music industry experience and expertise, a fresh perspective, and new connections to local and international music communities," says Sean McManus, executive director of Manitoba Music. "He has a great un-

derstanding of the needs and realities of artists and music companies, and a deep knowledge of the importance and impact of training and education."

Manitoba Music's professional development program provides industry knowledge and skills development for emerging and established artists and music industry professionals.

Sannie can be reached at alex@manitobamusic.com. For more information, contact Manitoba Music: 204-942-8650, info@manitobamusic.com, www.manitobamusic.com.

Alberta Music

Alberta Music has announced the appointment of **Christine Rogerson as its interim executive director**. Rogerson will be filling in on a 13-month contract while current Alberta Music ED, Carly Klassen, is away on maternity leave.

Rogerson was a festival manager for Live Nation Canada and responsible for the management and production of festivals, including Chasing Summer, Round Up Music Festival, Oxford Stomp, and Center of Gravity. Prior to Live Nation, she managed the national operations for Union Events, Canada's largest independent concert promoter, and aided the company in achieving developmental milestones, including its expansion to four offices across Canada, enhancing the programming capacity and launch of festival properties, and growing the staff and operational capacity.

For more information, contact Alberta Music: info@albertamusic.org, www.albertamusic.org.



Canada's Arts & Entertainment Sectors Hit Hard Financially by Pandemic, But Sound Recording Industries Buck the Trend

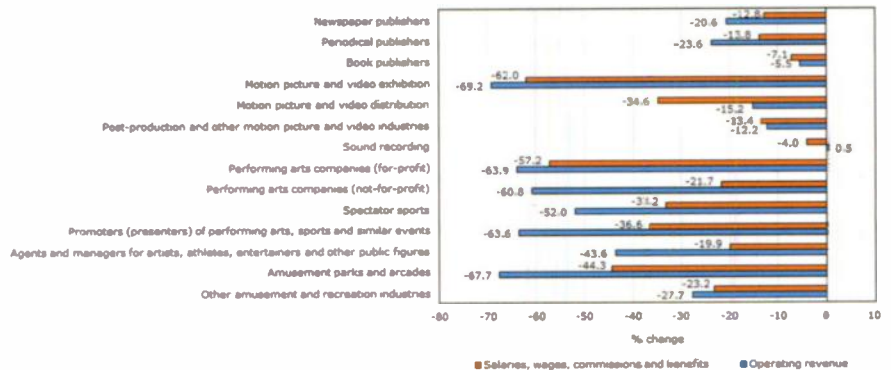
Statistics Canada has released a new report summarizing the financial impacts of the pandemic on the culture, arts, entertainment, and recreation industries in 2020. Unsurprisingly, the report outlines substantial declines in operating revenues and in wages, salaries, commissions, and benefit expenses across all sectors. The one outlier, though, is the sound recording industries, which actually saw a modest increase in revenue in 2020, but that was accompanied by a slight decrease in wages and salaries.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on the culture, arts, entertainment, and recreation sectors globally and in Canada. Preliminary estimates suggest that operating revenue fell in all industries in those sectors in Canada in 2020, with the exception of the sound recording industries," write the report's authors, Marie-Christine Bernard and Megan McMaster. "Similarly, despite government assistance, salary, wage, commission, and benefit expenses fell in all industries. Several factors contributed to these extensive declines, including the in-person nature of the sectors; venue closures; the cancellation of events, festivals, and performances; operating restrictions; and changing consumer preferences for physically distanced, at-home, and online activities."

The report states that digital technologies helped stem the severity of some losses for the cultural industries, thanks to the ability to create content from anywhere and for staff to work from home. The sound recording and music publishing industries were also helped by the increased sales of streaming services in the years immediately preceding the pandemic, with streaming-related sales growing to \$312.9 million in 2019, up 73.4% from 2017.

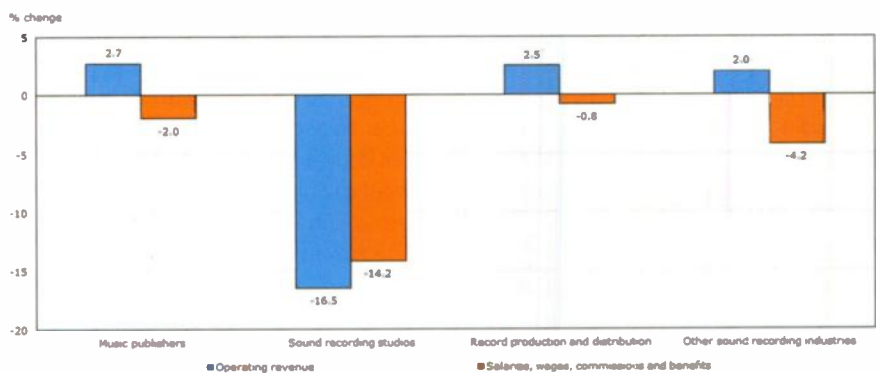
As noted, the sound recording industries were the least affected by the

Percentage change in operating revenue and salary, wage, commission and benefit expenses for industries providing cultural, arts, entertainment and recreation services in Canada, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Services Industries Program.

Percentage change in operating revenue and salary, wage, commission and benefit expenses for sound recording industries in Canada, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Services Industries Program.

COVID-19 pandemic, and the only segment to not experience a decline. That good fortune wasn't uniform across all areas, however, as recording studios were negatively impacted. While music publishers and record labels and distributors saw their revenue increase by about 2%, Canadian recording studios experienced a sharp 16.5% decline in revenue, accompanied by a 14.2% decline in salaries and wages.

"With increasing access to music on mobile platforms, revenue from streaming services accounts for a significant part of

the record production and distribution industry's revenue," the report says. "Overall, estimates suggest that with the exception of sound recording studios, all other segments experienced modest growth in operating revenue in 2020, with moderate declines in salary, wage, commission, and benefit expenses."

The full report, entitled *Financial Impacts of the Pandemic on the Culture, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Industries in 2020*, can be read on the Statistics Canada website at www.statcan.gc.ca.

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...



The OBGMs, Mustafa, The Weather Station & More Make Polaris Music Prize's 10-Album Shortlist

On July 15th, the Polaris Music Prize unveiled the 10 albums on the 2021 shortlist. The prize aims to award the best Canadian album of the year without regard to musical genre or commercial popularity.

Albums eligible for consideration on this year had to be released between May 1, 2020 and May 31, 2021. An independent jury of music journalists, broadcasters, and bloggers from across Canada (including *Canadian Musician's* Michael Raine) determines the long and shortlists. Eleven people from the larger jury pool are then chosen to serve on the Grand Jury, which will select the Polaris Music Prize winner on Sept. 27th.

The shortlist is: Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's *Theory of Ice*; Cadence Weapon's *Parallel World*; DJah's *Head Above the Waters*; Dominique Fils-Aimé's *Three Little Words*; Mustafa's *When Smoke Rises*; The OBGMs' *The Ends*; Klò Pelgag's *Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs*; TOBi's *Elements Vol. 1*; The Weather Station's *Ignorance*; and Zoon's *Bleached Waves*.

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

Artists Showcase Applications for SXSW 2022

Applications are open until Oct. 7, 2021, for artists to play official showcases at South by Southwest (SXSW) between March 14-20, 2022, in Austin, TX. Applications are open to solo artists and full bands across all genres and from all parts of the world.

The SXSW Music Festival brings together tens of thousands of artists, industry professionals, influencers, and music lovers from around the world to make connections, elevate their careers, and celebrate live music with showcases from both legendary performers and up-and-coming artists. This year's SXSW Online Music Festival showcased 289 artists featuring 202 international acts representing 38 countries.

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



THE ZOLAS AT SXSW



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Your search for a classic Otto Link Tone Edge Early Babbitt (EB) ends now with JJ Babbitt's re-release of this iconic, versatile, vibrant tenor sax mouthpiece. Yes ... this is the original EB and delivers everything you've been searching for.

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- Dark
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info@jjbabbitt.com

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Over the Bridge Launches Peer Support Mental Health Program for Canadian Music Community

Over the Bridge (OTB) has announced the launch of Supporting Act, a peer support program to foster greater mental health and wellness for members of the music community. OTB is a Canadian non-profit that assists music industry members, who are at their most vulnerable, cultivate and achieve long-term mental health and addiction recovery goals.

"Supporting Act takes a person-first approach to peer support. This person-first approach puts the person before their strug-

gles, describing what the person 'has' rather than asserting what the person is," says Ace Piva, co-founder and executive director of Over the Bridge. "Supporting Act groups are run by trained peer support facilitators from the music community, for the music community."

The Supporting Act program offers artists, musicians, and staff of all types in the music community a way to receive the support they need to foster recovery and better mental health. It offers several ways for people to get the support they need, including

twice-a-week virtual peer support sessions, a private Facebook group for members to interact with, and digital resources through OverTheBridge.org. It also offers in-person meetups when possible.

People who are curious about Supporting Act can join the free virtual sessions, which happen every Tuesday and Friday at 2 p.m. ET over Zoom.

For more information, contact Over the Bridge: info@overthebridge.org, www.overthebridge.org.

PHOTO: STEVEN GUILBEAULT/FACEBOOK



HON. STEVEN GUILBEAULT

Feds Outline \$70M in Investments to Support Canadian Artists & Live Music Sector

Minister of Canadian Heritage Steven Guilbeault has announced the rollout of \$50 million in new COVID-19-related funding to support the live music sector. An additional \$20 million will also be delivered in renewed annual funding in 2022–23 and 2023–24 to current Canada Music Fund (CMF) recipients.

This \$70 million is part of the \$1.9 billion that was allotted in the 2021 federal budget to support the arts, culture, heritage, and sport sectors. This funding is meant to assist recovery and growth and create jobs in these sectors.

The announcement in August provided more details on the multi-million-dollar Emergency Support Fund for Canada's Live Music Sector package. The Government of Canada will deliver \$50 million to support the live music sector and to maintain the stability of Canada's funding system for commercial music in 2021–22 through the CMF, bridging the period between the current pandemic restrictions and a sustainable recovery.

Allocation of the newly-announced funds will be handled by FACTOR in the Anglophone market and Musicaction for the Francophone market. FACTOR has announced that the initial \$50 million will be allocated in three streams: Stream one includes \$25 million for emergency funds for Canada's live music sector; stream two includes \$20 million in support for live concerts to help the sector prepare for the resumption of in-person shows; and stream three includes \$5 million in support for Canadian artists to ensure that the level of funding to artists is maintained despite declining contributions to Canadian Content Development (CCD) from commercial radio broadcasters.

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



Ontario Government Announces \$49 Million Investment in Festival & Event Industry

The Ontario government is investing \$49 million to help festival and event organizers deliver innovative and safe experiences that allow people to safely reconnect with their communities. This one-time funding increase – more than double the annual funding provided to the festival and event sector in the past – is meant to ensure the long-term success of the festival and event sector.

The government is providing \$43 million to support 439 festivals and events through the Reconnect Festival and Event Program, representing a record number of supported events in the program's 14-year history.

The Reconnect program (previously known as Celebrate Ontario) was developed to help festival and event organizers adapt to new public health measures with virtual, drive-through, and other safe offerings. This support is directed to community-based events with safe, innovative experiences that create opportunities for Ontarians to reconnect with their community in new ways.

The provincial government is also providing \$6 million to Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster events. This helps municipalities and organizations in Ontario host large-scale, high-impact signature events that draw significant tourist attendance and increase tourist spending, increase Ontario's profile through media and broadcast exposure, and provide significant economic impact and legacy development for the province.

According to the government, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, every one dollar of provincial funding invested through Celebrate Ontario (the model for the Reconnect program) resulted in almost \$21 of visitor spending. The impact of the 2021/22 Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster and Reconnect Festival and Event Program investment is estimated to generate over \$1 billion in economic benefit across the province.

U of Waterloo Researchers Create AI to Help You Write Song Lyrics

Songwriters can find inspiration and new creative directions for their songwriting with technology developed by University of Waterloo researchers. LyricJam, a real-time system that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to generate lyric lines for live instrumental music, was recently created and released by members of the Ontario university's Natural Language Processing Lab.

The lab, led by Professor Olga Vechtomova, has been researching creative applications of AI for several years. Their initial work led to the creation of a system that learns musical expressions of artists and generates lyrics in their style. Recently, Vechtomova,

along with Waterloo graduate students Gaurav Sahu and Dhruv Kumar, developed technology that relies on various aspects of music – such as chord progressions, tempo, and instrumentation – to synthesize lyrics reflecting the mood and emotions expressed by live music. As a musician or a band plays instrumental music, the system continuously receives the raw audio clips, which the neural network processes to generate new lyric lines. The artists can then use the lines to compose their own song lyrics.

"The purpose of the system is not to write a song for the artist," Vechtomova explains. "Instead, we want to help artists realize their own creativity. The system generates poetic lines with new metaphors and expressions, potentially leading the artists in creative directions that they haven't explored before."

For more information or to try it, go to www.lyricjam.ai. For a conversation about LyricJam and AI's potential in music creation with Vechtomova, listen to the Aug. 25, 2021 episode of the *Canadian Musician Podcast*.



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www.canadianmusician.com

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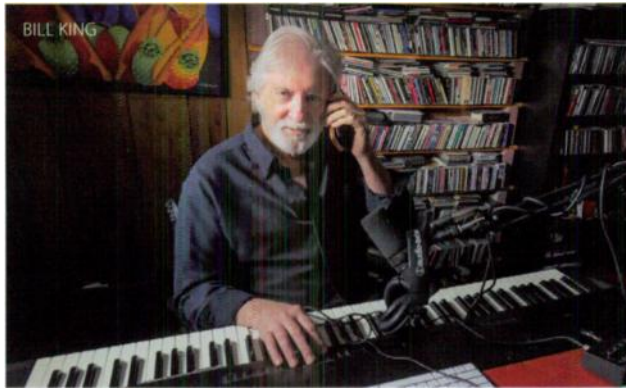
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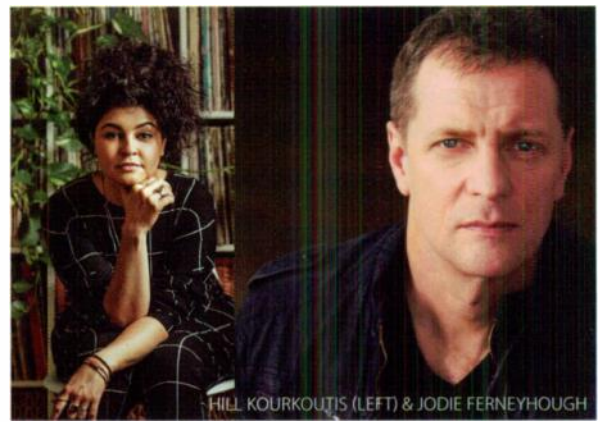
SING! Toronto Vocal Arts Festival Names Strategy & Engagement Director

SING! The Toronto Vocal Arts Festival has named Bill King as its new strategy and engagement director. King brings decades of experience as a recording artist, music journalist, author, music director, Juno Award nominee, photographer, magazine publisher, artistic director, radio producer, event producer, and host of SING! concerts.

"This side of COVID offers many opportunities to tap into the abundance of young talent that surrounds us and showcase in as many situations as possible. It's also about providing guidance. What drew me to SING! – the staff and the considerable talent in positions to make a difference. Any event of major significance is about that collaborative spirit and the will to move mountains," says King.

Launched in 2012, SING! is an a cappella festival that features a lineup that crosses cultural, demographic, and musical styles from around the globe. In addition to performances, the festival offers educational workshops. The main SING! festival will return with both live and online offerings in May 2022.

For more information, contact SING!: info@singtoronto.com, www.singtoronto.com.



CCS Launches New Division, Daytripper Music Publishing

CCS Rights Management (CCS), a Canada-based global independent rights administration and creative services company, has launched Daytripper Music Publishing, a new division and stand-alone brand dedicated to "creative development of established and up-and-coming artists and songwriters, while enhancing, capitalizing, and promoting their works." CCS will provide global administration, synchronization, and licensing services for Daytripper Music Publishing, which is headquartered in Toronto.

"Since we founded the company 10 years ago, CCS has established itself as a leader in administrative practices and services. As we continue expanding into the U.S. and internationally, we're excited to launch Daytripper Music Publishing which will focus on the front-facing part of music publishing, identifying and developing great talent at all levels, providing personalized and curated global creative opportunities, and helping each artist and writer build their brand and career," says Jodie Ferneyhough, founder and president of CCS Rights Management.

Daytripper Music Publishing's first new signing is award-winning Canadian songwriter, producer, composer, and recording artist Hill Kourkoutis.

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

CMRRA Distributed \$57M to Music Publishers & Songwriters in 2020

The Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency (CMRRA) says it distributed over \$57 million to music publishers and self-published songwriters in 2020. Online streaming featured significantly in these figures, representing an increase of more than 17% compared to 2019's distributions for streaming year-over-year. The Toronto agency has a repertoire database of over 40 million musical works, representing 142,000 music catalogues.

"We know how significantly the music industry has been affected by the global pandemic. The live sector has been decimated by venue closures, festival shutdowns, and tour cancellations. At the same time, it's also resulted in a renewed focus on rights and royalties. Catalogue sales have been making news headlines. During the

lockdown, commercial radio revenues received by CMRRA were down by 30% in 2020. We know how important it is for royalty payments to reach people right now and we're thrilled that we were able to process and distribute over \$57 million of mechanical royalties in 2020 to music publishers and self-published songwriters," says Paul Shaver, president of CMRRA.

Behind the scenes, CMRRA says it's been investing in a technology platform that will improve processing for collections and distributions. In March 2021, the agency launched a new International Collections service. Working in tandem with the Mechanical Licensing Collective (the MLC) for the U.S. and with IMPEL (an England-based collective) for countries outside of North America, the new service allows clients

to expand their collection territories for digital mechanical royalties.

In June 2021, CMRRA announced a multi-year partnership agreement with TikTok, ensuring that going forward, rights holders are paid for music used within video creations on the popular platform. Licensing agreements were also finalized for an Online Music Service collection portfolio with Qobuz, Indigenous Cloud, ACX music (which operates the Ultimate Fighting Championship streaming application), as well as classical streaming service, Primephonic. A licensing agreement renewal was also completed with Soundcloud for the same portfolio.

For more information, contact the CMRRA: 416-926-1966, inquiries@cmrra.ca, www.cmrra.ca.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

POP Montreal Announces Lineup & Programming for 20th Edition

POP Montreal has announced the programming for the 20th edition of the festival, which is taking place from Sept. 22-26. This year's programming celebrates emerging talent as well as artists that have performed at the festival over the last two decades. Polaris Prize-winner Backwash, American rapper Cakes da Killa, Montreal psych rock band Suuns, indie rock veterans The Dears, and more are set to perform the hybrid event.

The festival organizers are promising special events in line with previous years that incorporate the community and backdrop of Montreal. The festival will also host the Art POP exhibition on the third floor of the Rialto, Pucés POP at Entrepot77, conferences and discussions as part of the POP Symposium at the Rialto, Film POP at Cinéma Moderne and at Entrepot77 (cine-concert), as well as Kids POP at Parc Saint-Viateur.

With both in-person and virtual streamed events, once again shows will be adapted to ensure the safety of attendees. Adhering to all COVID-19 protocols, a health pass (i.e. proof of vaccination) will be required at the entrance of the concerts. Those planning to attend a performance must purchase tickets online in advance. There



will be no tickets available at the door.

For all show listings and more information, go to www.popmontreal.com.

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

Billy Raffoul's "Western Skies" Wins SOCAN Songwriting Prize

PHOTO: JESSE DEFLORIO



BILLY RAFFOUL

The song "Western Skies," written and performed by Billy Raffoul of Leamington, ON, is the winner of the 16th annual SOCAN Songwriting Prize.

Canadian music fans voted from June 17th to July 1st for the 10 finalist songs written by emerging songwriters. The nominees were selected by a panel of 15 music industry experts for each of the prizes. For winning, Raffoul receives \$5,000, a Yamaha Keyboard, and a \$500 gift card from Long & McQuade.

"Songwriting has been a part of my life since the very beginning, and I am so fortunate to have grown up in a family full of artistic expression," Raffoul says. "Western Skies" is a song about the imminent threat of climate change and our responsibility to future generations. To be recognized for a song that means so much to me is an incredible honour. Thank you to SOCAN, thank you to the nominating panel, and thank you to everyone who voted for 'Western Skies' amongst an exceptional group of songs."

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

Finalists Announced for the 2021 Slight Music Emerging Songwriter Award

PHOTO: CARLAS PHOTO



WILLIAM PRINCE PERFORMING DURING THE 2021 JUNO AWARDS

The Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame (CSHF) has announced the finalists of the 2021 Slight Music Emerging Songwriter Award. Established in 2017,

the Award celebrates the current achievements and bright futures of Canadian songwriters on an upward trajectory in their career. This year's finalists are comprised of six Anglophone artists and five Francophone artists from across Canada, who will be vying for the top cash prize and exclusive opportunities to SOCAN songwriting camps, mentorship opportunities, and industry recognition at the 2021 and 2022 SOCAN Awards.

The 2021 finalists in the Anglophone category are: Toronto-based alt-pop artist Lu Kala; Polaris Prize shortlisted poet and singer-songwriter Mustafa; Scarborough, ON's Savannah Ré, who won the 2021 Juno Award for Traditional R&B/Soul Recording of the Year; Montreal-based multi-genre singer-songwriter Shay Lia; Toronto's TOBi, whose album *Elements Vol. 1* won the Juno Award for Best Rap Recording; and Winnipeg-based singer-songwriter William Prince, whose songs have earned him a Juno Award, the SOCAN Songwriting Prize, and Canadian Folks Music Awards.

In the Francophone category, the finalists are Ariane Roy, Klô Pelgag, Laurence-Anne, P'tit Belliveau, and Sarahmée.

The Anglophone and Francophone winners will be announced in September. Past winners of the Slight Music Emerging Songwriter Award include Charlotte Cardin, Jessie Reyez, Lowell, and Les Louanges.

For more information, go to www.cshf.ca/songwriter-award.



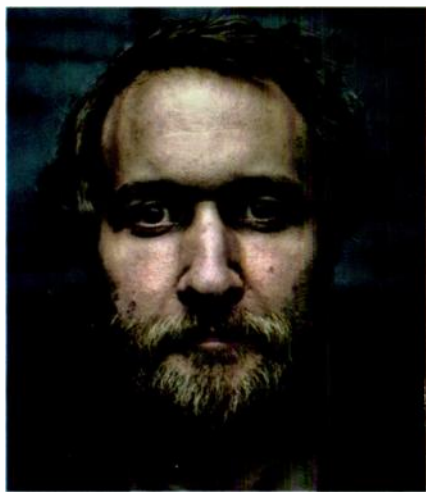
RICHARD TICHELMAN

Richard Tichelman Wins CMW's 2021 Jim Beam Virtual National Talent Search

Canadian Music Week (CMW) has announced that 20-year-old pop singer-songwriter Richard Tichelman of White Rock, BC, is the 2021 Jim Beam Virtual National Talent Search Grand Prize Winner. Tichelman's song "Hands" was streamed in one of six provincial webisodes focused on the contest's finalists. The webisodes garnered more than 5.7 million impressions, and fans voted for their favourite artist in each province to help determine the grand prize winner.

As the Grand Prize Winner, Tichelman has won a free trip to Toronto to perform at the 2022 Jim Beam Indie Awards. Additional grand prize package items are a fully produced single at Metalworks Studios, a shopping spree at Long & McQuade, and gifts from *Canadian Musician* magazine.

Fans also voted for provincial winners, who are: Taken By Sanity from Alberta; Brandi Vezina from Manitoba; Weigh the Anchor from Ontario; Ricky Paquette from Quebec; and Good Dear Good from Nova Scotia. All the finalists' performances are available for viewing at www.indies.ca.



CRAIG CARDIFF

For the full conversation, listen to the July 7, 2021 episode

CM: When you were curating your best-of compilation, *Collected Works*, a couple years ago, did you see any connecting threads between your most popular songs, like “Dirty Old Town” or “Last Love Letter,” in terms of why they’re your most popular?

Craig Cardiff: No, I honestly have no idea. I’ve written so many better songs than those ones, and that’s frustrating. It’s frustrating because it’s like, “Okay, I did this and I can’t do that again. So, I’ve got to stand on the shoulders of that.”

So, there’s better songs than those, like “Lake Michigan.” With that one, I feel like it was me being schooled and someone being like, “I see through you.” It was actually an old woman who was brought to one of my shows by their family member and they just saw through everything! She was like, “Well, you write for young people. All your love songs are for young people, or people with sugar in their eyes.” I’m like,

“Uh, I don’t know what we’re talking about right now... I was just trying to get you to buy a CD; what’s happening?” [laughs]. But she goes, “Well, when you get to my age, you’ve cried all the sugar away and you don’t fall in love with people to try to change them because that never works.” It was a grandma and she said, “I want to hear a better quality of love song from you.”

It was like, “What the fuck is this? Did you pay to get in here?” [laughs]. But then, who am I, you know? She’s been alive double the time I have, so she’s seen more...

So, to get back to why I think [“Lake Michigan”] is a stronger song, I think it talks about failing and the idea of, even at the end of things, what’s still important. I said to this person, “You’ve had an impact on me” and I asked, “What advice do you have? Or could you write something in the notebook?” She wrote, “Time, time, time. Love, love, love,” and that became the chorus.



KEZIAH MYERS

Executive Director, ADVANCE, Canada’s Black Music Business Collective

For the full conversation, listen to the Aug. 4, 2021 episode

CM: When it comes to any type of organization with a social mission, there’s a difference between identifying problems and actually making progress towards solving those problems. So, for ADVANCE, what’s been the process of not just bringing attention to the lack of Black representation in the music business, but actually achieving change? How do you do that?

Keziah Myers: You do that through metrics. But in order to track metrics, you need base research to see where we are at the start. I’m a huge supporter of ensuring that what we’re doing has a metric attached to it so that we can track success. Being able to track success allows us to see performative actions versus real change. It also allows us to not get wrapped up in movement. So, what you may notice in the industry is that there have been many jobs come up and there’s been lots of movement, but the question is; have there been

new additions to the music industry, or are there people like me who are going from Entandem or SOCAN to this role? Because that doesn’t really mean you’ve added anybody, it just means you’ve moved somebody.

So, that is really what I look at when I’m looking at those metrics. The basis of that comes, again, from research. It also comes from ensuring a strategic plan. We’ve just completed our strategic plan, and that outlines goals for the organization. Over time, we look at achieving those goals and the question is; how? So, if we realize we’re shuffling people and there may not be a large group who are prepared to come into the music industry, then the question is; why? Is it because they don’t recognize that music industry careers are available to them in high school? Well, then we have to start having that conversation then. Is it because they’re not given the opportunity to intern? Well, then we need to make sure we address that barrier.

Listen to new episodes of the *Canadian Musician Podcast* every Wednesday at www.canadianmusicianpodcast.com. All episodes can be found on the website or through Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.





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.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CCMA



Lindsay Ell at the CCMA Awards

PHOTO: DENNY MEDLEY



Digging Roots at Folk Alliance International



AES Convention

NOVEMBER

OMEA & CMIEC Conference: Con Fuoco 2021

Niagara Falls, ON
November 4-6, 2021
contact@omea.on.ca,
www.omea.on.ca

Indie Week Online Music Conference Online

November 9-13, 2021
info@indieweek.com,
www.indieweek.com

CCMA Country Music Week

London, ON
November 27-30, 2021
416-947-1331
country@ccma.org, www.ccma.org

FEBRUARY

Breakout West

Winnipeg, MB
February 2-6, 2022
204-943-8485
info@breakoutwest.ca,
www.breakoutwest.ca

Folk Alliance International Conference

Kansas City, MO & Online
February 23-27, 2022
816-221-3655
fai@folk.org, www.folkconference.org

MAY

East Coast Music Week

Fredericton, NB
May 4-8, 2022
800-513-4953
ecma@ecma.com,
www.ecma.com



OCTOBER

Austin City Limits

Austin, TX
October 1-3 & 8-10, 2021
info@aclfestival.com,
www.aclfestival.com

Celtic Colours International Festival

Cape Breton, NS
October 8-16, 2021
902-562-6700
info@celtic-colours.com,
www.celtic-colours.com

AES Show Vegas 2021

Las Vegas, NV
October 11-13, 2021
212-661-8528, FAX 212-682-0477
www.aes.org/events

AES Show Fall 2021 International Convention

Online
October 20-23, 2021
212-661-8528, FAX 212-682-0477
www.aes.org/events

Toronto Audio Fest

Toronto, ON
October 22-24, 2021
514-267-8231
mplante@torontoaudiofest.org,
www.torontoaudiofest.org

Worldwide Music Expo (WOMEX)

Porto, Portugal
October 27-31, 2021
www.womex.com

IMSTA FESTA Online

Online
October 31, 2021
416-789-6850, FAX 416-789-1667
info@imsta.org, www.imsta.org

Frank Brothers Blue Mist Korina Arcade Guitar

By Omar Shabbar

If you've been keeping an eye on the guitar world recently, you've probably heard of Frank Brothers Guitar Co. Personally, I'm seeing them everywhere; they're popping up on show posters, in music videos, and even on TTC posters. The unconventional shape is instantly recognizable and the artists pictured with the guitars are endorsements in their own right. An interesting, new guitar company, a wicked roster of musicians backing them, and they're based out of my hometown of Toronto? I knew I had to get my hands on one for a review.

I drove across town to the east end to visit the shop and pick up the guitar. That's where I met two of the three brothers that make up Frank Brothers. One of the brothers, Tim, was kind enough to give me a tour of the shop, show me the guitars that they were working on, and chat about general nerdy guitar stuff – the kind of stuff I love. The guitar they lent me is part of their flagship Arcade series of solid-body guitars. This particular model is called "Blue Mist Korina Arcade," referring to the candy blue finish on the Korina wood body and neck. As Tim explained to me, this wood isn't particularly common in guitars and it often adds a bit of brightness to the tone.

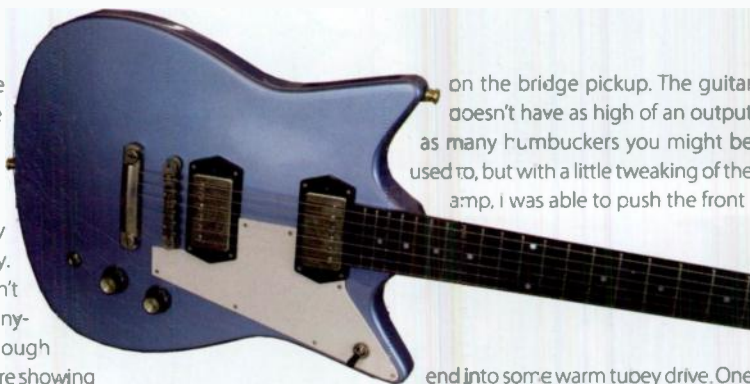
The eye-catching finish covers the guitar and has a light relic. Personally, I don't like factory relicing on a guitar; however, I didn't find this relic over the top like you see on a lot of custom shop guitars. The relic resembles more of a cracked-paint look than a sanded down, completely exposed wood relic. One thing that I really liked was that the cavities in the back were covered with plexiglass so you can see the wiring on the inside. As well as reviewing guitar gear, I also have a lot of experience as a guitar tech. So many of the guitars (not all of them inexpensive) that I have worked on are a complete mess when you open them up; the cables are jammed in willy-nilly, and it collects dust really fast. This is not the case with the Frank Brothers

guitar. The cavities are nice and tidy and the parts themselves look really good quality. This wiring isn't hiding from anyone. It's as though the brothers are showing how beautiful and interesting wiring can look when done right. It's on full display.

In terms of feel, the thing that stood out to me the most was the neck. It's their classic medium C-shaped neck and, man, it's beefy. Not so big that you struggle to play it, but big enough that you feel like you're gripping a baseball bat and you're swinging for the fences. The fretboard is a gorgeous Indian rosewood that, in combination with the large neck and arched top, feels like you're playing a really great vintage Les Paul, just without the often-aggravating tuning issues or the backbreaking weight found in many solid-body Gibsons.

Now the most important thing is obviously how it sounds, and believe me, this guitar sounds as good as any. One word really comes to mind: balance. Personally, I lean towards single-coil pickups for their punchy, cutting sound that can sometimes belabour with the thickness of humbuckers. This guitar has the Seymour Duncan Antiquity Humbuckers, which have a certain sweetness that helps cut that muddiness, while retaining that low thickness if you want to achieve those fat sounds. I recently started rehearsing again and was luckily able to play this guitar with a full band. With just the two pickups and the volume and tone pot (no extra boost or gain pedals, coil tapping, or coil splitting), I was able to get those thick, lush rhythm humbucking tones to support vocals with the neck pickup, and cut through the mix for solos like I'm used to with my single-coiled guitars

on the bridge pickup. The guitar doesn't have as high of an output as many humbuckers you might be used to, but with a little tweaking of the amp, I was able to push the front



end into some warm tubeey drive. One

of the amps that I played through was a Supro Black Magick, which proved to be one of my favourite guitar/amp combinations that I've ever played. It has become, without exaggeration, my dream guitar rig. That's not to say that you need to have a top-of-the-line amp to get good sounds out of this guitar, because it makes even the most average amps sing.

So, make no mistake, folks; this is the cream of the crop. Frank Brothers guitars are some of the best that I've ever played, and, let's not forget, it's made in Canada. The best part is that the vast majority of the guitars they make are custom ordered. If you want a Frank Brothers guitar, they will work with you to customize every aspect of the guitar to make sure it is truly your guitar. From the wood, to the tools in the shop, the conversations with the brothers, and ultimately the guitars: you can tell that the craftsmanship, quality, and service is top of the line. These are built to be your best guitar.

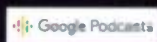
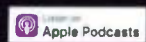
Omar Shabbar is a gigging musician based out of Toronto. He's also an onsite guitar tech at The Root Down Studio (bit.ly/rootdownstudio) and a self-proclaimed gear head. In the rapidly changing industry of modern guitar gear, Omar attempts to discern innovation from distraction. Check out his YouTube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

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Newfangled Audio Elevate Mastering Bundle

By Adam Gallant

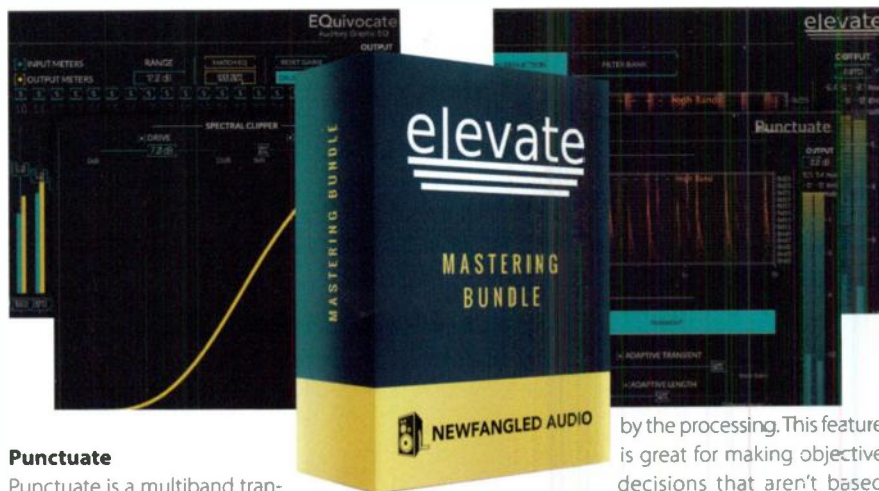
Newfangled Audio was started by former Eventide engineer Dan Gillespie. After 15 years at Eventide, Gillespie branched out to develop and release cutting-edge products with a unique philosophy that incorporates machine learning and auditory modeling of the human ear. In this issue I'm exploring the Elevate Mastering Bundle, which consists of four standalone plug-ins: EQivocate, Saturate, Punctuate, and Elevate. Elevate is a suite of all the products brilliantly combined along with an intelligent multiband limiter.

EQivocate

EQivocate is described as a "precise human ear EQ." It is a graphic EQ with up to 26 bands based on the mel (short for melody) scale. The mel scale is used to express the fact humans perceive pitch in a non-linear way. For example, a difference of 200Hz between 65Hz and 265Hz is close to two octaves, whereas a difference of 200Hz between 1,500Hz and 1,700Hz is close to two semitones. As pitch rises, so do the number of available melodic intervals within an equal Hz range. EQivocate lets you work within critical EQ points based on this phenomenon as well as switch out of the fixed mel scale and boost/cut any frequency in the audible range. EQivocate lets users make really drastic cuts and boosts while maintaining a natural sound. In use, cycling through presets is possibly the best way to get a sense of how the mel curve behaves.

Saturate

Saturate is a spectral clipper with the unique ability to overcrive a signal without affecting the tonal balance. With conventional clippers, as drive is added, harshness tends to creep in or density in the low end tends to build up — these anomalies are non-existent in Saturate. There is also a "detail preservation" parameter that re-introduces lost detail from the clipping process. Much like the EQivocate, the presets create a great jumping off point to get a feel for the colouration this plugin imparts. From subtle to blitzed out, the colouration is not specific to any genre or instrument type, very usable, and very pleasing on drum busses and vocal busses.



Punctuate

Punctuate is a multiband transient designer based on the same mel scale described above. Punctuate can suppress or emphasize transient information along that same 26-point curve, as well as be shifted to affect any frequency. Use it to pull cymbal bleed out of a snare mic or excite the low end on a kick drum. Well suited for surgical work on instrument tracks containing vital transients that need clarifying.

Elevate

Elevate is marketed as a multiband mastering limiter with a brain. Within Elevate are the three modules, EQivocate, Saturate and Punctuate, plus a multiband limiter that uses the same mel-based filter bank that divides the incoming audio into 26 bands and uses machine learning across the bands to get the loudest output with very little pumping, tonal change, or auditory distortion. The bands' attack and release speeds have adaptive lengths, meaning the limiting can be pushed beyond conventional levels with very little compromise in sound or perceived dynamic range.

The User Interface

The UI on each of these plug-ins is intuitively laid out with lots of available information that provides feedback at a glance. Meters to the left (input) and right (output) of the plug-in window show matching Peak, RMS, and Peak Hold data. On the output side there is a very helpful feature that will allow you to automatically compensate for the level change introduced

by the processing. This feature is great for making objective decisions that aren't based on having a hotter output. In Elevate, there is a hugely helpful Gain Lock function to avoid jarring jumps in volume when you're cycling through presets or making changes on the fly.

In Use

Initially, the tendency was to reach for the limiter and focus my efforts on the master bus. As I gained an understanding of their usability, the individual Saturate, Punctuate, and EQivocate plug-ins found their way onto busses and individual tracks within my sessions. With large mix sessions where lots of CPU power was engaged, we have the ability to reduce the number of bands from 26 down to as low as one. This frees up processing power and allows for more instances of the plug-ins to live within a mix.

Newfangled Audio did a great job on this incredibly powerful software package. Elevate has replaced a series of plug-ins that used to live on my master bus and my mixes are coming out louder and clearer. The Elevate Mastering Bundle can be demoed and purchased on the Eventide audio website and more information on Newfangled Audio (and a free mono synth plug-in) can be found at the Newfangled audio website.

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.

ESP LTD M-HT Arctic Metal Electric Guitar

By Andrew Leyenhorst



For the last few decades, Japan-based ESP Guitars has established itself as a leading manufacturer of premium guitars and basses, and their instruments are brandished by many revered players; from Metallica's Kirk Hammett to Ben Burnley of Breaking Benjamin, and countless others. If you keep even the furthest eye on the heavy music scene, you've seen and heard ESP guitars in abundance.

In 2020, under its more-affordable LTD brand, ESP launched the Black Metal line of guitars; a gamut of their classic guitar shapes and designs, dressed up in a menacing black satin finish, and sporting a single bridge pickup; made to be an ultra-simple option for heavy players with little interest in fiddling with knobs and switches. A year later, the company has followed up with the Arctic Metal line, which takes the same philosophy and opts for a gorgeous white finish instead.

For this test, I tried out the Arctic Metal M-HT, a simple double-cutaway design with neck-thru construction and an alder body. This particular model boasts a 25.5-in. scale length, as well as LTD Locking tuners, a Hipshot bridge (all in black), and 24 XJ stainless steel frets.

Visually, the guitar looks beautiful. The matte finish, which ESP calls "snow white satin," is very striking, especially punctuated by its jet-black hardware. It's simply a very bold-looking instrument, and it really is a treat to look at. The weight is respectable; it's not too heavy, it's not too light. It's a well-balanced instrument in terms of the feeling in your hands and the overall weight and heft of it. Think heavier than a Strat, but with some pounds to put on before it would balance a scale against a Les Paul.

In terms of the playability, the Macassar ebony fretboard feels fantastic, and the three-piece maple neck is very much tailored towards fast fingers from top to bottom. This can be an advantage or a disadvantage depending on how and what you play; with the combination of the instrument's wide neck (nut width of 1.692 in.) and a rather flat Extra Thin U contour, I found I was really having to work my wrist in new and sometimes fatiguing ways to comfortably fret the fourth, fifth, and sixth strings for my more rhythmic riffs or chording. Of course, this could be a failing of my own technique as mainly a rhythm player, but it's an exaggerated tweak I've not had to make before across many different guitar brands and models. That being said, if you're a lead-oriented player and/or play a lot of quick flourishes or tapping passages, the neck will most likely be to your liking, as once again, it plays as though it's designed for quickness and agility.

One thing that I noticed is that from an ergonomic standpoint, especially for playing heavy music, it's really beneficial not having a neck pickup, especially if you're doing a lot of chugging or muting and really digging into the strings. Depending on where your picking hand lives, you're not having a pickup brick getting in your way. If you happen to pick a little bit closer to the neck, you've got more depth to really dig into your strings and fatten up your chugs.

Tonally, if you're a metal player, you probably already have a decent idea of what this guitar sounds like out of the box, and you'd mostly be correct; however, there is a surprise. The stock-equipped bridge-positioned EMG 81TW is an upgraded version of the renowned EMG 81 active humbucker, adding a second single-coil pickup into the same form factor, switchable

via the guitar's lone push-pull volume knob. This means that the M-HT Arctic Metal will pull off those huge, scorching, humbucker-flavoured tones with ease, but can also delve into a more twinkly single-coil-style sound, which definitely gives the instrument some room to play with more than just rip-roaring metal tones. It cleans up really nicely!

Just remain mindful that there's no neck counterpart on this guitar, so you'll be getting quite intimate with bridge tones. There's also no tone knob, so any sculpting will have to be done elsewhere in the signal chain. I also recommend that players be quite discerning about the amount of gain they dial up, especially when paired with an overdrive; I found that when really pushing an amp, there was a lot of throaty build-up in the lower mid-range that I didn't love. Prior to that point though, there's no short supply of killer metal tone here.

From its name to its feature set, to the Black Metal line that inspired it, ESP's LTD M-HT Arctic Metal makes its point quite clearly: it and its Arctic Metal brethren are tailor-made guitars for players that quite literally want to cut through the noise of the heavily-saturated electric guitar market and go for an instrument that overtly stares them in the face, saying: "This is what I do, this is what I'm for, I'm really good at it, pick me up and play something heavy." One pickup (with two voicings), one knob, no problems. It's as uncomplicated as it gets; it's a machine made for metal, and while you're more than welcome to try it on whatever you want, this instrument knows its purpose and delivers in droves.

Andrew Leyenhorst is a Niagara-based producer, engineer, mixer, and Consulting Editor at Canadian Musician.



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A Story About Management, Trust & Self-Reliance

By Roland Pemberton, a.k.a. Cadence Weapon

When I was a teenager, I signed a 360 deal with an independent label. A 360 deal is when the label gets a cut of everything you do instead of just record sales. This includes live performances, publishing, syncs, merch sales, endorsements, and any other entertainment income. I signed a management contract with them where they received 20% of gross proceeds from my career. I signed a publishing contract where they received 50% of my publishing revenue forever (they currently still get money quarterly from my first three albums). I signed a record contract where they owned the masters and I'd only start seeing income when I recouped the expenses for the albums.

I never had an entertainment lawyer look at the paperwork, just a regular lawyer. Reluctant to lose my shot at success, my mom and I signed. Initially, the label believed in me and worked really hard to get my music out there. We had some great successes in those early years: I was shortlisted for the inaugural Polaris Music Prize in 2006, I got to play Glastonbury, signed licensing deals with Anti and Big Dada, and received critical acclaim.

But during the first 10 years of my career, I basically didn't make a dime. Everything went to the label, even my honorarium for becoming Edmonton's poet laureate. I travelled the world and played hundreds of shows but I was penniless the entire time; always hungry, living off whatever per diem or rider the venue would give me. When I wasn't on the road, I was a seasonal temp worker in the shipping department at Holt Renfrew in Edmonton and I wrote for the alt-weekly papers in town.

Either way, I was just happy to make music. After *Hope in Dirt City* came out in 2012, I was primed to build on the momentum of that album getting on the Polaris shortlist and coming off of a series of sold out dates with Japandroids in the U.K. and U.S. I got ghosted by the label and management, who stopped responding to my emails and demos. They ignored me for so long that I shifted to focusing on DJing in Mon-

tréal and essentially stopped making music for a few years. I felt trapped in the label situation, on the verge of quitting permanently.

The label never accounted to me once over the first 12 years of my career, so I never had any idea when things would balance out and I'd start seeing some money. This hypothetical debt became an albatross around my neck. When I'd ask what I owed, they would say, "You don't wanna know." I never sold a ton of albums but I was always pretty organized and kept records of how much cash I had sent them over the years and it wasn't nothing. By my count, I had sent them around \$255,000 over the years and they'd gotten grants on top of that. My ex-girlfriend connected me to a music lawyer she knew who linked me with a litigation lawyer who helped me move on from the contracts. This whole situation is why I didn't release an album for six years.

I wanted to talk about this to show that these exploitative artist/manager/label relationships don't only happen in the major labels and they aren't just a vestige of the 20th century. I'm just another musician in a long line of Black artists taken advantage of by an industry that is inherently extractive and predatory.

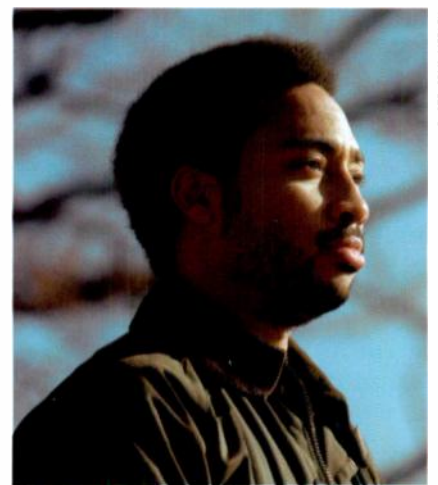
I'm still dealing with the fallout of having bad management today. These experiences made it difficult for me to trust people in the music industry. This is why I began managing myself at the end of 2015. I moved to Toronto and started my career over from scratch, having lost all momentum and buzz I had built up previously. I didn't have a job and cobbled together a living with freelance writing, DJ gigs, and voiceover narration. I was determined not to become a Canadian rap footnote and worked ceaselessly, finding a recording arrangement that worked for me, an engineer I really liked working with, and a new label.

I did extensive research and connected with producers, photographers, visual artists, directors, and collaborators in person and on social media. I shaped my vision and found the people to help me execute it. I booked my own shows until I got an agent again, coordinated

my own travel and lodging, and tour managed for myself on the road. I negotiated deals on my own behalf. It's been like this for years and it's been really gratifying to learn that I have the capacity to do it.

But recently I've gotten to the point where it makes sense for me to work with a manager again. It's exciting to think of a world where I can spend more time making music, working on my book, and writing newsletters and less time creating invoices and doing admin. But I've also been emotional thinking about getting into that type of relationship again. Finding people who have your best interests in mind and are willing to work with you to reach your goals are priceless. When it comes to this side of the industry, I'm finally optimistic to see what the future has in store.

This column has been reproduced with permission and was first published on Cadence Weapon's Substack on July 6, 2021. Subscribe to his newsletter at Cadenceweapon.substack.com.



*Cadence Weapon is a critically-acclaimed Canadian rap artist and writer. His latest LP, *Parallel World*, is currently shortlisted for the 2021 Polaris Music Prize. www.cadenceweapon.net.*

How Blockchain Can Protect a Musician's Intellectual Property

By Raine Maida

Musicians have always struggled with the concept of intellectual property (IP); I've never copyrighted a song in my life. Fortunately, I've had record labels, publishers, and management register my work over the years and protect the ideas in case of theft. This is a luxury that is less relevant in the new creator economy and the longer you're in the business, the better the chance you're going to have an idea ripped off. We've become victim to the power of social platforms like Twitch, YouTube, and TikTok, who've convinced us to share our ideas for free; except that clout and followers rarely – if ever – pay the bills. This is why today, more than ever, it is critical that artists understand the importance of owning and managing their intellectual property. Technology has finally caught up, enabling a new generation of talent to capitalize, sooner, on their assets, as well as create real sustainable income through direct royalties on future sales.

Blockchain is Here

The blockchain is the easiest and most cost-effective solution for any musician to protect and monetize work. Developed as a means of tracking, verifying, and securing the exchange of cryptocurrency transactions, blockchain software acts as a digital ledger that encodes information with a unique hash to ensure authenticity. Given the sorts of shenanigans prevalent online, exchanged bitcoin could easily end up being sold twice in the same transaction, sold without changing hands, or make its way into some enterprising individual's account between buyer and seller. If blockchain can provide stability in the wild west of cryptocurrency, just think what it could do for a musician's IP.

Security at Every Step

The true strength of blockchain for musicians is protection at every step; from the very first writing session to uploading completed masters, as long as the blockchain is used as the medium for saving, the asset is safe from beginning to end. This allows musicians to establish the rights

to files, pre-emptively, rather than having to go on the defence when opportunistic individuals claim ownership against the person who created it. Blockchain provides traceable, verifiable proof of each moment of the creative process, not just on the musician's computer but on those of everyone involved: from collaborators to the record label. When it comes time to prove a file was originally created by the musician, both the contract and the initial creative steps are all accounted for on the blockchain.

Tracking Ownership

As a means of ownership tracking, blockchain remains useful to musicians well after the creative process is finished. This won't come as much of a shock, but it's often hard to determine where a piece of work first originated online. Try picking your favourite meme, for example, and find not just the first instance of the meme, but the original poster who created it before it went viral. Likewise, a piece of art or music could make its way around on the net and become a huge hit, for which the original creator gets no credit or profits — just ask one of the many TikTok dancers whose original moves show up as microtransactions in *Fortnite*.

Now creators can set up blockchain as an IP registry to declare their IP once and for all, so that anyone who posts or attempts to profit from their ideas cannot disassociate those ideas from their original source. An IP registry can establish a trackable chain of ownership and licensing that nobody can dispute or disprove, making sure that credit remains with the original author or anyone to whom they legitimately sold the limited or full rights to their labours. In the future, IP registries could even reduce the time it takes to establish a patent, as proof of the original idea can be easily tracked down and verified on the blockchain.

Smart Contracts

Finally, blockchain also enables the creation of smart contracts. It goes without saying that a secure and transparent format like blockchain is great for regular contracts, but a smart contract

allows creators to set their terms for licensing agreements; and verify that such deals are being enforced. With a smart contract, end users could license work directly from the creator, cutting out the middleman and helping musicians sell directly to the public. Collaborators could even use smart contracts to apportion licensing and compensation rights based on contribution, and to automatically split profits from all sales without dispute.

Blockchain has evolved into more than just a home for various cryptocurrencies — we see you, ElcN — it can now easily provide incredible benefits across hundreds of industries and verticals. For musicians, securing original work is as vital as a bitcoin trader authenticating their exchanges. By accepting this cutting-edge new technology, musicians can ensure that they control their destinies and their art.



Raine Maida is the chief product officer of SING, Inc., in addition to a four-time Juno Award-winning artist as the frontman for the multi-platinum-selling alt rock band OurLadyPeace. He has written and produced hits for internationally-acclaimed artists including Carrie Underwood, P!nk, and Avril Lavigne. Raine is also the co-founder and director of artist-fronted cannabis company LoopPool. He was awarded the Tiffany Mark Award in 2014 and appointed to the Order of Canada in 2016 for his humanitarian work.

Music Remains a Catalyst for Revolution

By Darcy Ataman

Content warning: references to rape, sexual violence.

When Gil Scott-Heron famously wrote and sang "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" in 1970, spurred from an often-used phrase in the Black Power movements of the 1960s, it was both a clarion call and poignant reminder to stay focused on social justice efforts regardless of the fickle ebb and flow of popular culture and media. It was also a flag planted on a distant hill, serving as a north star to remind the righteous of how far the movement still needed to go.

Regardless of provenance, music has continued to be used as a global instigator and accelerator for revolution, protest, activism, and social justice movements. Music and the right song can serve to invert the notion of power, inspiring and propelling the historically have-nots into sustainable and equitable change.

I recently interviewed three prominent activists, who in representation of their distinct movements and revolutions, continue to use music and specific songs within their respective countries' desire for change:

Nompilo is an activist in South Africa where recent protests have been met with bloodshed and food shortages. When recently-ousted president Jacob Zuma was arrested on corruption charges, some of his loyalists took to the streets in support, which provided a catalyst for other forces. This, along with South Africa surpassing day 500 of lockdown due to the pandemic, has exposed the frustration, as well as political and emotional issues, which the disenfranchised in that region have faced. Within all of this, Nompilo said that music is still being used to unify the protestors into a cohesive collective and mobilize them into a movement that continues to fight despite the challenges. To her, the right song serves as a way to centre the spirit and encourage oneself to remember how far they have come while being mindful of how far they still need to go.

This beautiful notion of music, pushing from the past and pulling into an idealized future, can be exemplified by Mbongeni Ngema's stun-

ning vocal performance on "Safa Saphela Isizwe," which represents the sound of freedom.



Abbas (named changed for his protection) is a Syrian musician who fled his home when the revolution erupted after decades of pressure brought on by the current regime's control over media, arts, the economy, and their very lives. Paraphrasing his words, Abbas determined that if he had stayed, his choice of "kill or be killed" was simply an anathema to his ideals and hopes for the majority of people living in their homeland. Even though the current proxy conflict within the country has continued to further complicate life within Syria as various countries jockey for position, for or against the current regime for goods and resources, music has historically and now continually plays a vital part in the endurance and continuation of the revolution.

To demonstrate its power, one local artist, Abdel-Basset al-Sarout, was sadly killed when his song became too much of an anthem for the local population fighting for a more just and prosperous life.



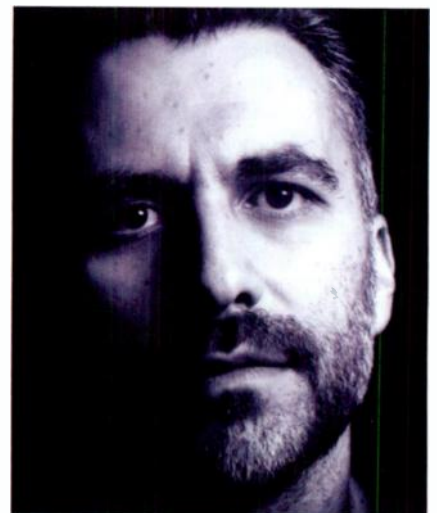
Fulvis is a defiant activist hailing from Columbia, where she is part of the Global SEMA Network and Tamboreras del Cauca, which globally and locally fights the scourge of violence against women. Fulvis, among others in her group, are attempting to correct the power imbalance, which excludes women politically in practice and provides a framework of impunity to the mismanagement of public funds and the effective participation of young women in living their rights. Pointedly, since the latest uprising began on April 28th, more than 70 human rights activists have been killed in her vicinity.

Despite the risk and stigma that Fulvis endures daily in Columbia, she speaks of the power of music with a capacity that is both joyful and breathtaking. To her, "music is life" that can denote the realities of her country's current situation or "change hatred into joy." A fantastic example of the music she speaks about that helps to alchemize the weight of stigma to the lightness of bliss and healing can be heard in the video "Tamboreras del Cauca" on the Corporación Opción Legal YouTube channel.



As I ponder these recent encounters and conversations, I am cautioned by a memory from the NGO I founded, Make Music Matter. In the Democratic Republic of Congo where rape is used a weapon of war, graduates from our Healing in Harmony music therapy program and sexual violence survivors wrote a song called "The Criminal Father," which calls out all the men in the community who either conduct the atrocity of rape or allow it to continue. When this particular song became a minor hit on local radio, the military would call into the stations to complain and ask for the song to be removed from the playlist as they were "the good guys" and were "no longer committing the rapes." Wistfully this was a lie but it was a fascinating notion where someone with the guns was afraid of someone with the songs.

With music, the revolution may not be televised but it will continue to be inspired, charged, and sustained by the songs that ultimately bind us all.



Darcy Ataman, M.S.C., is the founder and CEO of Make Music Matter Canada and Make Music Matter USA. MMM uses music therapy and the creative process, plus an emphasis on local leadership, to empower marginalized individuals and communities. Darcy is also a music producer and the co-founder of A4A Records & Publishing alongside producer David Bottrill.

Be Found Ready ...and Prepared to Pivot

By Martin Mayer

A singer dreams of the day she gets to meet her idol, Celine Dion, after a concert. Months of anxiously waiting, the night arrives and the dream comes true. The singer tells Celine how much she has inspired her to be a vocalist, and Celine says, "Oh, thank you so much! Would you sing something for me?"

Herbie Hancock is signing autographs after a show and a musician walks up to him. He says that he's been a jazz pianist for 30 years because Herbie's music inspired him. Showing his classic smile, Herbie says, "Cool, man – let's jam on 'Watermelon Man' together," and motions the young man to join him at the piano.

Both the singer and pianist have something in common: they were both ready to be found. Question is – were they ready to pivot at a moment's notice? These are scenarios any one of us could face when meeting our heroes and idols. More often than not, though, opportunity comes knocking at the door in our industry, and likely, when it's least expected.

I find this topic interesting because in the 20 years that I've been a concert pianist, I've almost always had to prepare a pivot on a project I was found ready for.

My first international performance was a 16-city concert tour of China – the result of a mammoth undertaking of self-producing and self-financing my debut concert to the tune of \$35,000. When the agency approached me about it, I was found ready. What I didn't know at the time is that we started rehearsing the night before 9/11. A pivot needed to be devised very quickly if it wasn't going to be safe to fly when it was time to go to China.

In 2003, I was invited by the trade office in Taipei to perform at the Canadian Food, Wine & Music Festival, co-produced with Canada Beef. I was found ready after the success of the China tour. In May of that year, though, the Mad Cow crisis gripped Canada's beef industry. So, a pivot to going ahead with a different version of the event was laid out if the world continued to keep its borders closed to our beef and cattle.

The need for these pivots has come up since, and was even part of discussions with my agents ahead of my recent 20-city tour of China in the fall of 2019. Each time I was found ready and a pivot was conceived and planned, it thankfully wasn't needed. COVID changed that this time around.

2020 was to be a milestone year for me. I'd planned to attend MIDEM, perform concerts in France and Italy, and later that year, go back to China for another tour. Well, as we know, everything changed very quickly and a full 2020 calendar looked eerily empty. It was time to pivot – for real this time.

When I was in my studio in March of 2020, I was practicing with continued hope that I'd be able to get out and play for audiences later that year. I remember thinking to myself, "Well, if I'm going to play tunes,

why not just turn on the camera and invite people on Facebook to join?" I did 12 concerts in six weeks – all free because I wanted to bring some comfort into people's lives.

The response I received from people tuning in from all over the world was amazing. My favourite impact story is a lady recognizing me at the grocery store the day following one of these online concerts, and coming up to me to share what it meant to her. She said that on a dark day when her brother passed away that morning, she found my concert online, and it gave her comfort during a truly difficult day.

Two decades of professional ventures into international markets has taught me this very important lesson: Be found ready and prepared to pivot. No matter how much you practice, prepare, organize, rehearse, or double-check everything, because life – and the world – is full of surprises.

My grandmother once said to me, "Something bad happens so that something good can come of it." I've been found ready, and yet, some of the best experiences in my career have come from a need to pivot. Your pivot may just become your best story, too!



"Canada's prince of piano" is how the Beijing Times, China's leading English-language newspaper, has described Canadian pianist and composer Martin Mayer. Born in the Czech Republic, and now based in Vancouver, his music has been defined as instrumental fusion – a combination of smooth jazz, classical, pop, and rock. He won the Rachel McKeown Memorial Award for composition and his 16-city tour of China in 2001 was the biggest tour of any artist in China's modern history, and all of his Chinese tour dates since then have sold out. www.martinmayermusic.com.

What Your Group Needs to Survive Each Other is “Creative Diplomacy”

By Piers Henwood

Have you ever had an argument about a seemingly insignificant creative decision that ended up feeling like life or death? Have you felt unequipped to have healthy conversations with collaborators who don't share your opinion? If you've ever played in a band, I know you have. Just ask The Beatles, Pink Floyd, and Oasis.

Anyone who pursues creativity in a group setting knows how it feels to struggle with unhealthy communication. Often what's missing is a thoughtful approach to what I call “creative diplomacy” – the traits and techniques needed for positive decision-making in creative environments.

Creative diplomacy is a mental orientation that can be deployed to enable groups to make decisions about subjective creative choices. Whether you're in a rock band or a tech start-up, these may be the decisions that make or break your progress. Creative decisions feel personal, and disagreements can become battlefields. It's why the most successful bands in the world break up, and boardrooms break down.

Creative diplomacy begins with a mindful understanding that creative disagreements trigger our most basic fight or flight responses. The intensity around creative arguments shows how deeply our identity gets wrapped up in our creative opinions – they become a projection of our very essence.

You don't like my lyric in the chorus? You don't like my marketing copy for the release roll out? My mind and stomach turn like a washing machine, and I want to scream (fight) or quit (flight).

Within the challenging environment of creative decision-making, I believe collaborators should make a set of six mutual pacts when navigating differences:

1. Separate your identity from your creative ideas, and do the same for others. A critique of a creative idea is not a critique of the person behind the idea. This is especially difficult to do in the arts, and can require deep introspection over time.

2. Avoid immediate negative judgments, but also avoid silence. While a quick positive judgment often holds true over time, a negative one frequently doesn't, especially in cases where a creative idea is challenging or unexpected. Within reason, give people's ideas the benefit of the doubt and sit with them for at least one sleep cycle. But also realize that silence is deafening when it comes to creative communication.

3. Default towards testing creative ideas rather than dismissing them outright. If someone has a strong creative opinion that isn't immediately accepted by the group, whenever possible, test it before dismissing. Mock up a quick draft of the idea if it's visual or sonic so that participants can discuss it in reality rather than debate it in theory.

4. Avoid interruption and listen respectfully. Silencing someone on a creative subject is damaging and never forgotten, especially if done from a position of power within the group dynamic.

5. Create a conceptual framework where stakeholders have a finite number of “passion points” to spend on disagreements within a given project or process. This system can add helpful structure to the open-ended “pick your battles” teaching. For example, one person's passionate opinion may be enough to overrule two people's mildly held difference, but putting limitations on passion points gives people a finite

sense of when and how to “spend” their opinions. Credit to Neil Osborne of 54-40 who espouses this concept with bands he's producing, including former projects of mine.

6. Learn your own creative biases and those of your collaborators. Build empathy for different ways of looking at the creative process and decisions:

- Creative risk tolerance – acknowledge that people have different degrees of willingness to experiment and potentially fail in creative arenas.
- Creative patience – acknowledge that people have different tolerances for pursuing open-ended explorations versus pushing for decisions and completion.
- Propensity towards predictability – creative work still requires predictability to be emotionally effective (e.g. a predictable chorus, a predictable marketing hook) but acknowledge that people have different relationships to the spectrum of predictability and surprise; both are essential ingredients.
- Market orientation – acknowledge that people have differing biases towards pursuing creativity for its own sake versus situating creative choices within current market conditions.
- Sensory bias – acknowledge that people interpret the world differently based on sense perception. For example, in music some gravitate to melody over rhythm, and vice versa. Recognize all are valid.

Thinking about creative diplomacy reminds us that the most important outcome for musicians, bands, and indeed any creative is simply to make decisions and move projects forward to completion. A band is like a start-up with thousands of decisions to be made.

If you aren't making effective decisions about creative matters, you might just be lacking the tools and orientation to deal with the intense emotions around the creative process. Don't let the boardroom turn into a battlefield, and don't let the studio turn into a soap opera.

Since founding Amelia Artists in 2002, Piers Henwood has co-managed the careers of Tegan and Sara (2002-2020), Bedouin Soundclash, Luca Fogaie, The Librarian, Buck 65 (2005-2015), and The Funk Hunters (2014-2019). In collaboration with his artists and label partners, Piers' work has resulted in over 1.5 million albums sold in the pre-streaming era, hundreds of millions of track streams, seven Gold certifications, 12 Juno Award nominations with four wins, a Grammy nomination, an Academy Award nomination, and a New York Times Best Seller. In 2018 he co-founded Amelia Recordings, an early-stage record label, to help a new generation of artists develop creative and career momentum. With his former band, Jets Overhead, Piers performed at major festivals like Coachella and Bonnaroo, toured the world, and received a Juno nomination. He continues to write and record with experimental electronic band Astrocolor. Follow on Twitter & Instagram @piershenwood. www.piershenwood.com.



Could Immersive Audio for Music Become the Norm?

By Dajaun Martineau

Atmos is Dolby's latest technology for creating and consuming immersive surround sound content. Unlike any previous surround mixing format, Atmos is not a channel-based format. Up until now, mixing has always focused on how many channels the end format had. In the days of mono, stereo, even up to the old surround formats of 5.1 and beyond, the engineer had to mix sonic elements by feeding signals to each channel; left, right, centre, or otherwise. Rather than worry about what each speaker is physically doing, the Atmos encoder allows mixers to place sonic objects in three-dimensional space. On the consumer side, the Atmos decoder dynamically blends the signals to the appropriate channels available based on the layout and calibration of the listener's system. The result is a system that allows for the same mix to be appreciated on every type of listening system, from a pair of headphones up to an entire 22.2 surround theatre system. With Atmos, there is no longer a need to create multiple mixes.

The first Dolby Atmos system was installed in the El Capitan Theater in Los Angeles for the premiere of *Brave* in June 2012, and home theatre systems started introducing the technology in 2014. So why didn't we see Atmos music mixing happening seven years ago? The answers potentially lie in the music industry's previous failed attempts to bring surround music to market. The Super Audio CD (SACD), intended to be the successor to the standard compact disc (CD), was introduced in 1999 and was a hybrid format that could be played on either a regular CD player or an entire surround system. DVD-Audio was introduced the following year in 2000 and could tap into the fast-growing home theatre market. While these both experienced some

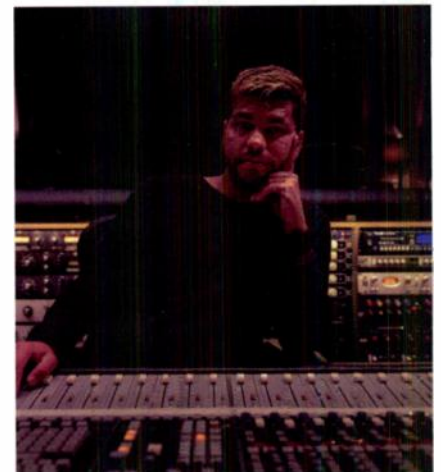
success in the audiophile community, they never became the standard. The lack of success was partly due to the high cost of players, but may have also resulted from Apple's introduction of the iPod in 2001. The iPod changed consumer listening habits by introducing a level of portability, convenience, and cost-effectiveness that was unbeatable and still drives the market to this day.

Ironically, the company that inadvertently stunted the evolution of surround sound may be the one to revive it. In June 2021, at no added cost to subscribers, Apple Music introduced its new "Spatial Audio" listening option, which utilizes the Dolby Atmos technology in lossless audio. Now every consumer with an Apple device can enjoy surround mixes. That is over half of the smartphone consumer base in the United States. Apple launched the service with an extensive library of music already mixed in Dolby Atmos. I expect that other streaming services will follow suit as soon as they update their platforms to accommodate.

What's even more compelling is that Dolby now offers a software suite, including the Dolby Atmos Renderer, that connects to most DAWs, which empowers any mix engineer to take on Atmos mixing. In the past, only expensive commercial studios and post houses could mix in surround sound. Now every bedroom producer can purchase and download inexpensive software to begin creating in surround. The Dolby Renderer connects to your current DAW as a playback engine. From there, the mixer can route audio to objects that can be automated to move freely within three-dimensional space. The renderer offers more than just placement; it has presets for movement patterns and offers size and distance profiles that make sonic objects sound like they exist outside the speakers.

Just as we as a society went from AM radio to FM radio, there will be a transition buffer

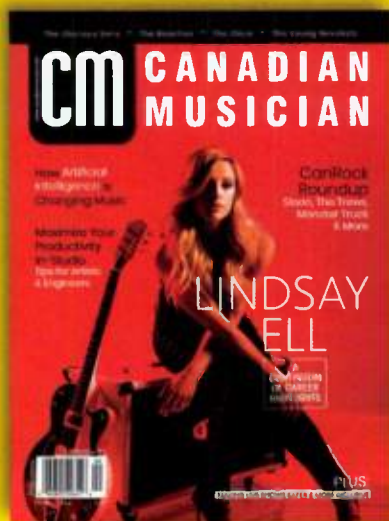
time. Still, I do believe that it's only a matter of time until we'll hear phrases like, "Remember listening to music in stereo?!" and the inevitable stereo-fetishizing hipster will emerge insisting music was meant to be listened to in stereo. Dolby has already partnered with Sennheiser to create AMBEC Mobility, a premium in-car sound system. Apple now offers advanced surround sound headphone systems, and Sony has been providing surround headphone systems for gaming for years. New technologies are ensuring that Atmos won't be limited to wealthy individuals' home theatre systems. It has never been simpler to create and consume surround sound content. All barriers are being removed, and there is no reason why this won't become the new standard for music mixing.



Dajaun Martineau is a gold-certified producer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and mixer with multiple Juno nominated projects. He has been mixing in surround formats for over a decade. For more information, go to www.dajaun.com.



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From the Stage to the Executive Suite, This Is Kardi's Business

PHOTO: PAUL JONES MEDIA



By Michael Raine

Why would I do that? You guys are the enemy,

Kardinal Offishall thought to himself as he hung out at a friend's cottage in the summer of 2013. It was a relaxed weekend in Ontario's posh cottage country for a boat rally to raise money for kids with cancer and, out of the blue, and he'd just been made a surprising offer.

Joining Offishall in Muskoka was Randy Lennox, the then-CEO of Universal Music Canada. "Kardi and I had worked as an artist and label for many, many years and had several successes togeth-

er from an artist's perspective," Lennox recalls now, eight years later, and just a few months removed from stepping down from his latest high-profile gig as the president of Bell Media. "We struck up a Saturday afternoon conversation in which I said, basically, 'you're a fantastic artist and a super smart guy — have you ever thought about coming over to the dark side?' but with a sort of 'LOL.' We've had much laughter about that since because we're very friendly, but he looked at me and I said, 'You know, you are this country's Jay-Z.'"

In retrospect, that may have been

an exaggerated comparison, given that Jay-Z is a mogul whose mega wealth and influence crosses music, entertainment, sports, and even politics. After chatt.ng with Offishall, I get the impression that while tough and smart, no doubt, those traits aren't matched with the ruthlessness needed to be a Jay-Z. Nonetheless, Lennox correctly saw something unique in him.

"It happened very quickly. Once we came up with it, it was very spontaneous. But I'll say this, the initial idea was inspired by my respect for Kardinal," Lennox says.



KARDI & JULLY BLACK AT THE JUNOS



KARDI AT THE 2021 JUNOS



By that fall, Kardinal Offishall was the new creative executive director of A&R at Universal Music Canada (UMC).

"I just came back from vacation, so it was a much-needed recharge or regeneration. I was on a small island in the Caribbean. Our family has a little spot that we go to. It was super awesome. I always say when I go there, it feels like it's a place that Satan can't penetrate!" Offishall exclaims as we kick off our conversation over Zoom in the last days of July. His bleached high-top hair is in full form, as he lets out a characteristically sharp and infectious laugh. At this point, we're just a few months removed from his most recent promotion to senior vice president of A&R at UMC. "For a cool week, I had nobody asking me for anything — I had no emergencies, no fires to put out, no whining artists, and no overzealous managers. Everything was good for a week; it was just me, the wife, and the kids."

As he explains it, using an analogy that probably few Gen-Z kids will get, his life these days is like level four of Tetris. "Just trying to figure out the pieces and putting them together to make it work. I tell people all the time, for me, it's an enchanted life that I live. Honestly, and not to get super cliché or whatever, but it's really just trying to figure out how to take blessings that don't necessarily fit together, and make them all work within a specific timeframe."

First and foremost, his priority is being a good husband, father to his three kids — four-year-old daughter, and seven- and nine-year-old sons — and friend. "But then, music is the nucleus for pretty much everything. Music is at the core of everything that I do, whether it's corporate, whether it's creative, sometimes even in my personal life; music is at the core. It's a balancing act of trying to retain the passion, the memories, all the stuff that made you fall in love with music and has you still in love with music, but then also trying to

figure out what it looks like as you continue to forge new paths and move forward," he says. "You can't really take the same philosophy and move it forward, because music has changed. The way we've consumed it, the way the new generation has consumed it, the way they view it — the things that are heralded, held important, revered — it's all evolving at a much faster pace."

By dint of age, now being 45 and having been in the rap game since he was a teenager, Offishall has directly experienced a revolutionary period for the industry, both as an artist and executive. Technological disruptions — from SoundScan's introduction in 1991, which proved rap's commercial market was larger than most thought, to streaming analytics now shaping how A&R is done in 2021 — have shaped and reshaped the music industry for the entirety of his professional life.

As well, as a kid he witnessed the birth of Canadian hip-hop in the 1980s and early '90s, idolizing his "holy trinity" of Maestro Fresh Wes, Dream Warriors, and Michie Mee. "Also, Rumble and Strong, B-Kool, Self-Defense, so many artists that were around in the '80s and were really forging the path. People like DJ Ron Nelson, and Mastermind was a young kid back in those days doing stuff. In Toronto, the Concert Hall era, that's always gonna be Canada's entry point," he says.

Looking back over Canadian hip-hop's arc, from Maestro to Drake, Offishall sees himself as a bridge. In the historical context, he views the era (late-'90s and early-2000s) in which he began making a name for himself as the bridge between the forefathers of Canadian rap and today's global stars.

"Before me, it's like, 'There's this thing called hip-hop and let's just get involved,' and the era that came after me was like, 'Okay, it's established and now it's time to reap the benefits.' My era was kind of in between. So, myself, Saukrates, Choclair, Marvel, Solitaire, Tara Chase, Jully Black, et cetera, our whole crew at the time — The Circle — we literally had

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legitimate businesses to where we were selling thousands and thousands of pieces of vinyl in Japan and the U.K. and America and so forth. And that's really what gave us all our global start outside of the country," he remembers. "It was fun because we didn't come from a time where people are like, 'Yeah, put me on' or there wasn't a whole lot of MCs that were signing other MCs. And I'm not taking a knock at it, because obviously part of my story is that I signed with Akon later on in my career, but it just gave us a whole different way of viewing the industry. It also put the power back in our own laps at that time. Our success rate basically depended on how hard we worked."

Listening to Offishall tell his story, what's maybe most impressive (or surprising) to me is the sheer confidence he and his crew had, at least in his telling of it. Though it's changed in the 2000s as Canadian artists have found worldwide success across most genres, really establishing a fresh confidence that there is nothing less-than about Canadian music, we all know that wasn't always the case. Canadians' cultural inferiority complex, the assumption that the Canadian version must be inferior to the American version, was previously accepted as an established fact in our entertainment industries.

"At the time that I went down [to the U.S.], we might have been delusional. I say that because I didn't do it on my own. Think about it like this; we were smack dab in the middle of high school and Saukrates gets signed to Warner Brothers in America," he says, explaining the years leading up to his own major label deal with MCA Records. That said, Saukrates got signed to Warner in 1996 and was dropped in 1998 before releasing his influential debut, *The Underground Tapes*, on his own Canada-based label, Capitol Hill. That indie label also released Offishall's debut, *Eye & I*, in 1997. But he continues: "Choclair gets a deal up here with Virgin but then, basically, he was also on Priority Records in the U.S. So, as an up-and-coming MC and somebody who was, you know, second or third tier within the crew, I got to witness that happen before I got my deal."

Also interesting in retrospect is how overt Offishall was in fronting for Toronto. His breakout hit single, "BaKardi Slang" off of his acclaimed major label debut, *Quest for Fire: Firestarter, Vol. 1.*, is all about Toronto slang and popularized calling the city "the T-dot." Fifteen years before Drake sang of "runnin' through The Six" (and changed Toronto's nickname once more), Offishall had the first ever Canadian rap song in the Billboard 100, and it was explicitly about Toronto.

As he sees it though, there wasn't anything unique about it. He was repping his hometown, same as NWA did for Compton, Too Short did for the Bay Area, KRS-One did for the South Bronx, and so on.

"I just think at that time, where my mind was, I didn't care

what anybody else had to think. I was like, 'Yo, you're gonna love my city, and you're gonna respect us, and you're gonna scream this stuff out the same way that you scream out other cities and other countries and whatever else.' That was my dream. I was like, 'What I want is for Toronto to be looked at in a certain type of way and *on the same level*,' and *it was* at that time," he says. "That was the first time that we saw it, and it was dope to be around at that time to see the videos be played on BET and MTV, at a time when those were still a thing. It was an incredible time."

Canadian hip-hop fans under 30 may not know or appreciate the importance of *Quest for Fire: Firestarter, Vol. 1*, but its international success really marked the beginning of a new era in this country's music industry. The album, which included the singles "Money Jane" and "O' Time Killin'" in addition to "BaKardi Slang," was also co-produced by Offishall himself and introduced a uniquely multinational sound to rap, with Offishall's Jamaican roots clearly incorporated.



But it's not just the commercial success of *Firestarter, Vol. 1* that remains important, but it was the respect it garnered. Offishall remembers being introduced to Lil' Wayne in 2006. At that time, the diminutive rapper was at the height of his powers, having just released the first two volumes of the now-classic *Tha Carter* tribology. "He was such a dope guy and I remember he rapped *my verse to me* when I met him. I was like, 'What the...?' That was bananas," Offishall recalls. A couple years later, Lil' Wayne and Pusha T featured on Offishall's song "Swag."

Unfortunately, the next couple years showed the convoluted and frustrating nature of the record label business. His high-anticipated follow-up album, *Firestarter, Vol. 2: The F-Word Theory*, got derailed when MCA was absorbed by Geffen Records. The album was preceded by the Neptunes-produced single, "Belly Dancer," featuring Pharrell Williams, but then got shelved. As a result, 2005's *Fire and Glory* was only released in Canada via EMI/Virgin Records.

It wasn't until 2008's *Not 4 Sale* that Offishall returned to the American market thanks to a deal with R&B singer Akon's own label, Kon Live, and Geffen Records. The album entered the *Billboard* charts at number 40, and most importantly featured Offishall's most famous song, "Dangerous." A dozen years later, that song sprung back into pop culture in a way that couldn't be predicted in 2008 — via TikTok virality.

"These kids that are saying to their parents, 'Oh my god, this is my new favourite song!' and their parents are laugh-

ing at them, like, 'Okay, it's kinda not a new song,'" he chuckles. It's similar in his mind to when his hero-turned-friend Dave Chappelle used the unreleased track "Reaching Through the Darkness" during the end credits to his 2017 Netflix special, *Equanimity*.

"The thing is, it's hundreds of millions of impressions through TikTok, through streaming, and all this other stuff that's happened with me doing nothing except raising my eyebrows," Offishall notes. "I say my life is enchanted because I don't take any of these blessings for granted. There's not a day where I wake up and I'm just like, 'yeah, I should be doing what I'm doing and doing it with the people that I'm doing it with.' Nah, it's not a small thing when one of the greatest comedians on the planet in Chappelle is not just a friend, but says he wants to use your song at the end of one of his Netflix specials that will live forever. That's massive, because the thing is, we look back at Eddie Murphy comedy specials, or Richard Pryor or [George] Carlin, Andrew Dice Clay, or people from that era, people are forever going to look back at these Chappelle series and be like, 'Man, he is incredible.' But then when those end credits play and it's my song, nobody can take that away from you."

What's interesting is that those hundreds of millions of impressions via TikTok and Netflix, when viewed from the office rather than the studio, can mean something else entirely. For the artist, viral TikTok videos and high-profile Netflix placements mean influence, cultural cache, coolness, etc. For the A&R executive, that is all data for marketing and career planning. That double-sided view of the numbers – the analytics – is not lost on Offishall. He gets animated talking about it, largely because he has concerns about the overreliance on analytics by A&R departments.

"We live in a time with music where a lot of the industry is heavy on analytics — less on gut, a lot more on analytics. I think it's interesting to me, because relying on analytics means you're relying on the past, because analytics are something that happened already. Analytics are not something that can tell you the future," he says. "When you look at it at its core, that's what it is. You're seeing a trend, or part of a trend, that has passed already. So, now it's up to you to guess: is that something that's going to be sustainable, or is it going to fizzle next week or next month?"

Knowing Offishall is a sports fan, I draw that obvious comparison. These days, every team in every major sport uses advanced analytics. And yes, teams rely on past data to identify past trends, but, I point out, they do this to better predict *the future*. But Offishall is saying the same process can't apply to music? That what was popular before, and the path songs/artists took to popularity, doesn't help predict future popularity?

"Nah, because if you think about basketball or whatever, when you're talking about analytics and percentages, they're all shooting at one basket," he responds. "So, when you think about the breakdown of it, it's like, 'Okay, if a thousand guys go to that one basket, this is usually what happens.' You go through the analytics and break it down to get field goal percentages, three-point percentages, whatever, and here's what's most likely to happen. But you have hundreds of guys shooting at the same goal. In music, the equivalent would be 100 different nets, with a million different people shooting at the same time, from a million different places, in a million different courts, and trying to gather analytics from that and then make that apply to a singular artist!"

As well, he emphasizes, if he and other A&R executives ignored their guts and only signed artists who fit known moulds, then where would that leave music – or at least the labels? Pretty stale.

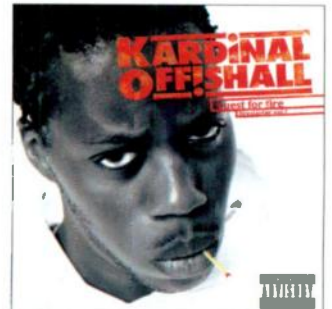
"When you think about Public Enemy and their Afrocentric, radically-political views, we didn't really have somebody that embodied that, at that time. You think about Drake, and the fact that he was able to tap into emotions. Typically, within hip-hop it was super masculine, testosterone-driven, and we all know the positives and the negatives. But when he came along, he brought something brand new that the game did not offer, at least in a real big way, before him. Same with Kanye and everybody else that kind of cuts through, they're doing stuff that analytics never would have been able to predict," he continues. "So, I'm saying, if we depended on analytics, maybe we wouldn't have seen J. Cole, we wouldn't have seen a Drake, we wouldn't have seen a Kendrick [Lamar], we wouldn't have seen a lot of our favourite artists in hip-hop today."

That brings up another of his concerns. That 10 years ago, the most acclaimed

KARDI'S LPs



Eye & I, 1997 (Capitol Hill Music)



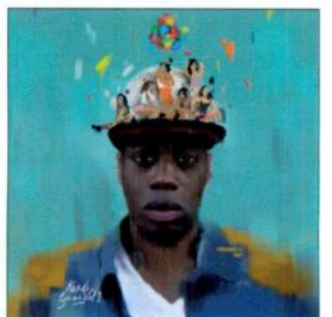
Quest for Fire: Firestarter, Vol. 1, 2001 (MCA Records)



Fire and Glory, 2005 (EMI/Virgin)



Not 4 Sale, 2008 (Kon Live/Geffen)



Kardi Gras, Vol. 1: The Clash, 2015 (Black Stone Colleagues/Universal Canada)

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rappers were Drake, J. Cole, and Kendrick Lamar. Today, the conversation remains focused on Drake, J. Cole, and Kendrick Lamar.

"Of course, there's your Chance the Rapper and Migos and Travis Scott, definitely a good handful of people that came out and are doing dope music, but unfortunately there's a lot of artists where you're like, 'Yo, that artist is ill, love them!' and then, more times than less, you're like, 'What happened to that person?' because they were fire hot for just a year and a half."

So, if career sustainability is the problem, how do we fix it? Figuring that out is partly why he accepted Randy Lennox's offer.

"I'm also somebody that never saw myself as an executive," he says. "I almost threw up my first day working at the label. Between the anxiety and just some of the things that we were doing behind the scenes, I was like, 'This is way worse than I thought!' But the dope thing about being me, and being an executive, is it's a similar journey as I took being an artist. I say that because I had a conversation with one of my A&Rs yesterday and we were talking about an artist, and we were like, 'He doesn't fit in any box. He's incredible, but where does he fit?' But then I had to take a step back and I was like, 'Well, that's what they used to say about me, too.' They said, 'Is he hip-hop or is he dancehall? Oh, he's Canadian but it means culturally more American than Canadian.' So, what I'm saying is I didn't necessarily fit in a box before, but I made that work for me and was able to have some massive success around the globe. Most of my career was people saying, 'That's never going to work; that's not going to happen.' And I would say a cool eight times out of 10, I proved everybody wrong. So, on the executive level, there's definitely things that people are like, 'Well, why would you do that? That's never going to happen?'"

"Think about this," adds Lennox, "how underwhelming Canada's performance had been in Black music and those genres a decade ago. We both got very, very motivated by the notion of really doubling down in that area. [Hiring] Kardi was one of the major components and, matter of fact, we started to rebuild our A&R team in its entirety at that stage."

But beyond his ability to identify and foster talent, Lennox says he knew instinctively that Kardi would be more than the usual musician-turned-talent-scout.

"I just knew in my in my soul that day that he was going to be this ubiquitous spokesman for the community, in addition to his role in finding talent. Kardi would advise me in governmental issues, and because he's so smart, he'd give me his opinion on some of the challenges we were having with Canadian content and radio play and things of that nature. So, he not only had A&R chops and artists chops, he is studied in the condition of our country and the music industry."

(As a side note, let me add this charming anecdote from

Lennox here: "I remember Kardi saying to me, 'By the way, Randy, do I get to design my own office?' I said, 'Have your way with your space.' So, he came in and he had one of the most unique offices I have ever, ever seen. It was all red and sort of looked like a bowling alley. It was so, so cool, and it was literally 20 feet from my office. You walk in Kardi's office and your stress level will go down 50 percent. He's created that environment." Anyway, back to the story...)

At this stage, Offishall's fingerprints are all over UMC's rap and R&B roster. In the last year or so, he's responsible for joint-venture deal with British mega-producer Harmony Samuels (Ariana Grande, Jennifer Lopez, Mary J. Blige) and signing Juno-winning R&B singer Savannah Ré and Quebec-based bilingual rapper Zach Zoya.

There's a particular artist, though, who best exemplifies Offishall's approach to A&R, and his skepticism about analytics. This artist is London, ON's Emanuel, who has quickly risen from obscurity to be the first Canadian signed to Motown Records in the U.S.

"Here's an artist that has zero streams, zero views on YouTube, was an orderly at a hospital, overweight, no buzz — all those things, but he had an incredible gift," Offishall says about Emanuel. "I signed him and Jeffrey [Remedios, UMC CEO] was like, 'You know, I hear it and I see it, and Kardi, I will always bet on your passion'... Within a year — *within one year* — he was able to do 30 million streams. Now, in the grand scheme of things, is that a massive number of streams? If you put it in context, it is. For this random guy that nobody knew about last year to have 30 million streams? But not only that, but to be on some of the biggest playlists around the world at the end of last year, and a lot of these platforms were like, 'Oh, the guy to watch for next year.' That's just one example of me taking a bet on somebody."

In essence, he says, with his newfound influence, Offishall is trying to be the label guy he would have respected and wanted to work with 20 years ago.

"I'm saying, that person who is empathetic — not sympathetic, but empathetic. The person that, based on his past, really understands the anxiety that artists go through and that torment that we go through at times, and the consideration that we need. That's how I use my past experiences — dealing with people, just trying to be a great person."

Offishall is fully aware that the timing of his promotion — April 2021 — could be viewed as merely a response by UMC to Blackout Tuesday and the heightened focus on the lack of Black executives in music. He sees that meaningful change is often competing with performative corporate gestures.

"I know that I've earned it, so in terms of me becoming the SVP, I don't have any qualms around timing or any of that stuff. I busted my ass for the last few years doing a lot of things," he says. "But it wouldn't have been meaningful to me if I got this promotion to be the country's first black SVP at a label, but then it was just something for the news to bite onto and it was just a cute title or some clickbait and there was nothing that actually happened."

Likewise, in his capacities as the chair of UMC's B.L.A.C.K. (Businesses Levelling Access to Change and Knowledge) Label Coalition (BLC) and Canada's representative on Universal

Music Group's Task Force for Meaningful Change, he remains singularly focused on making decisions that have a substantial impact. For example, the BLC and the Pinball Clemons Foundation earmarking \$250,000 for a scholarship program for Black student leaders.

"What does meaningful change look like? We could have just written a couple of cute cheques to people that already get cheques that don't even need it, and that happens a lot within the charitable community," he says. "But for us, we're going above and beyond to make sure that some of these charities that have never received money or that should receive more, that it's actually going to make a dent, and it's going to also send the right messages to these other corporations and other people."

How Offishall thinks about progressive change, and how he wields influence, is rooted in his community, and especially in his mother's teachings. She is a former teacher who still works in the Toronto school system, and who was involved in creating Canada's first Afrocentric school.

"My mom has been somebody that has really driven home just a real appreciation for being a servant. My mom, honestly, she should just be chilling, and I swear to you, the only thing she doesn't have that would make her a Black Panther is a beret. My mom is still constantly trying to figure out how we make the

education systems better for Toronto," he says. "So, for me, I need to be able to continue to do not just surface work. But to actually dig deep and make sure that every opportunity that is given to myself or given to people that I work with, that we really make it count and we make it count big time. At the end of the day, we're not doing it for the sake of 'look at me,' but we want to make sure that our legacy is one that is very, very grounded in love for our community and based in a progressive attitude. Like, how do we build? How do we break the cycle? I think that's what we're trying to do right now. Ultimately, all that talking, I could sum it up by saying that meaningful change is change that will break negative cyclical patterns. That's pretty much what it ultimately means."

And with that clear and bold statement, our time is up and Kardinal has to run to his next appointment, but not before he expresses a very sincere thanks for wanting to talk to him. For me, there's no question, he's one of the most interesting and inspiring folks in the Canadian music industry. Precisely because he's not Canada's Jay-Z or our anyone else. He's pure, honest, compassionate, and smart in a way that is uniquely him. Thankfully we have our own Kardinal Offishall.

Michael Raine is the Editor-in-Chief of Canadian Musician.

KARDI'S RISE AT A GLANCE

- Born Jason Drew Harrow on May 11, 1976 in Scarborough, ON, to Jamaican immigrant parents. The family spent his childhood years living in Toronto's Flemingdon Park neighbourhood. His mother was a teacher and still works in the Toronto education system.
- He started rapping at 8-years-old. At 14, he performed in front of Nelson Mandela during his first visit to Canada.
- In 1991, a young Kardi, then using the name MC J-Ski, records his first demo and enters a rhyme he wrote with an anti-drug message into a Scadding Court community centre contest and wins. For this he gets to meet his idol, Maestro Fresh Wes. He is also interviewed by Barbara Frum about his anti-drug message on the CBC program *The Journal*.
- He later changes his moniker to Gumby D, and performs at malls with two friends who call their group the Young Black Panthers. He also uses the stage name KoolAid before settling on Kardinal Offishall.
- In 1993 he co-founded the Toronto hip-hop collective The Circle with Choclaire, Jully Black, Solitaire, Tara Chase, and Saukrates. The following year, he is featured on Saukrates' single "Still Caught Up"
- In 1996 at age 20, he signs a publishing deal with Warner/Chappell Music Canada and releases his first single, "Naughty Dread", which gets nominated for Best Rap Recording at the Junos.
- In 1997 he releases the debut LP, *Eye & I*. The single, "On wit da Show," gets on regular rotation on MuchMusic
- Kardi's first major label album, *Quest for Fire: Firestarter, Vol. 1*, is released in 2001. The single "Ba-Kardi Slang" is the first Canadian rap song to enter the Billboard Top-100 (peaking at 37).
- *Fire and Glory* is released in 2005 on Virgin Records in Canada and gets nominated for Rap Recording of the Year at the 2006 Juno Awards.
- *Not 4 Sale*, his fourth album, is released in 2008. For it, he returns to an American major label, Kon Live/Geffen Records. It spawns the hit single "Dangerous" and for this he wins Rap Recording of the Year at the 2009 Juno Awards.
- In 2008, Kardi is featured on Lady Gaga's "Just Dance (RedOne Remix)"
- In 2013, he becomes creative executive director of A&R at Universal Music Canada.
- In 2015, Kardi's releases his fifth studio album, *Kardi Gras, Vol. 1: The Clash*, which includes the hit single "That Chick Right There."
- In 2019, his song "Run" is used by the Toronto Raptors as the theme to their championship season.
- In 2020, Kardi is founder and co-chair of UMC's B.L.A.C.K. Label Coalition, which spearheads improvements to education, mentorship, and progressive equitable infrastructure to increase Black representation within the company. Kardi is also the Canadian representative on Universal Music Group's Task Force for Meaningful Change.
- April 2021, Kardi is promoted to Sr. VP of A&R at UMC.

CROWN LANDS

Are Exactly Who They Want to Be

By Kevin Young

With their most recent releases – “White Buffalo” and “The Oracle” – Crown Lands are hitting their stride, says guitarist/bassist/keyboardist, Kevin Comeau, adding: “I mean, how many bands out there follow up an eight-minute single with a 13-minute single?” he asks, laughing.

Nowadays, few, if any. Then again, Crown Lands aren’t shy about releasing epic-sized songs. Nor are they the least bit put out by being told they sound a lot like their key mutual influence, Rush.

“That’s the best compliment we could get,” Comeau says. “I’m proud of the fact that ‘Context’ reached as many people as it did and that ‘The Oracle’ is going the same thing. We’re carrying on the tradition of an art form that reached its peak 40 years ago, one that touched us both.” It’s not just the basis of a lot of their music, he adds, but their “friendship and desire to make music in the first place.”

“We’re kind of who we wanted to see as kids,” puts in Cody Bowles (drums/vocals).

Frankly, they’re the kind of band I wanted to see as a kid, too. And while my introduction to Crown Lands happened by chance and I don’t remember what tune I heard first, I do recall the visceral, fanboy reaction I had to their songs and outstanding musicianship.

CROWN LANDS' CODY BOWLES & KEVIN COMEAU

PHOTO: LANE DORSEY



SINGLE ARTWORK FOR "WHITE BUFFALO" & "THE ORACLE" (2021)

That's evident in everything Crown Lands has put out, and more so than ever on these first two tracks from their upcoming *White Buffalo* EP, which is set for release on Sept. 16th. The song, "White Buffalo," is the third in a series on which Comeau and Bowles address Indigenous peoples' rights; a follow up to "Mountain" and "End of the Road," all of

which are meant to present an inspiring message about "bridging the past and future."

"I've been playing drums since I was a year old," Bowles says when asked about his musical background. "My dad was a drummer. He'd

play *2112* by Rush and, as a baby, I'd be watching him from the floor. I think I always knew I wanted to be a musician. He got me a kit and I loved it and ended up taking private lessons around age 12. I was one of those kids who was into classic rock more than anything else and listened to Rush almost exclusively up until high school. I wasn't one of those cool kids who got invited to parties. I just had my music and played drums all day."

Bowles went on to study West African, Guinean, and Afro Cuban drumming in university but didn't start singing until Crown Lands formed.



CROWN LANDS' SELF-TITLED LP (2020)

CM: Were you aware of the vocal gymnastics you were capable of before that?

Cody Bowles: Not at all. When I first started singing my voice was very low. I mean, my speaking voice is low, so that surprised me. We started playing and that voice came out and I've been developing it ever since.

CM: And your musical background, Kevin?

Kevin Comeau: I was really into punk rock; The Clash, Misfits, Green Day. They were really important to me. My parents bought me a bass when I was 11 and I learned how to play "Hot Cross Buns" and "All Along the Watchtower" on the same day. My life changed at that point. I didn't discover Rush until I was 14 but everything changed (again) when I heard [Rush's 1977 album] *A Farewell to Kings* – it felt like discovering magic. At that point, I was just a bass player but started playing keyboards and messing around with guitar when I was 16. But I was always more into the bass. I studied classical music theory and composition at Western for a year, but I guess I read too much Jack Kerouac because I dropped out and hitchhiked to Los Angeles, joined a reggae band (playing keyboards), and toured California.

CM: How did you and Cody get together?

Comeau: I came up to see my family one Christmas and a buddy of mine was auditioning for a band Cody was in. I heard they were big into Rush, so I crashed the audition, and Cody and I got along really well. I wasn't much of a guitar player but they needed a guitarist and if I wanted to hang out with the best drummer I'd ever met I had to figure it out.

Bowles: And he was damn good from day one...

Comeau: Oh shucks. It's funny, both of us spent our lives focused on one instrument, and in Crown Lands we're playing other instruments...

Bowles: And learning new instruments as we go through this journey.

Comeau: You never stop being a student, right?

As students, players, and songwriters, Crown Lands don't do anything by half measure. Since founding in 2016 in Oshawa, ON, they've released three EPs — *Mantra* (2016), *Rise Over Run* (2017), *Wayward Flyers Vol. 1* (2020) — and their self-titled debut LP in 2020, which was nominated for the 2021 Juno Award for Rock Album of the Year (that followed their 2020 Juno win for Breakthrough Artist). The duo also released a four-song EP featuring both studio and live versions of "Context: Fearless Pt. 1" and "Right Way Back," both recorded and filmed at Toronto's Revolution Recording.

Given how complex and demanding their songs are, watching them recreate them live is mindblowing...

CM: The mechanics of what you do – there's so much going on. How do you drill down into that during writing and rehearsals to recreate it, as a two-piece, live?

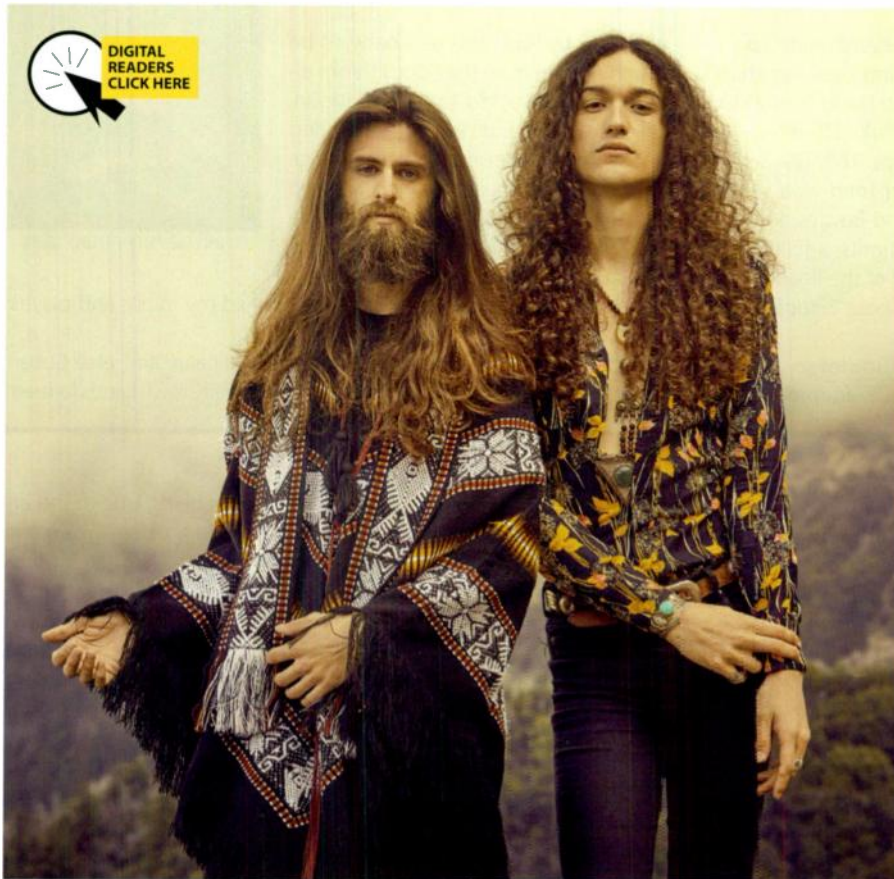
Comeau: We make sure the song works in the jam space before we track it. There are songs on the first record we got a little carried away arranging and rearranging. I'm so proud of that record, but when it came to touring, a few songs didn't necessarily work. We've recognized that the most important

thing to being a duo is being true to the arrangement. If we're adding parts, we make sure we can pull them off live. There's nothing worse than seeing a band play your favourite song and your favourite part is missing. It's like, "Where's the mellotron?" We have almost 30 inputs when we tour – no backing track or click. We might trigger some nature sounds/samples between songs on our upcoming tour, but that's going to be triggered live. I'm not saying you have to have a live band if you're doing a hip-hop set – there are different rules within different genres and art forms. But the form of music that we want to carry on is a movement of popular music that peaked in 1981-82...

Just as most bands did back then, Crown Lands want to be the ones creating everything their audience hears from the stage, which required Comeau to tweak his live set-up over time. "I was adding more and more and it was just getting complicated. Then I switched to Moog Taurus 3 pedals, which changed everything. It became less about trying to fill in low end with synths and more about arranging parts properly. Sometimes bass players will say, 'You should get a bass player,' which is funny because I'm a bass player and it's one of the most important things to me. So, sometimes the best bass is a keyboard. The bass player's worst enemy is the keyboard player's left hand, or, in this case, the guitar player's right foot."

CM: Cody, you don't have a ridiculous large-scale kit but still have a lot going on. How are you becoming more ambitious as a musician and songwriter?

Bowles: I'm looking to branch out into weirder and compound time signatures to learn how to sing over top of them, and



into adding to the kit... I have some temple blocks and I've been looking for places to put those; I'm working on adding more. We'll see how it goes.

Comeau: Tablas, windchimes, indigenous flutes...

Bowles: Yes. I play indigenous flutes. I have a lot of gear. I just don't have anywhere on the rack to put it.

CM: How about a flaming gong?

Comeau: With Crown Lands, it's always a gongshow.

CM: Tell me a little bit about "White Buffalo" and "The Oracle" and how your songwriting process has evolved?

Bowles: We started writing "White Buffalo" around the time we were in Nashville recording "Right Way Back" and "Context" with Nick Raskulinecz, [producer of Rush's 2007 album, *Snakes and Arrows*]. Kevin had this amazing riff, but we were supposed to be writing lyrics, but he just wouldn't stop playing it. I picked up my sticks and ended up playing this unrelenting rhythm on the couch and we were like, 'This has got to be a song.'

Comeau: The best time to write a riff is when you should be writing lyrics.

Bowles: Originally, the song was in 13 and we trimmed it down to seven.

Comeau: Would you say trimmed it, or would you say add a beat to make it 14? When you say we wrote it in 13/8 but recorded it in 7/8, it sounds like a huge difference, but really it was adding a beat because 13 is a bar of six and a bar of 7. I mean, Cody over here studying Afro-Cuban drumming and I studied classical, so we are trained very differently. Cody is the master of metre and rhythm and I'll just come up with random prog shit and try to play the most complicated thing I can. Then Cody's like, 'Actually, that's in 15/8. Good job, Kevin.'

CM: And lyrically?

Bowles: A lot of times I'm just singing melodies with no words – speaking in tongues as David Byrne would say. We find something that speaks to us; maybe a word that slips out from my subconscious, then we slowly uncover what the song is about and work from there.

Comeau: We came up with the name "White Buffalo" while jamming in Nashville and it

was like, "This sounds like some giant animal." And we were like, "Well, elephant has been overdone. What's another huge animal that's dope?" Cody mentioned the white buffalo is a symbol in a lot of 'indigenous cultures. Most of the time the music comes first, then a title will show up that the chorus might get built out of. Then we'll share iPhone notes and just keep changing the lyrics.

CM: With just two of you, can you get more done quicker than, say, a four- or five-piece might?

Comeau: Sometimes. When you have four people, one person has an idea but then you have three egos that you have to blast through to get the idea finished. Being a duo there's no tiebreaker. A lot of the time I'm throwing ideas at the wall and Cody's like... [mimes swatting a horde of flies away]. But then Cody will go, "That's actually a good idea." I think we're still learning how to be the most efficient band and we're getting better. It usually takes us a couple of weeks to get into the groove. Then, all of a sudden, this cool magical shit comes out. I don't know if every band is like that. But some bands are more a solo project or a duo, with a bunch of guys tagged on. And that's not a diss against rhythm sections. Cody and I are basically a rhythm section who've been co-opted into doing the leading roles in the band; the goofy kids in the back of the class – like Beavis and Butthead. In another universe, Cody and I are a happy rhythm section in a band, but in Crown Lands, we're both at the front of the stage.

If it's not abundantly apparent by now, as committed as Bowles and Comeau are about challenging themselves musically, and as serious as the overarching messages of their songs are, they don't take themselves overly seriously and have an easy, inclusive way of bringing anyone talking with them into the loop. It's a level of communication that's as integral to their writing and recording process as it is on stage.

"We have to have eye contact. Kevin actually conducts me with his eyebrows when we play. Everything is based on reactions. Like, if I'm not jazzed on a part, Kevin doesn't play it," Bowles explains. "He looks to get this reaction out of me and I do the same with him with fills, lyrics, and melodies. If we're not both jiving on something, it's not going to work."

As light as our conversation is, it's impossible to talk about Crown Lands without discussing their activism; the sheer weight behind the words of so much of their music, notably



“End of the Road,” a protest song that features narration by Tanya Tagaq, which focuses on missing and murdered Indigenous women.

We’re living in a time where the voices of historically oppressed and/or marginalized people are more a part of mainstream conversation (and, correspondingly, the voices of those preaching politics of division and intolerance have been amplified as well). That’s of personal concern to both Bowles (who is of Mi’kmaq heritage and identifies as two-spirit) and Comeau (who’s Jewish). Given the moment we’re in currently, I’m curious if they believe that substantive change is on the horizon.

CM: There have been so many times when people have said, “That’s it. This issue, whatever it is at a given time, can’t be ignored any longer,” and then it is ignored. Is this moment in time different? Do you feel that people, generally, are more aware and readier to become allies and advocates and share the load?

Bowles: Absolutely. I feel like, in Canada at least, people are listening to Indigenous people for the first time in a long time about things that they’ve known for generations. It feels like we’re at a turning point and something’s happening. I’m just really grateful to be a part of this and to amplify those voices with our platform.

Comeau: When we talk about things like truth and reconcil-

iation, I feel like we’re finally approaching the truth part of it, but it’s going to take a long time to recognize what Canada is, how it was built, and the genocide of the people who were here first. But as much as we try and talk about the horrors of colonization and the intergenerational suffering of Indigenous peoples, we also have to celebrate Indigenous excellence and the beautiful art that’s come out. You can’t just reduce a group of people to the suffering that has been wrought on them. I mean, look at Cody, that’s fucking Indigenous excellence right there, baby!...

We have a long way to go but I think we are hitting a turning point in terms of mainstream acceptance, of being able to talk about these things and support people and believe people. There’s this weird thing where the onus is always on the abused or the mistreated to prove that some transgression happened and I don’t think we’re there anymore, luckily. I think the revolution starts with education, and thanks to social media, more people who didn’t have voices now do. It’s our job, right? As artists, to amplify those voices so we try and use our platform to talk about things and direct people to the resources so they can educate themselves.

I was 18 when I first read about residential schools and, luckily, generations that are younger than us are now going to be learning about that, younger and younger. And they’re going to have better tools to [confront] white supremacy and to dismantle in-

herently racist systems. It’s going to take multiple generations, but I believe the ship is slowly correcting. The question is: Can you fix the system from within or do you have to dismantle it from outside? But that’s not a question we can answer, that’s only a question that we can ask.

Crown Lands hits the road for their first full-on headlining tour in October 2021.

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

KEVIN COMEAU’S LIVE GEAR

GUITARS:

- Gibson SG Classic with P90s
- Gibson SG Standard (1969) with T Tops
- Fender Stratocaster (1982)
- Fender Stratocaster
- Boisclair Custom Double Neck (12-string guitar/4-string bass)
- Rickenbacker 360/12
- Alvarez custom acoustic
- Eko Ranger 12-string acoustic

AMPS:

- 1965 Fender Bassman
- Hiwatt DR103
- Hiwatt DR504
- McCormick Custom Super FC50
- Roland JC55
- Leslie 145 rotating speaker

EFFECTS:

- Xotic EP Booster
- Zvex Mastotron
- Diamond Compressor
- EHX POG2 Octaver
- Eventide Timefactor
- Ibanez TS9 Tube Screamer
- McCormick Custom Fuzz
- Ideen Tech True Friend Fuzz
- MXR Phase 90
- MXR Micro Flanger
- Boss CE-2 Chorus
- Boss RV-3 Reverb
- Roland RE-201 Space Echo

KEYBOARDS:

- Moog Taurus 3 bass pedal synthesizer
- Roland PK-5
- Moog Minitaur
- Nord Electro 4 HP
- Fender Rhodes MK1

CODY BOWLES’ DRUM SETUP

The drum kit is a 1970s blue/olive badge vintage stainless-steel Ludwig

TOMS:

- Concert Tom 1: Ludwig refurbished by Shaw Percussion (8")
- Concert Tom 2: Ludwig refurbished by Shaw Percussion (10")
- Rack Tom 1: Ludwig (12")
- Rack Tom 2: Ludwig (13")
- Floor Tom: Ludwig (18")
- Kick Drum: Ludwig (24"x 14")
- Snare: Ludwig Black Beauty (6.5"x 14")

CYMBALS:

- Zildjian K Mastersound (13")
- Zildjian K Dark Crash (17")
- Zildjian K Dark Thin Crash (18")
- Zildjian K Custom Medium Ride (20")
- Zildjian A Custom Splash (8")
- Paiste Gong (48")

HARDWARE:

- DW 5000 hi-hat stand
- DW 9000 kick pedal
- Gibraltar Rack custom made by Shaw Percussion

ADDITIONAL PERCUSSION:

- LP 25 bar chimes
- Korg Wavedrum
- Tablas
- Halo Mounted for Gong (48")

STICKS:

- Los Cabos Red Hickory 5As

Your DIY Guide to Keeping Your Guitar in Top Shape

BY OMAR SHABBAR



PHOTO: FELIX/DENNIS.AG

As musicians with no live shows, no recording sessions, and no rehearsals for nearly two years, our relationship with music has truly changed over the course of this pandemic. For some of us, this new-found time has been an opportunity to reconnect with our instrument, finally sit down to practice, and get our chops up. For others, myself included, the lack of shows and ability to jam with friends has really killed any motivation to play. Whichever group you've found yourself in over the past two years, I'm sure that all of us are happy to see that shows, rehearsals, friends, and everything music is slowly coming back! Whether you're picking up your guitar for the first time today, or the first time this year, we all need to get our axes back into giging shape.

I've been working as the guitar tech at The Root Down Studio here in Toronto for the past five years. My job involves keeping our collection of guitars and basses in top playing shape and workshopping with clients on their guitar rigs. While five years is not a very long time, especially compared to many of the guitar techs in this country, I have still learned a number of easy tips and tricks that I think every guitar player should know about maintaining their instrument.

Before I begin, though, there are **three disclaimers** that I should get out of the way:

First: I am not suggesting that you shouldn't take your instrument into the shop to get work done. I think it's important to know your limits and recognize when a task requires something beyond your skill set. That's when you should bring your instrument into the shop and pay someone to take care of it for you. As we go through the tips, I will outline when you should stop and bring your instrument to a professional. Always remember the golden rule: *If you're*

ever uncomfortable or unsure with what you're doing, stop. Bring it into your shop and get a professional to look at it. That said, a lot of the work that I do on guitars is very simple, requires inexpensive tools, and has little-to-no risk of damaging your instrument. These are things that I am confident you can do to keep your guitars feeling, sounding, and looking great.

Second: These are the techniques that work best for me. If you have heard other theories or techniques on setting up your guitar that are contrary to what I'm suggesting, try both options and see what works best for you and your guitar. Ultimately, that is the only thing that matters: does it feel good to you? If the answer is yes, who cares how you set up the guitar as long as it isn't doing any damage to the instrument.

Third: I'm not going to go through each step of a full setup in detail. That would take way too long and be very difficult to properly describe without pictures or videos. Instead, I'm going to focus on five tips and tricks to help you along the way when setting up your instrument.

Protip: If you're completely new to setting up your instrument or you're looking for a quick refresher, then YouTube is your best friend. Most major guitar companies have instructional videos online on how to work their guitars, so try to find a video on your specific guitar.

Alright, with all of that out of the way, let's jump right into the tips!

Tip #1: Take Pictures and Notes

Most of what I've learned about guitar teching comes from a lot of trial and error, and this tip definitely comes from error. On some guitars (like some Gibsons or Gretsches), the hardware is held in place by the tension of the strings. When you take the strings off, those parts can fall off. When you go to put the strings back on, you may be stuck guessing the direction of the bridge or the placement of the tailpiece. I have made this mistake twice and was left searching the web for pictures, trying to figure out what goes where.

So, for the first tip, I suggest taking pictures of the guitar before you start working on it. Take pictures of every place that the string makes contact with the guitar. This includes the tuning pegs, the string trees, the bridge, and tailpiece. If the guitar has a tremolo system, make sure to take pictures of that as well.

I also try to take as many notes as possible when working on a guitar. This way I can reference the notes and the pictures the next time I work on a guitar to change any parts of the previous set up that I didn't like. These notes and pictures can also be



useful if you do need to bring the instrument into a shop. They're an all-around good reference and resource when setting up your guitar.

TOOLS

If you're either starting out or looking to expand your guitar maintenance tools, I have some suggestions on what to get next. I have two categories that I put guitar tech tools into:

Absolute Must Haves

- New set of strings
- Wire cutters
- Set of Allen keys
- Screwdriver (Phillips and flat head)

Heavily Suggested, but Not Crucial:

- Fretboard cleaner (I use Music Nomad's F-ONE oil)
- Guitar polish/cleaner (I use the Dunlop 65)
- Microfiber cloth
- String cleaner (I use the Music Nomad string cleaner)
- String winder
- Fret polisher (I use the D'Addario Fret

Polishing System)

- Dusting brush (I use the Music Nomad's Nomad Tool all-in-one guitar cleaning tool)

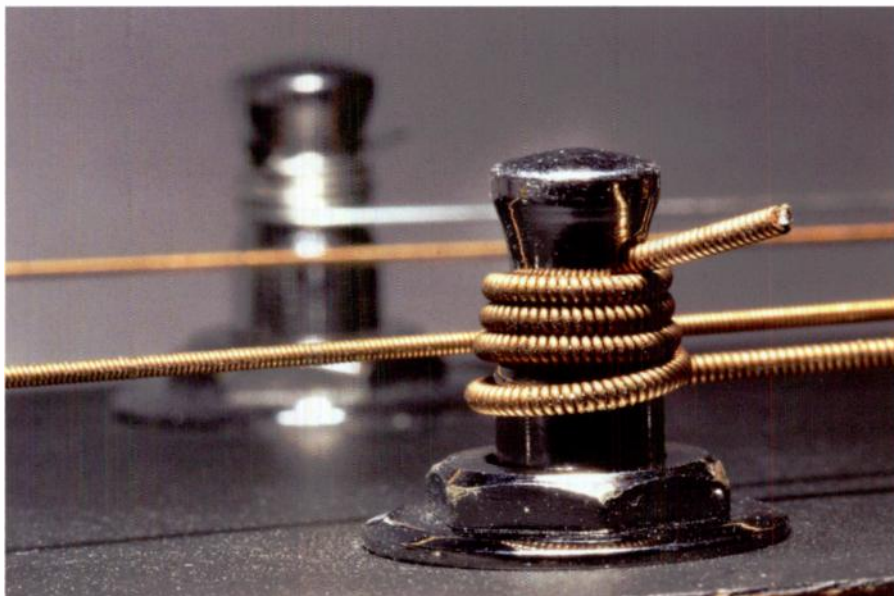
A lot of these things can be purchased together as kits or multitools. For example, Dunlop makes a cleaning kit that includes a set of cleaning solutions and a microfiber cloth. I also have the Music Nomad Octopus multitool which has two screwdrivers and 5 different wrench sizes.

Tip #2: Clean It Up

This is something that I didn't learn until I started working on other people's guitars. I always want to return my customer's guitars not only feeling and sounding great, but also looking tip top. So, when I began working on other people's guitars, I started using oils and cleaning solutions on my setups. Not only does this make the guitar look better, but it prolongs the life of the guitar, and it makes it feel significantly better to play. I now use a fretboard cleaner and guitar body polish on all of my setups, for customers and my own guitars.

The most important thing to clean on





your guitar is the fretboard, because that's where a lot of dead skin lives. Not only is it pretty gross, but it doesn't feel good to play. This is the number one thing that I suggest to people who are looking to improve their at-home setups: get some fretboard oil. It's very inexpensive and it makes a world of a difference when you're playing.

Protip: If your guitar has a whammy/tremolo/Floyd Rose or a floating bridge, you may have to take the strings off one by one, replacing each one before moving onto the next. This is because the springs that hold your tremolo system in place require tension from the strings. If you take all of the strings off at once, the bridge may angle itself in a way where you can't put strings back through it. I have made this mistake before and it is a huge pain; trust me. If you're looking to clean the fretboard, loosen the strings fully without taking them off so you can work in between them. Once the fretboard is clean, tighten the strings back up then replace them one at a time.

QUESTION #1:

I wanted to know what guitar maintenance questions you have and want me to cover in this article, so we reached out to readers via *Canadian Musician's* social media platforms to ask what questions you had.

The first question comes from Greg O'Toole: **"What kind of oils should I use on my guitar neck? And what do they do?"**

Thanks for the question, Greg. Most commonly you'll see lemon oil, which is meant for rosewood fretboards exclusively as the acidity in the lemon can eat away at maple necks. Personally, I use the Music Nomad's F-ONE oil, which doesn't contain any lemon oil and can be used on any type of fretboard. As mentioned above in tip #2,

these oils help clean any gunk off of your fretboard, they condition the wood to keep it from drying out, and they make your neck feel really good to play.

Tip #3: String Wounds & Placement

Of all of the guitar issues that I work on during a setup, I would say that almost half of them can be solved simply with a good restring. I've seen a new set of strings cure a nasty fret buzz, uncomfortably high action, tuning issues, the list goes on. So regardless of the issue, I almost always start my setups with a good restring. A big part of this is string wounds; not just how many times the string goes around the peg, but how they sit on the peg.

Now, there are a lot of opinions on this and not all of them are wrong. What I aim for is roughly two wounds on all pegs except the G and B string, on which I aim for three. As a general rule, on standard tuning pegs, I would never go less than 1.5 wounds or more than four. Less than 1.5 wounds can lead to the string slipping through the tuning peg, causing tuning issues. Any more than four wounds may put too much pressure on the guitar, which, over the course of several years, may cause damage. If you're within that range on a standard set of tuning pegs and it feels good to play, you're doing it right.

Perhaps more important than the number of wounds is how they sit on the tuning peg. On many guitars that I look at, the wounds are overlapping or spaced out throughout the peg. This will inevitably lead to tuning issues as the string can move around the peg. I find the best way to avoid this is to guide the wounds to sit tightly, one on top of another. If the headstock is sitting to the left of you, use your right hand to

maintain tension on the string as you wind and use your right index finger to guide the string, ensuring that each new wind is sitting just below the previous. The string wounds should not be overlapping or have any space between them.

Protip: Sometimes tuning issues come from the string getting caught on the nut. This can cause your string to jump in pitch when you're tuning or go flat while you're playing it. This is most common on headstocks where there are three tuning pegs on each side. You can purchase lubricant for the nut of your guitar, but an even easier and cheaper solution is using graphite from a pencil. While cleaning the fretboard of your guitar, grab a mechanical pencil and draw in the slots of your guitar's nut. The graphite will act as a natural lubricant, allowing the string to flow more freely through the nut.

QUESTION #2

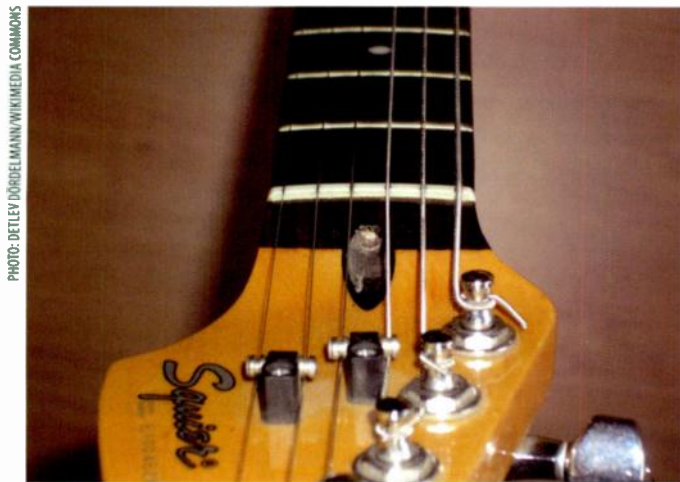
This question comes from reader Joseph Landau: **"Some people say leaving a guitar leaning against a wall is bad for the neck. Is this true? Does the angle matter? How about the side of the neck facing the surface?"**

To be honest with you, this one puzzles me. I've also heard this many times but I have never seen a guitar warp out of shape because it was leaning against a wall. I'm sure if you left a guitar leaning against a wall for a few weeks or months you may start to notice some movement, so in that regard: I wouldn't recommend it as a permanent place for your instrument, but for a few hours, even days, I really don't think you would notice a difference. I have also heard the theory that if you lean it strings side towards the wall that it's somehow better. Again, not sure about this one. Your guitar's neck is a pretty solid piece of wood and I don't think that leaning it against a wall is going to cause any kind of irreparable damage.

Tip #4: Truss Rod, AKA the Boogie Man

I think a lot of people are afraid of working on their neck because of those horror stories of friends overturning their truss rod. It's true, you can destroy your neck by over-adjusting your truss rod. Needless to say, if you really don't feel comfortable working on your neck, by all means bring it into a shop and have them look at it. That said, I believe that with the right patience, precaution, and technique, you can absolutely learn how to adjust your neck, but also learn when to stop and bring it in.

Your guitar's neck is naturally a little bit curved. We call this a bow. Your neck can bow either away from the strings, causing



high action, or towards them, causing fret buzz. We can adjust this by tightening or loosening the truss rod, which is a metal rod that goes down the centre of the guitar neck. Generally, the ideal guitar set up would have a little bit of a bow where the seventh to 12th fret curves the slightest amount away from the strings.

To make adjustments, you first need to locate the truss rod. For some guitars, particularly older or custom shop guitars, the truss rod is found at the base of the neck. This requires taking the neck off. Some other guitars simply don't have a truss rod at all. If you find yourself in either of these situations, I would highly recommend bringing your guitar into a shop and having them look at it. On most guitars, however, we can access the truss rod at the top of the neck, through the headstock. You may need to remove a plastic cover to access it, but often it's just an open hole.

First, you need to loosen the D and G string and get your Allen key ready. Be sure to look up which Allen key you need to use on yours before adjusting the neck because this varies depending on the guitar. When adjusting the truss rod, you either want to move it clockwise to move the neck towards the strings, or counter clockwise to move the neck away from the strings. Make sure to move only in increments of 45 degrees or less, then retune the guitar and test it out. Repeat this process until the action feels right to you.

Now, when do you stop? If you have repeated this process more than three times, I would stop and bring it in. Another big red flag is how tight the truss rod feels. It should feel like you're screwing into a piece of wood. If it's too loose and/or spinning in place, bring it in. Adversely, if it is feeling really tight and requires a little elbow grease (again more than screwing into a piece of wood), stop and bring it in. The name of the game is patience and precaution with truss rods. You don't need to be afraid of adjusting it yourself, you just need to know when to stop.

QUESTION #3:

By far our most asked question was about humidity and **what we can do as musicians to help our guitars cope with the changes in temperatures and moisture?** Thanks to Chris Sipos and Les Thomas for their questions.

The optimal humidity range according to Taylor Guitars is 45-55% relative humidity. Personally, I'm like, "Great, what do I do with that information?" For us gigging musicians, with "a musician's budget," I think the best way to deal with humidity is through trial and error. You need to find out which room in your house allows your guitar to best retain its neck curve and playability. Typically, you'll want to avoid basements and lean towards rooms with lots of air flow. Keep your guitar in a room for a couple of days and see if you notice any changes in the neck by looking from the headstock down to the bridge. Look just off to the side of the neck and you'll be able to see the curvature of the neck. Remember: you want a slight

bow in the middle of the neck. If you're noticing big changes in your guitar in every room, then put your instruments in the smallest room in the house and purchase a dehumidifier. By using the smallest room, you'll have more control over the humidity level and you can hopefully create that 45-55% relative humidity.

Tip #5: Keeping in Shape

Alright, so you've looked up the guitar setup video on YouTube, cross-referenced these tips, and you got your guitar playing great. Now what can we do to keep your guitar feeling this good for as long as possible? The simple answer is just play it. By far, of all the guitars that I've worked on, the ones that need the most work are those that are stuck in the closet in their case. I think that neglect can be the hardest thing on your guitar. If you have it out on a stand in your living room or bedroom, you're more likely to play it. The more you play it, the quicker you'll notice any changes to the neck and you can address them right away, before they require more attention.

Another thing that you can do is use a string cleaner. These can be really inexpensive and keep your guitar feeling great. Not only do they help keep your strings clean, prolonging the life of your strings, they help clean and condition your fretboard as well. Generally, I wipe down my guitars with a microfiber cloth, clean the strings, and make slight adjustments to their necks every couple of weeks, or as needed.

If you're able to keep on top of these slight adjustments and keep your guitar clean, your wicked guitar setup should last you a good six to nine months, depending on how much you play the guitar.



Learning the Quirks of Your Guitar

The first time you do a deep clean and set up on your guitar, it may feel very intimidating and I get it; you don't want to mess up your guitar. It's important to remember that, even if you do somehow mess up, you can always bring it into a shop and get someone to look at it. Don't be afraid to try things at home. I promise: the more times you set up your guitar, the easier it will be. My main guitar is a Mexican-made Telecaster and I must have set that guitar up nearly 100 times by now. Because I am so familiar with that guitar, I can get it into gigging shape quicker and easier than any other guitar. The best way to get really comfortable working on your guitar is to just do it many, many, times. I think that every guitar has its own little quirks and once you learn them and how to work with them, you can really get that guitar to sing.

Omar Shabbar is a gigging musician based out of Toronto. He's also an onsite guitar tech at The Root Down Studio (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.



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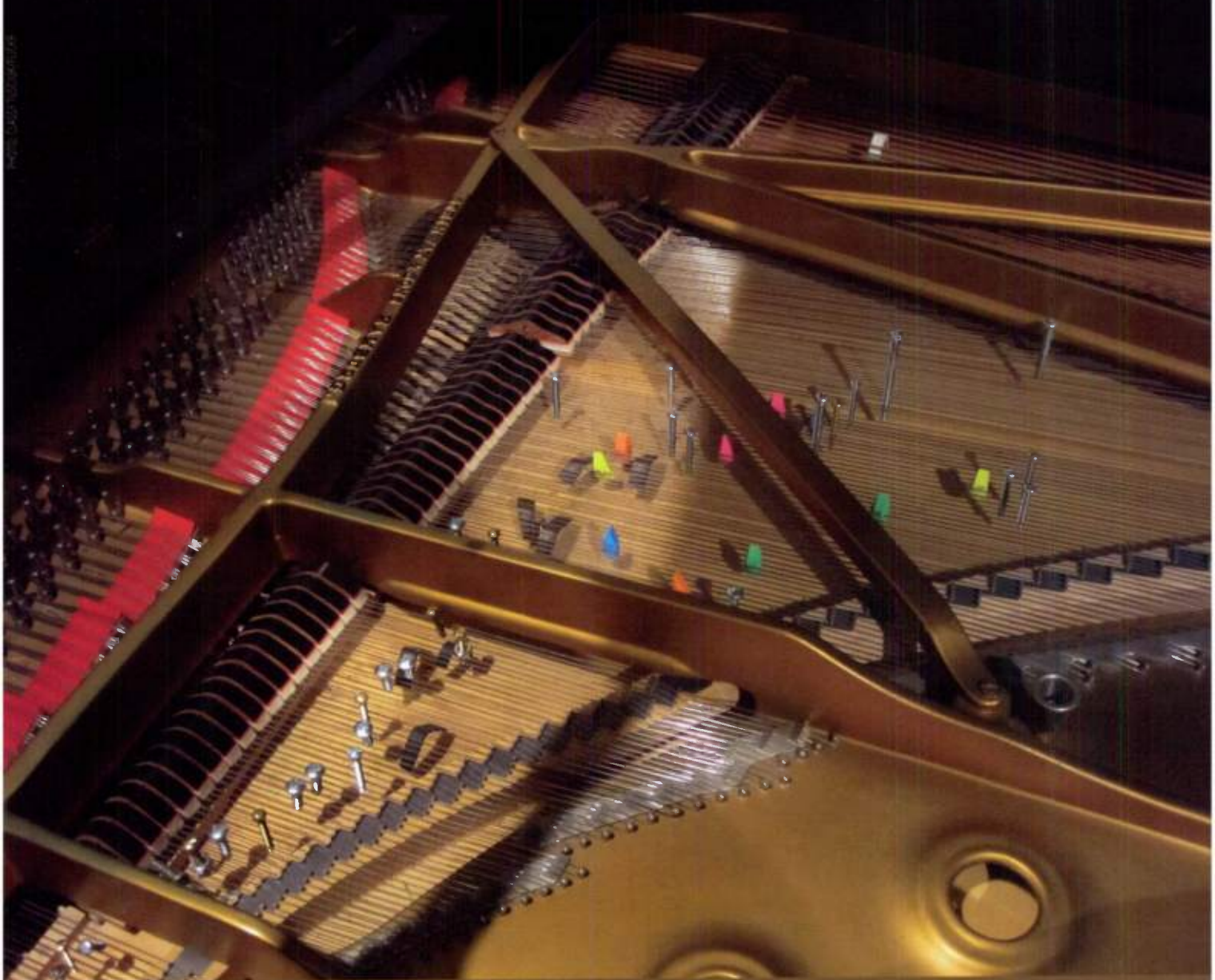
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EXPLORING THE WONDERFULLY



JOHN CAGE'S PREPARED PIANO AT THE BARCELONA MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

ODD WORLD OF PREPARED PIANO

BY KEVIN YOUNG

By way of explanation for those unfamiliar with “prepared piano,” a definition may be helpful. Put simply by Dictionary.com, it’s “a grand piano that has been altered for some modern compositions by having various objects attached to its strings to change the sound and pitch, and performance on which typically involves playing the keys, plucking the strings, slapping the body of the instrument, and slamming the keyboard lid.”

The keyword there is “typical” because preparations – the type of piano, playing technique, etc. – all vary dramatically depending on the player, the composition, and just how comfortable the piano’s owner is with the idea sticking things into their instrument.

Before we get into that, though, let’s quickly look at how the piano itself evolved. Buckle up, we’re going way back and moving way fast...

PHOTO: SUSANNA BOULEY/WOLLESPA.COM/SHUTTERSTOCK



The piano’s oldest ancestor is generally considered the Chinese ‘ke’ – a wooden box with a movable bridge on which strings were “strung” over (circa mid-2000s BCE). A thousand years and change later, Pythagóras is credited with inventing the monochord, which as Wikipedia has it, is ‘at its least... merely a string having a board under it of exactly the same length, upon which may be delineated the points at which the string

must be stopped to give certain notes... allowing comparison.”

Jumping ahead to 1000 CE, keys were added to provide more accuracy for playing individual tones. Organs factor into this as well, but let’s keep things as simple as possible, shall we?

By the 11th century, the pace sped up substantially: first with the Middle Eastern dulcimer appearing in Europe (a resonating box with strings stretched over it that’s played

with a small hammer). Then, rather suddenly by comparison, over the next, 300-ish years we got the harpsichord, clavictherium, and the clavichord. Without getting into all the gory details, that led to Bartolomeo Cristofori’s invention of the “clavicembalo col piano e forte” around 1700 CE (i.e. a harpsichord that can play soft and loud noises owing to the fact the strings were hammered, not plucked).



The harpsichord and early pianos had fewer keys and less range than a modern piano, but, as more pieces were composed for the instrument, that changed; ultimately leading to Steinway's creation in the 1880s of the 88-key version we know and love.

Why stop there? Why not make a bigger piano? Good questions – allegedly, because of the limitation of our ears, and the fact that sub-woofers were not a thing at the time. There are some exceptions, however, including Bösendorfer's 97-key pianos and Stuart and Sons nine-octave, 108-key, world record-setter (circa 2018).

Because the piano offers a huge range of flexibility and expression, and since musicians and composers tend to be free thinkers who wanted to explore its possibilities as both a string and percussion instrument, eventually some people got the bright idea to expand those possibilities via screws, rubber bands, silicone baking sheets, and duct-taping Tic Tacs to the piano's interior, thus spawning a quirky, but

highly-intriguing composition/playing technique.

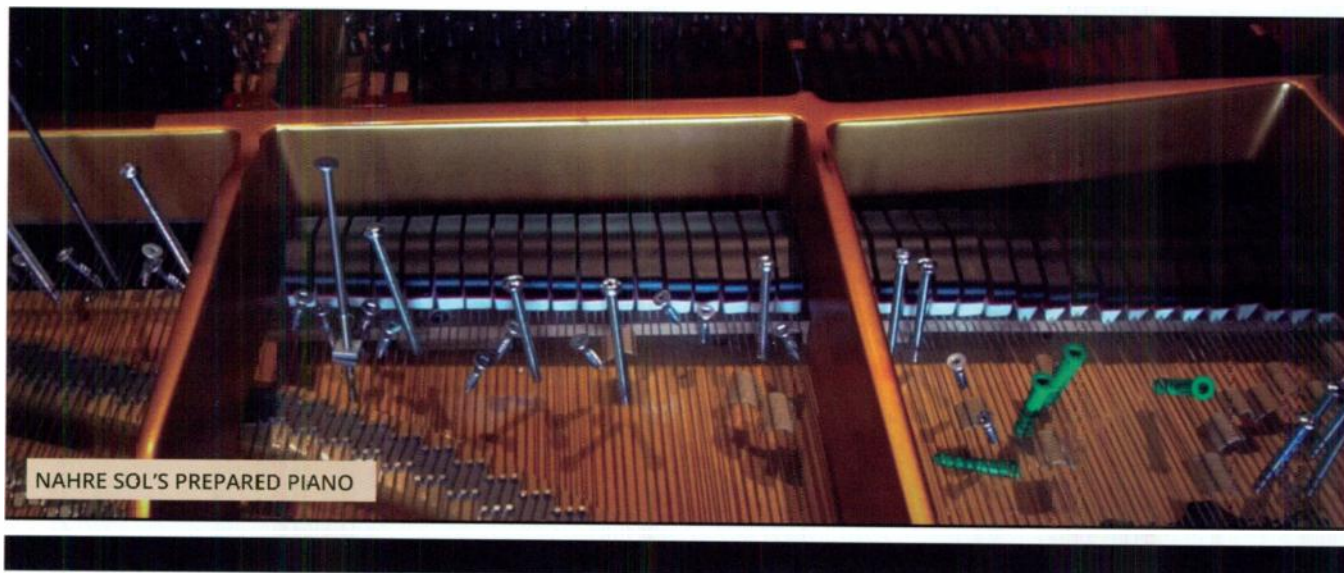
What treatments can be applied are only limited by imagination, and the need to avoid permanently damaging the instrument. That was the case with preparations used by John Cage (1912-1992), who's widely credited with inventing the technique for his 1940 composition, "Bacchanale." Cage, however, cited Henry Cowell (1897-1965) as his inspiration. Since then, there have been many who have expanded on Cage's techniques – and there's no guarantee such things weren't done before Cage's work — who knows what the composers of yore got up to during or following gigs after they had a few flagons of ale or mead into them?

While that's a mystery, we do know what drove Cage's choice for his initial preparations. At the time he was working as an accompanist for modern dance classes at the Cornish School in Seattle and was asked by a dancer, Sylvia Fort, to write music for her performance. Cage wanted to compose mu-

sic that incorporated percussion instruments, but with limited room on stage to accommodate both the dance and the musical performance, he was forced to stick to a piano. Rather than let that stand in the way, Cage went to town; allegedly altering the piano's sound by placing a pie plate on the strings before moving on to nails, screws, and bolts, among other things.

Initially, in composition, he hoped to be able to repeat the works he created (or have others do so). But, as Cage wrote in the foreword of Richard Bunker's 1973 book, *The Well-Prepared Piano*, he came to understand that: "As the music left my home and went from piano to piano and from pianist to pianist, it became clear that not only are two pianists essentially different from one another, but two pianos are not the same either. Instead of the possibility of repetition, we are faced in life with the unique qualities and characteristics of each occasion."

There's no better way to illustrate those unique qualities than by speaking with two contemporary



composers who – although their approaches to prepared piano differ – are united in the enjoyment and inspiration they find in this, admittedly, esoteric approach to the piano.

First up, Nahre Sol, who performs, composes, and teaches an eclectic mixture of music that incorporates improvisation, avant-garde, and traditional Western forms, jazz, and minimalism. Although hailing from the U.S., Sol has a connection to Canada, having studied at The Glenn Gould School of The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, written four works commissioned by the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra for their 2021 Spring and Summer Festival, and recorded her debut record, *Alice in Wonderland*, in Toronto — which features one work aptly titled “Caged” for prepared piano.

Initially, Sol intended to record at Toronto’s Revolution Recording, but she explains: “I ended up recording it myself. Because this was at the peak (of COVID), everything was closed down. There’s this very generous family that supported my studies in Canada and they have a space that houses a Fazioli concert grand in pristine condition. It was a learning experience for me, [but] I think in some capacity every musician should know a bit about how to record and engineer their own projects.”

CM: Do you have a preference of pianos?

Nahre Sol: I do and I don’t. I’ve been conditioned to deal with any piano – that’s part of the job description of being a pianist, but I love Shull pianos and have a history of practicing on various Schimmel pianos. My favourite piano, if I decided to own one, is a Steinway B, but my favourite piano I’ve played on is the Yamaha CFX. I’ve been able to use a lot of Yamaha keyboards, like the CP88 and

YC88. I also have a Nord Piano 3 and have owned a Kawai digital piano. And I use plenty of software sounds as well. I’ve been using Logic for a while and recently Cubase. Depending on the task, I’ll still use both, but I worked in Logic for my record.

CM: Did you record “Caged,” the prepared piano track, on the Fazioli?

Sol: No. That’s the only track not recorded on the Fazioli, and that I didn’t record myself. I did broach the idea with them because I had other pieces for prepared piano I wanted to record, but they weren’t comfortable with me sticking things in the piano, which I understand because things can go south.

CM: If you don’t know what you’re doing?

Sol: Exactly.

CM: With that in mind, if someone wanted to go down this path as a player/composer, what do you suggest in terms of first steps?

Sol: I’d encourage them not to do it alone; to either find someone that has experience preparing pianos or a piano technician. That’s what I did. I knew a really good technician in Toronto named Damon Grove. It’s not every day that he does a preparation like this, so I remember him hesitating in a few places, but he knows what he’s doing and guided me through it. I wouldn’t attempt this just by watching a video, which I made very clear in my own video – *don’t do this at home*. But if you don’t have anyone around, and if it’s your piano, you have the right

to do whatever you want. When you do know the basics, it's not that invasive.

CM: How did you get into prepared piano?

Sol: My first introduction was John Cage's music. He's written so much for prepared piano. I was introduced to it in music history/piano repertoire class in the early 2010s. But in the class, you move through different bits of music history (quickly) and it didn't appeal to me then.

CM: So, what tipped you over the edge?

Sol: Formally studying Cage's sonatas and interludes, which piqued my interest... It was at a time where, compositionally speaking, I was interested in writing for percussion instruments. But, because of the practical aspects of preparing a piano, it's not something that you do every day. When I started to do it myself, play a prepared piano, and experienced it firsthand, [I felt] there was something invigorating and interesting about it from the listener's perspective.

CM: What about from a player's perspective?

Sol: The thing that fascinated me at first is that it disconnects the muscle memory of you playing certain notes and being used to hearing certain pitches. I was preparing the piano the way John Cage did and performing his sonatas and interludes. What I wanted to do was write a set of pieces using the same preparation. With that preparation, you lose the essence of the piano aside from a few notes and

pitches, so when you're playing it, the sound is dramatically different. At first, I was practicing those pieces on a regular piano but when I started playing the prepared piano, it took a while to get used to it because I wasn't expecting that sound, even though I've heard recordings. But each recording will be different depending on the material that you use and the piano, so that brings spontaneity to the table. You'll react and respond in different ways. Then I switched to experimenting with improvisation and writing for prepared piano, which was a completely different thing again. It detaches that connection I have – in a tactile sense – with what I'm playing versus what I'm hearing. So, it's like a new, different instrument.

CM: In terms of preparations, how did you move forward and innovate as you've composed over time?

Sol: I mostly use rubber and silicone, wood, and copper. I prefer the blend of those sounds with the timbre of the actual piano. I think it's just exploring what I preferred, but I'm also very practical. I recognize that if I write something with 20 different elaborate sets of materials, chances are I'm not going to want to play that piece in performance. And, as a composer, it will be much harder to show someone else how to do it should they want to play the piece. So, the preparations I've chosen are minimal and easy to put in place. I've experimented with erasers, rubber bands, wooden shims, but the material I love the most is strips of a silicone baking mat. It's the most reliable sound on different pianos and it's sturdy and stays in place because it's firm but flexible.

NAHRE SOL'S RECORDING SETUP FOR *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*

Interface: Universal Audio Apollo x4

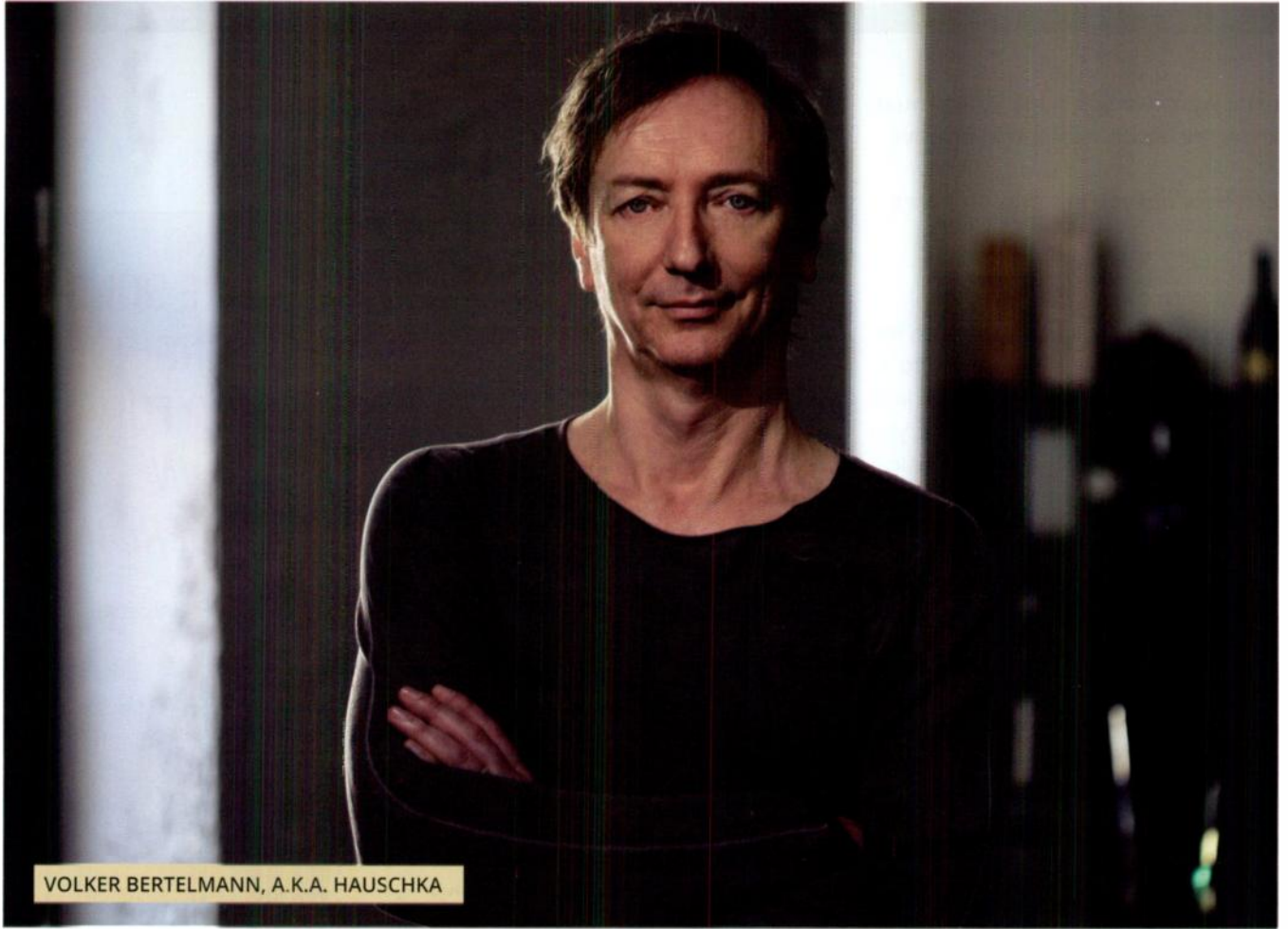
Microphones: Soyuz 013 FET small-diaphragm condenser microphone & DPA 4006A omnidirectional mic

Laptop: Apple MacBook Pro 13-in. (2015)

DAW: Logic Pro X

Digital readers, for a closer look at Nahre Sol's recording process, watch her video.





VOLKER BERTELMANN, A.K.A. HAUSCHKA

Sol's favourite sounds are "muted, hollow percussive sounds that almost sounds like a hand drum" and resonant sounds achieved by "using a screw or a piece of rubber wedged between the strings in a specific way that make the note last twice as long." She adds that, more often than not, it's John Cage's work that serves as most people's introduction to prepared piano, but cautions that although Cage's instructions are very precise, having a skilled piano technician on-hand will go a long way to avoiding any mistakes that could damage the instrument.

Another issue, she notes, and one too many pianists tend to ignore, is the damage caused by touching the strings themselves. This can transfer oil, dirt, and so forth, which can be more destructive than properly preparing a piano.

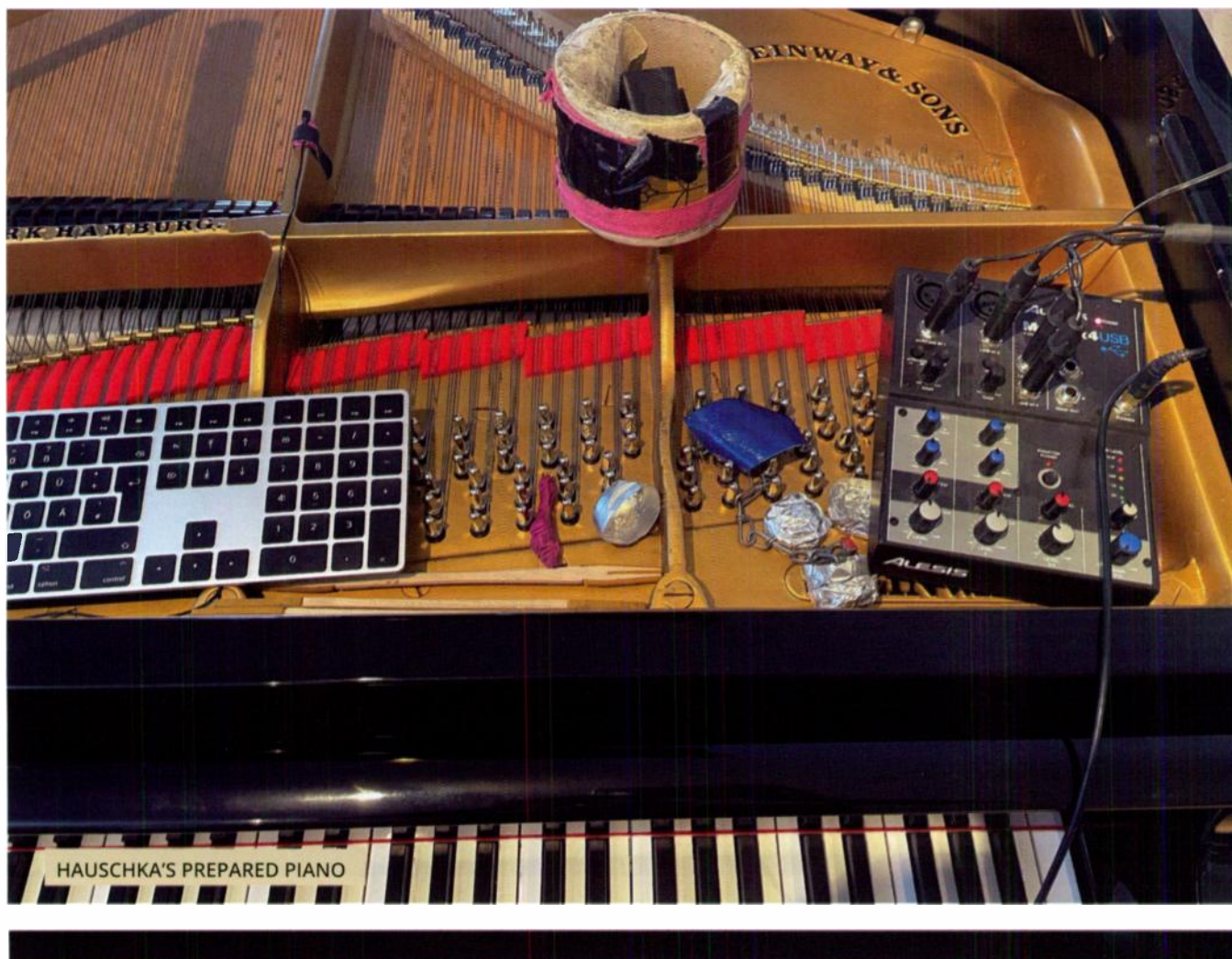
All that said – as Sol mentioned earlier – if it's your piano, you can do whatever you like, which is something German composer Volker Bertelmann (a.k.a. Hauschka) embraces wholeheartedly.

Hauschka has a lengthy history with prepared piano.

While he's perhaps best known for that type of work, however, he's also an Oscar-nominated composer, producer, and pianist, who scores films and television and works, both alone and in partnership, with a wide variety of artists and ensembles.

Classically trained, from the age of 12 Hauschka played keyboards in various bands and recalls beginning his prepared piano experimentations (employing a Tack Piano technique to achieve a harpsichord-like sound) after a tour when he found himself without access to a synthesizer; something he did, he adds, "just to have a second sound."

While he's always dedicated himself to expanding his compositional and playing palette – by dabbling in electronic music as a solo artist, for example – prepared piano has helped him "find his place as a musician and a human," and, as he puts it, "slowly transform into somebody... that wanted to create 'electronic music' without technology." Having said that, he's equally fascinated by blending those types of treatments with technology to



expand his palette, on stage and in the studio.

Hauschka's preparations range widely and include the use of EBows, the previously mentioned Tic Tacs attached to the strings using duct tape, ping pong balls, and a variety of other treatments, as well as loop stations and FX pedals.

He talks about how "the sound of a piano can flow" and about finding ways to regulate and mix the sound of the prepared piano alone with the looped and/or effected signal while he's playing, which can be challenging to do "without losing the continuity of the piece."

Citing a preference for the Boss RC-50 Loop Station, which offers greater possibilities because of a dedicated MIDI output, the capability to record multiple tracks, and the ability to separate and individually control the level of the loop – and/or effected signal – as well as the direct signal from the piano. "I have to always have the real, direct signal in there, but I need separation as well; the piano (sound) by itself, and the loop signal by itself."

When it comes to preparing pianos, he says: "Everybody has their own focus and style. Some are connected more with John Cage so they may want to make it so that you can notate everything very precisely." But because every piano, and indeed every player, is different: "The notation may fail even though you measure everything correctly. It's a little bit like Bach, who wrote for an orchestra that is not our orchestra. The orchestra at that time sounded completely different. It's beautiful now, but it's morphed into something new."

CM: Much like the piano has over time?

Hauschka: Absolutely.

CM: From what I've seen, you're not just preparing a piano and recording with just mics in the room, you're mixing a variety of sounds using multiple microphones and sound sources – can you take me through your setup?



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HAUSCHKA LIVE WITH HIS PREPARED PIANO

Hauschka: At home in my studio I have a grand piano and an upright piano; each mic'd up with six microphones. I have Neumann [KM 85s] and M 49s, and some Royer [R-121 ribbon] mics [in a stereo pair] for the grand piano, but I also have some DPA microphones that are very close to the strings. The DPAs are going into a mixing desk that is next to my piano and that routes the piano into a loop station and different pedals that are chained together, so I can feed, for example, the distortion pedal into a reverb into a delay and loop that, as well, if I want to. When I play live, I have 12 microphones on the piano and I need somebody to control the sound. I remember one gig where the preparations were exploding out of the piano because the bass

was resonating so much. At home that's never a problem because I can work in headphones. But transporting that to a live situation is a beast because, say, you want to have a huge bass drum sound like a [rock] band, that can feed back into all the mics you have open on the piano.

CM: It's as if you're building a large acoustic synthesizer?

Hauschka: Exactly. The piano is my oscillator, and if I want to have the pure piano sound on top of everything, it's totally fine, but it can also happen that you don't hear anything that's a typical piano sound. You hear, like, a weird band with detuned elements, or percussion elements that sound a bit robotic. I'm a big fan of imperfections, so it

can be very groovy, but it can also be more like a sound collage.

CM: For someone who wants to undertake this, but not necessarily from the John Cage perspective – more along the lines of your approach – how would you suggest they start?

Hauschka: Let's say you don't want to use a real or digital hi-hat. Well, [ask yourself] how can I create that? How can I work with sounds that are, in a way, doing the same thing, but sound special or specific? So, maybe you take a light filter [gel] from a stage light and put that between the hammer and the string to give you a sound like a hi-hat. That's just one example of how you can start finding single sounds that are

different. From there you can extend the whole thing and, if you're interested, explore the limitless possibilities that a piano [provides] in terms of drums, percussion, and even string sounds, because you can bow the piano strings to make it sound like a detuned string ensemble.

Like Sol, Hauschka also calls attention to the potential damage preparations can result in if you're not careful. "That's definitely a danger. You won't be invited the second time if you go into a place and destroy the piano."

That said, just because something appears invasive, doesn't mean it's harmful. As an example, Hauschka says: "A lot of times I use a contact microphone between the hammers and the strings on a grand piano because the hammer hits the string from below, so if you put that underneath the string, the hammer hits that, and when you EQ everything properly, you have an 808 bass drum. I mostly use the lowest A key for that. Now, if you show that to a piano tuner or someone from a classical piano house they may get freaked out. But if you show them how it works and explain that you're careful with the pressure and not hammering it down hard, well, some will be fine with it, and some of them won't. With my own piano, of course, I can do whatever I like. And, you know, inventing things always means you have to take some risks."

Since early prepared piano works like Cage's were composed, the techniques and preparations for prepared piano have dramatically evolved to encompass different materials and different instruments. Among them: the Acoustisizer (an electro-acoustic instrument that is actually a small grand piano into which have been placed built-

in speakers, guitar pickups, PZM mics, and prepared piano elements created by Bob Fenger in 1983); the electromagnetically prepared piano (essentially a blend of a traditionally prepared acoustic piano and a synthesizer); as well as various software applications and sample libraries, including IRCAM's Prepared Piano/ Showcase: Preparation Techniques, Big Fish Audio's John Cage Prepared Piano sample library, and a mobile app available on John Cage's site.

While prepared piano is a somewhat esoteric approach to achieving sounds that, admittedly, can be more easily generated using samples and/or synthesis, the way you approach an instrument, your technique, and frankly what you're inspired to play, differs from instrument to instrument – say, a vintage electro-acoustic instrument vs. a digital recreation of that vs. an acoustic piano. The same is true with a prepared piano, something purely analog and intensely physical that's uniquely compelling. Prepared piano is all about revisiting and redefining how we interact with the instrument, which is perhaps something we take for granted given how much we're able to achieve with digital recreations of instruments.

In Hauschka's experience the result was: "A playfulness in my playing. I felt so excited about finding sounds and working with obstacles in the strings. Sometimes you have to play very hard to get the full resonance of a tone, which you wouldn't do with a normal piano.... In a way, the technique changes, but also your skills are changing. Everything is in flow, which was something I was always looking for because I was, in a way, caught in my own habits."

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

HAUSCHKA'S MOST USED GEAR

Mixing Desk

- Studer 961

Monitors

- ATC SCM25

Pianos

- Steinway B grand piano
- Zimmermann Z1 upright piano

Mics for Piano

- Neumann M 49 stereo pair
- Royer R-121 ribbon stereo pair
- Neumann KM 85 stereo pair
- DPA 4099s (to feed the effects pedal)

Effects

- Boss RC-300 Loop Station
- Eventide Space
- Eventide TimeFactor
- Erica Synth Zen Delay
- Hologram Electronics Microcosm & Infinite Jets
- Red Panda Particle

Synths

- Sequential Prophet-5
- Korg PS-3100
- Erica Synth Syntrix
- Grp Synthesizer A4
- Tasty Chips GR-1
- Roland Jupiter-4
- Soma Pulsar-23
- Soma Lyra-8
- Make Noise Black & Gold Shared System

8 (More) Ideas for Creativity & Resilience

By Kerlie McDowall

Do you feel stuck from not performing as often? If you are a prolific musician who likes to constantly create, record, and perform, COVID-19 may have thrown a curveball at you. Dwindling finances may be negatively affecting your desire to play your instrument and create. Lately, your self-care practices may have been getting second priority. You already know that creativity – and making time for it – is necessary for your best mental health as a performing artist. So, how can a creative artist stay resilient?

In the July/August 2021 issue, I shared seven ideas to help give you a boost. Those were: 1) Staying stable; 2) a creative holiday; 3) remaining present; 4) connecting with your natural environment; 5) enjoy your favourite things; 6) brainstorming; and 7) journaling. Here are my final eight tips...

8. A Healthy Lifestyle

Wellness and centredness should focus on maximizing emotional, spiritual, and physical health; including exercise, maximized sleep (8-10 hours), rest time, balanced nutrition, immune support, and focusing on activities that bring you joy.

Crucial to your health and immune support are sufficient nutrients from a well-balanced diet, which may require vitamin supplementation. Vitamins for the immune system to consider include vitamin C, zinc, magnesium, selenium, vitamin D, and B vitamins like B-100 and B-12 for stress. Other herbs like echinacea are known to provide immune support. Staying up-to-date on developments in the news and following reputable natural health experts can inform your preventative health options.

9. Goal-Setting with a Vision Board

When considering going forward into the future, it's a great idea to create a vision board. What is it? It's a visual art project made from cutouts of your favorite magazines, text, photos, and images on canvas. The vision board placed strategically in your home based on Feng Shui can assist you with goal-setting for both home, spiritual, physical, financial, relationship, and family goals going forward. Setting an intention and visualizing positively in this way works self-actualization magic. You will be surprised at what you can dream into your life.

10. Exploring Silence

Meeting John Cage at Darmstadt, I realized there is no such thing as silence. Even the barren Canadian Arctic is immersed in sound. Great artists like Cage (his infamous "4:33"), and Miles Davis (check out the 1964 Philharmonic Hall performance of "Stella by Starlight") have emphasized the crucial importance of considering the silence in a musical phrase or when considering form within composition/improvisation.

Give yourself space and power to reflect and experiment with the silence within the rhythmic structures of your musical work and how you are using it in your writing. This is a handy compositional exercise that can generate productive new ideas.

Meditation is helpful for mindfulness practice and stress relief. Deep breathing exercises, yoga, and visualization techniques can be powerful rejuvenators.

11. Peer Inspiration

The creative world has limitless potential. One idea or pursuit can lead to another or a new sonic adventure. The exploratory soundscapes and creations from recording artists during COVID-19 show us how much we truly need and value creative artists who help keep us inspired and thinking forward. Learning from your music mentors and peers can be a constant source of happy inspiration and motivation.

12. Borrowing from other Art Forms

Generating fresh creative processes can be a fun, ceaseless exploration for some artists. In a past interview, one of the globe's most interesting creative artists, France's Benoît Delbecq, explained that he experiments with French and English literature or poetry (Spanish and German, too), fusing it with rhythmic techniques on his piano to generate fresh music phrasing ideas. As Delbecq demonstrates, the possibilities for generating ideas can be drawn from other artistic mediums, which for Delbecq is also architecture. Other musicians are inspired to push extended music notation fusing it with the visual arts or writing for multi-media with their creations. Additionally, the best artists never shy away from collaboration.

13. Technology

Have you heard of JackTrip? Brand new technologies are assisting musicians with live music-making and collaborating online. Recordings are still taking place despite COVID-19. A technology like JackTrip that solves the audio latency issues online should be placed on every future Microsoft or Apple computer at this point, don't you think?

14. A Positive Mindset

A hopeful person should never say that something is impossible to realize. Ever-changing circumstances always evolve, permitting possibilities and exploration.

A combination of staying true-to-your-vision and embracing new possibilities seems like a winning combination during a pandemic. Staying positive with "gratitude journaling" will help emphasize and define the beauty in your life. This may be a new time of self-development for you. It may be time to re-imagine and make financial and creative plans for your next steps.

15. Re-invention

For the musician, re-invention is a continuous process. Do not get discouraged due to COVID-19. Resilience means staying flexible, brave, and creative.

Know a producer? A solo or multi-tracking project may be a great future plan or the re-releasing of your special past recordings. Many are considering self-realization strategies at this new stage of re-invention.

Kerlie McDowall is a British Columbia-based music writer and publicist and also a former professional jazz guitarist, instructor, and composer. She also coaches artists, teaches guitar, and is a Polaris Music Prize juror. Contact Kerlie at kerliemcdowall@gmail.com.



The Concept of an Album

Turning a creative assignment into an adventure

By Kaleb Hikele

The art of making an album is one of the most freeing adventures — there are no rules. You can record a handful of songs in one room over a short period, or songs can travel through time and space by visiting different studios with years and miles between. As far as the number of songs, the duration, the genre, there are no guidelines. The full-length album is an artform in itself.

As I write this, it's the first time in 12 years that I am not actively working on a concept album. I'm free from the shackles of my own personal assignments, ready to continue creating with experience in tow. I may never make an album with such grand concepts again, but my *Winter* and *Coast to Coast* albums as The Sun Harmonic simply had to become what they are. There's a lot to gain from making records, for myself that meant devoting my entire twenties to two overlapping (and never-ending) projects. Call it passion or stubbornness, in the end you can accomplish more than a new album by staying true to your dreams (i.e. travelling all the way across Canada to record an album from coast to coast).

I've learned that an inspiring concept helps drive you to create an album with unexpected results. Even if the idea doesn't go as planned, it will likely be more beautiful than you ever imagined. Embrace mistakes and derailments of the project along the way! Meet your dreams at the finish line, and orchestrate a complete body of work that tells your story from the heart.

You will hear people say the album format is dead or outdated, but that's not true for everyone. You're still allowed to indulge in an album in its entirety, to listen from front to back on vinyl, or hit the shuffle button on Spotify. Neither format is right or wrong, technology will suggest one playback medium is superior to the other, but convenience serves a purpose in the way we listen to music today. The full-

length album is an invitation to choose your own adventure.

Whatever genre you're creating, approach the album with a jazz musician's mindset: improvise! If you make a mistake, don't stop playing. Find your way back and take control, just like you would at a live show.

Remember, your idea can adapt! Circumstance, magic, tragedy, roadblocks — they're all a healthy part of the creative process and not meant to be a deterrent. Mistakes and compromises can produce beautiful results. Momentary frustrations can become something that, in hindsight, was meant to be. Technical difficulties may force you to relocate and land in front of the perfect ribbon microphone at a completely different studio (hey, it happened to me).

Set your own parameters that will interfere and in turn inspire you creatively. An important lesson is to fulfill your ideas, no matter the cost. If you plan to spend months on a project and instead it takes years, accept the passing of time as a way to infuse the art with your experience. Will your song sound better when it's recorded as a 31-year-old than when you wrote it at 20-something?

One of the hardest things to do is to stick to the ambitious concept and vision behind an album. Any artist can lose sight along the way — you may lose interest in the songs, rework them endlessly, or external life gets too heavy. Throughout the album-making process you may face trauma, your own faults and fears, injury or heartache, all bookended by moments of pure beauty and reflection. Face it head-on and look ahead. Life as a musician is spent wading through time, practicing patience until you're in front of the microphone once more.

Personally, I never dreamt that I'd be finishing my album on my days off as an essential worker during frigid winter lockdowns from a global pandemic. There were moments where, in minus-25-degrees, I turned off the heat in the

delivery van just so I could listen clearly to my final mixes and make mental notes on the road. The exterior stress and creative fire were more than enough inspiration to distill the album. Sometimes, the payoff is the experience rather than any measurable payback.

So, don't allow the lesser aspects of life steer you away from making music. Invite chaos and make sense of it. The world will keep turning whether or not we create our art, but it is undoubtedly a more beautiful place by doing so.

I want to thank Michael Raine, *Canadian Musician's* editor-in-chief, who first spoke with me about my cross-country album on the *Canadian Musician Podcast* (listen to the July 21, 2021 episode). I've been reading this magazine since I was a small-town high school musician with a guitar and only a few songs, so it's an honour to write this column and appear in this issue.



Kaleb Hikele is a singer-songwriter from St. Thomas, ON and based in Toronto's east end. *Coast to Coast*, his fifth Sun Harmonic studio album, is available now on vinyl (streaming Oct. 1, 2021). Kaleb has operated The Townhouse Recording Facility & Sound Studio in Riverdale since 2009, producing dozens of albums for Moon Melody in the early 2010s and focusing now on his output as The Sun Harmonic. Follow @thesunharmonic. www.thesunharmonic.com.

Creating Dynamics with the Bass

By Hal Rodriguez

Bass players control the level of energy in a song at any given moment. A guitar riff only gets heavy when the bassist comes in playing it in unison. If the bass drops out, the riff loses its momentum and impact. Conversely, an otherwise sleepy verse can sound like it's growing in momentum or building suspense when the bassline switches from playing whole notes to eighth notes. These are just two examples of how a bassist can greatly influence the dynamics of a song. If you're ever stuck in a rut with one of your songs and are wondering how to make it more exciting, take a closer look at your bass parts. In this column, I offer some simple strategies with examples for creating basslines that will make your songs more dynamic.

1. Save the low end and eighth notes for the chorus

Listen to James Jamerson's bassline in the Motown hit, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." You'll notice that when the song starts, he plays in the higher registers of the bass with mostly sustained notes. This helps to give the intro a relaxed feeling. As the song begins to pick up speed nine bars in, Jamerson continues to play the same line but busier, with just a few more eighth notes thrown in to create a sense of growing momentum. Finally, when the chorus hits, he starts playing in the lowest register of the bass with plenty of eighth notes. Saving the lowest notes for the chorus makes it sound bigger and contributes to its sense of lift, which is important in making the chorus sound climactic. The busier eighth notes also helps to make the hook feel exciting as there's more going on musically.

2. Play melodically during slower sections

If the rest of the band is playing sparser and more relaxed during the verses, playing root notes and whole notes will work, but could also make those sections sound a little boring. If that's the case, take this opportunity to come up with a bassline that is melodic to keep those sections interest-

ing. Have a listen to John Paul Jones' bassline in Led Zeppelin's "What Is and What Should Never Be." In the quieter, mellow verses, Jones plays a bassline so melodic you can sing it. This creates more movement and keeps the listener interested during slower sections of the song while they wait for the hook.

3. Do the opposite of what's expected

Sometimes, a tune needs the element of surprise to take on new life. You can do the opposite of my first suggestion and instead of getting busier during the chorus, play less. Take a listen to "Give It Away Now" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers and notice that Flea plays fewer notes during the chorus than the verse, opting to mostly accent the first beat of every bar and resting on the other downbeats. By dropping out unexpectedly, the chorus sounds starkly empty and the listener's attention is immediately drawn to the lead vocal. This is another good strategy that helps the hook jump out more.

4. When in doubt, lay out

Don't be afraid of laying out completely for entire sections of a song. Listen to Free's "All Right Now" and you'll notice that Andy Fraser doesn't play at all during the verses. This just makes his bassline in the guitar solo section stand out dramatically when he unleashes eighth notes and sixteenth notes to contrast all the space he left earlier. There's also a famous story of Prince listening to his mix of "When Doves Cry" in the studio and being unhappy about the way it sounded until he removed the bass entirely from the song. Experiment with silence and find ways to use it creatively!

5. Avoid doubling the guitar riff

Although playing the guitar player's riff in unison is a good formula for making a riff sound heavier, like in Black Sabbath's "Iron Man," you can create a different effect by avoiding this common formula. Take a listen to "Smoke on the Water" by Deep Purple and you'll notice that Roger Glover

avoids playing along with the famous guitar riff. Instead, he chooses to play a continuous stream of eighth notes using mostly root notes. This creates a feeling of propulsion and suspense under the guitar riff that leaves the listener hanging on in anticipation of the chorus.

Summary

The low-end frequency of the bass and its function as both a harmonic and rhythmic instrument make it a powerful tool for sculpting peaks and valleys in your songs. These dynamics are important in determining how the listener experiences your music - whether they feel that the song is interesting enough to stay invested in and if the chorus is climactic or not. The next time you hear a song that takes you on an emotional ride, pay close attention to the bass player and try to figure out how they are helping to create that dynamic experience for you.



Hal Rodriguez is a singer, songwriter, guitarist, bassist, and freelance transcriber. You can view his transcriptions on Instagram @jazzscribe. Contact him at halromusic@gmail.com.

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


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Eliminate Impostor Syndrome

One Solid Way to High-Kick Your Inner Critic to the Curb

By Mike Schwartz

“You can’t release that track. It’s just not good enough. You’re not going to book any shows just yet. You’re just not ready.” You sing at your friend’s wedding, everyone loves it and they come up and tell you how great you are and you react with “Oh, no... I missed three notes in the second chorus. I could’ve been better.” Does this sound like you?

What if there was a way to feel like a rockstar both on and off the stage? This is what many of us do for a living, yet it’s super common to hear how small and inadequate we all feel. Is there a way to get out of that cycle? Heck yes there is, and to start to answer that we got to look inside.

What is impostor syndrome?

We’ve all been there, right? Voice cracks on the chorus, we play a wrong note in the solo, we drop sticks on the count in... no one even notices. They say “you were great!” But you know. Why are they lying to you?

That evil inner voice gets up and whispers not-so-sweet-nothings in your ear. You start questioning everything. Why would people pay to see such a hack? Why are you even playing music? Impostor syndrome is this irrational fear of not being good enough and it’s running rampant amongst us artists as we all slowly wake from this lockdown slumber.

But who cares?

A continual feeling of inadequacy can lead to more serious mental health illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. You may quit the band or you may even quit music altogether, like I did in 2013 (I’ve since returned, better than ever after having addressed my mental illness and many more behavioural phenomena). Most likely if you fail to address it, you’ll feel stuck, sad, and resentful when you think about music; the thing that once filled your heart with joy. Don’t you put that evil on you!

I changed my life forever and now I pay it forward by creating rockstars with The Music Fit Method. The number one thing artists come to me for is their feeling of inadequacy and their lack of confidence. Ironically, the more fame and notoriety an individual has, the more inadequate they feel. This impostor syndrome often stems from deep, family traumas that I help them heal through the magic of language. Regarding impostor syndrome, one piece of conflict language known as “soft talk” plays a vital role and it’s tricky as all heck because it’s so ingrained in western, English-speaking culture.

You’re 10-ply, bud.

Say this out loud: “I think I’ll try to make it to the show maybe around nine-ish or something.”

How do you feel when you read that back? What sensations come up in your body? On the Spinal Tap scale of 1-11, how intense is that feeling? For many people, it’s a feeling of uncertainty, doubt, mistrust, etc. Super soft, right? Like 10-ply toilet paper. And it all stems from words such as kinda, maybe, sorta, ish, like, think, and perhaps. Now, try this: “I’ll be there by 9:07 p.m. tonight.” Anything changed?

How many times have you heard something like that first line from a friend you invite to a show? Is that friend likely to make it? Heck no. They soften it up so as not to hurt your feelings. I mean, they’ve got good intentions, but they’ve actually created a scenario of mistrust and confusion. The second, “solid” translation affirms trust and confidence that they’re going to be there.

What if the way we do one thing is the way we do many? If your language is indecisive and lacking confidence, what could that mean about your self-worth?

If you’re using soft talk in your day-to-day, imagine what repeating this language for years has done to your subconscious mind. Is it any wonder you doubt your ability? You spent 10, 15, 20-some years ingrain it into permanence. Your words create a story. That story creates your reality.

Here’s the cool thing. Language is learned, right? Anything you learn, you can unlearn. Here’s how to unlearn soft talk and solidify your life with more of what you want and high kick that impostor to the curb once and for all!

Slow down & breathe!

Slow down when you are speaking. We often use soft language as a placeholder when we’re on autopilot. Dial your rate of speech back 30% and watch what happens when you give yourself time to think before you speak. Once you start slowing down, you’ll catch yourself using the “maybes, kindas, and ishes” on the regular. Slow down and eliminate those soft words. You’ll build your own confidence subconsciously. When you do that, you’ll also build the confidence others have in you by simply being intentional and decisive with your words. Leave the 10-ply in the washroom, bud. It’s crap.



Mike Schwartz is an artist-first Fitness Professional and the creator of The Music Fit Method. If you want to learn more about The Music Fit Method and radically change your life forever, reach out and book a complementary Focus session. Head to www.musicfitcollective.com.



MILESTONES AND MAGIC MOMENTS

In 1989 Harris Institute opened in a 1,800 sq.ft. building at 296 King Street East in Toronto. In 1994 it relocated to a 15,000 sq.ft. industrial building designed in 1908 by Massey Hall's architect George M. Miller at 118 Sherbourne Street. Since 1989 international students have come from 142 countries. The college has delivered innovative educational programs with partners including University of the West of Scotland, Moscow International Film School, Edinburgh Napier University, the International Fund for Ireland and Nashville's ProMedia Training Centre.

For a 7th consecutive year Harris Institute ranked 'best school of it's kind' in the 2020 'Media Arts Education Report'. It was the only school in Billboard's 'Top 11 Schools' from outside of the United States. In 2004 the first Harris grads earned degrees at the University of the West of Scotland with tuition waivers. Since then over 220 Harris and UWS students have benefited from the unique partnership.

The college has the highest percentage of award winning faculty of any school with over 50% having won awards for what they teach. The faculty working together for a common goal was the inspiration for the proposal to create Metronome, the world's first 'music city' on Toronto's waterfront.

In 2015 Harris Institute became the first school to introduce a comprehensive policy ensuring 'free speech and the open exchange of ideas'. It is the only post secondary school in North America to have achieved five 0% Student Loan Default Rates and a 90.91% 'Employment Rate in The Field of Study'.

Students in the Arts Management Program have operated Confidential Records since 1997. It has donated the proceeds from over 100 album releases and showcase events to nine charities and non-profits. Harris alumni have won over 450 music, film and television awards. In 2018, Harris Institute's founder was awarded the Cashbox Canada Legacy Award for 'Lifetime Contributions to the Canadian Music Industry'.

One-year programs start in November, March and July.

HARRISINSTITUTE.COM



Quilter Labs AJ Ghent 12 Amplifier

Quilter Labs has released the AJ Ghent signature edition amplifier, which features the power of the Quilter Tone Block 202 overlaid on the Celestion Copperback speaker and with tilt legs for stage and performance monitoring/recording.

The AJ Ghent 12 features: Overdrive 202; a BlockDock 12 cabinet with a Celestion Copperback speaker; laser-engraved tilt-back legs and badge; XLR and headphone output; a second overdrive channel with independent level control; and onboard limiter, digital reverb, and three band EQ.

AJ Ghent, a famed lap steel player, says the signature amp offers his ideal combination of tone and sustainability. From clean to dirty, the combination of the Overdrive 202 and cab delivers the vocal-like sound Ghent is known for.

For more information, contact SFM: 800-363-8855, info@sfm.ca, www.sfm.ca.

Gretsch Black Nickel Over Steel Snare Drum

Gretsch Drums has extended its Full Range snare drum collection with the addition of the 5x14-in. Black Nickel over Steel snare drum (BNS).

The new snare is a shallower version of the affordable 6.5x14-in. BNS. Like its larger sibling, it's designed to provide a balance of power, sensitivity, beauty, and value in one snare drum. The 1.2-mm, 10-lug steel shell has a wide tuning range; from a loose, slow, dry sound to a very sharp, bold, and bright attack. It features 2.5-mm triple flanged hoops, an adjustable throw-off, 20-strand snare wire, Remo Control sound drum heads, 45-degree bearing edges, and a mirror-like black nickel plating as a metallic finish.

The company says this versatile drum is ideal for live or studio playing with a crisp, bright tone that will complement a range of drumming styles and genres.

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



Epiphone Alex Lifeson Les Paul Standard Access Electric Guitar

Epiphone has teamed up with Rush's legendary guitarist to create the Alex Lifeson Epiphone Les Paul Standard Access electric guitar.

The exclusive Alex Lifeson Les Paul Standard Access is the result of extensive collaboration between Lifeson and Gibson. The guitar includes a pair of Epiphone pickups - the ProBucker3 bridge pickup and the Ceramic Pro neck pickup. It also includes coil splitting options via the push-pull volume controls and a Graph Tech Ghost Floyd Rose system. Together these features give the player access to both traditional magnetic humbucker tones as well as the Ghost's realistic acoustic tones. For added flexibility, guitarists can blend acoustic and magnetic voices to create a rich layered sound and then route them through either a traditional mono jack or use two cables to access the individual magnetic and piezo outputs.

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





Cort Artisan C5 Plus OVMH & C4 Plus OVMH Basses

Cort Guitars has introduced the five-string Artisan C5 Plus OVMH and four-string C4 Plus OVMH. Representing the evolution of Cort's Artisan C4 Plus, both the Artisan C5 Plus OVMH and C4 Plus OVMH deliver a more familiar, rounder body shape that was previously only available on the company's premium Artisan A models.

The new basses also offer a new MetalCraft M bridge, and an ovangkol top in an antique brown-burst colour. The Artisan C5 Plus OVMH bass follows the tradition of Cort's Artisan Series, offering high-end workmanship with a unique body made from an ovangkol top, mahogany wings, and maple core. These tonewoods deliver a blend of balanced tone, with Ovangkol sharing similar characteristics as rosewood and bubinga, with a slightly fuller midrange and a top-end that's not as bright sounding, while the strategically-placed maple centre makes up for the missing highs.

The rounder body provides a classic unified look on the traditional bolt-on (34-in. scale), but also delivers ergonomic comfort. The 24-fret Canadian hard maple neck with jatoba fretboard (15.75-in. radius) adds stability and contributes punchiness to the overall tone of the instrument. Black hardware and die-cast tuners put a bold touch on an otherwise natural aesthetic.

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




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HOT GEAR



Gator Singer Mask & French Horn Bell Cover

Gator has released a new singer mask for students and those who are singing near others during the pandemic. The company also launched a French horn bell cover designed for players who use the hand-stopping technique. Like the company's previously-released instrument masks and bell covers, the new products follow recommendations from the National Federation of State High Schools' performing arts aerosol study.

Gator's double-layer French horn bell covers range from 11 to 13 in. in diameter and are made of a reusable, hand-washable lycra fabric with an elastic closure to keep the cover secured to the bell opening while in use. The aerosol-filtering masks for singers include triple-layered protection while keeping space between the mouth and interior front wall of the mask for proper breathing and clear enunciation. All masks are available in various sizes for the right fit.

The instrument bell covers with a pocket for a replaceable MERV 13 filter (included) are made from a breathable, non-woven polypropylene fabric with little-to-no backpressure or acoustic loss during performance. The fabric and the filter are expected to greatly reduce the spread of aerosols. The bell covers are available in multiple sizes ranging from 4-32 in. in diameter to fit various instruments. All the covers feature an elastic closure and cord lock to properly secure them over the bell openings of wind instruments and do not cause any backpressure or acoustic loss during performance.

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

Nugen Focus Elements Plug-in Bundle

Nugen Audio has released the Focus Elements plug-in bundle, which offers a collection of audio tools ideally suited for small/home studios. These budget-friendly, streamlined versions of the brand's Focus bundle plug-ins include Stereoizer, Stereoplacer, and Monofilter.

With the Elements plug-ins, beginner, independent, and at-home producers and mixers have access to the same algorithms used in all Nugen's pro-level software but with a streamlined, straightforward interface.

Stereoizer Elements provides instant stereo enhancement with the assurance of mono compatibility and no unwanted artifacts. Like the traditional Stereoizer software, the Elements plug-in affords users a more coherent sound, with polish and spatial balance, to ensure a mix will sound good in both stereo and mono.

Ideal for restoration projects, Stereoplacer Elements allows users to fix poor recordings, reposition complex audio, and reconstruct the stereo image from a mono source. A bass management solution, Monofilter Elements enables users to sharpen, define, and align the bass into a tight, transparent mix. With features for accurate control, Monofilter Elements helps define the centre of the bass using visual feedback and a user-friendly, tactile interface.

For more information, contact Music Marketing: 416-789-7100, cindy@musicmarketing.ca, www.musicmarketing.ca.



Waves CLA Nx Mixing Plug-In

Waves Audio is now shipping the CLA Nx plug-in, which brings Grammy-winning mixer Chris Lord-Alge's famed Mix LA studio control room to any pair of headphones. After faithfully modeling Lord-Alge's console and classic hardware gear in previous CLA-designated plug-ins, Waves and CLA have teamed up to replicate Lord-Alge's unique Mix LA room acoustics and monitoring system.

Built by the late premier studio designer Vincent Van Hoff, Mix LA has been Chris Lord-Alge's studio since 2008. In this room he has mixed for Bruce Springsteen, Green Day, Muse, and countless other top artists. With the CLA Nx plug-in, his complete monitoring setup is now available over any headphones. This includes the acoustic response of Lord-Alge's NS10-modeled CLA-10 nearfield monitors, coupled with his subwoofer system; his custom-built Ocean Way HR1 farfield speakers, modified to his specs; and the boombox model he relies on to check how his mixes will translate to small-speaker devices.

The CLA Nx plug-in combines Waves Nx spatial audio technology with precise measurements of Mix LA to replicate the acoustic response of the control room inside any set of headphones.

For more information, contact Waves Audio: 865-909-9200, info@waves.com, www.waves.com.



IK Multimedia The Resonator SampleTank Collection

IK Multimedia has released The Resonator, a new SampleTank collection created by sample library specialist Indiginus, which captures the sounds of a traditional stringed instrument.

With a bluesy, folksy, twangy warmth, The Resonator's multiple slide articulations offer realism and are easily controllable with velocity switching and/or key switches, while an auto-harmony function creates more convincing-sounding tracks.



Invented in the 1920s, the resonator guitar quickly became a favorite for blues and bluegrass musicians due to its punchy-yet-warm sound. Played like a traditional guitar with a bottleneck slide, or with raised strings using a metal slide

like a lap steel, The Resonator for SampleTank was sampled using a metal slide for maximum effect, adding unmistakable tone to any musical production. For the most authentic sound, a Hound Dog Dobro resonator guitar was captured using a coincident mic setup. Positioned 8 in. in front of the instrument, a phase-free stereo image was achieved, with results that also work well in mono. The overall sonic effect is upfront and present without any room tone that could muddy up mixes, according to the company.

For more information, contact Hal Leonard: 414-774-3630.
sales@halleonard.com, www.halleonard.com.

Erica Synths Desktop Matrix Mixer

Erica Synths has released its desktop device, the Matrix Mixer.

For Eurorack users, it can be challenging to change a patch radically during a performance, therefore diverse performances often require large systems or end up being extremely experimental. The Matrix Mixer is designed to allowed users to repatch their system with the push of a button.

The Matrix Mixer is a 16 I/O desktop patch matrix that can route and mix signals with high precision, create buffered multiples, and random patches. It can also interface external instruments with a Eurorack system, yet is not limited to Eurorack. The Matrix Mixer can be used with semi-modular synthesizers, as well as through adapter cards with the EMS Synthi and Buchla Music Easel. Thanks to patch changes via panel buttons or MIDI program change messages, the Matrix Mixer is particularly useful in performances that combine Eurorack and other performance instruments, such as drums, guitars, wind instruments, and more.

For more information, go to www.ericasyths.lv.



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HOT GEAR



Focal Clear Mg Professional Headphones

Focal is now shipping the Clear Mg Professional headphones ("Clear Magnesium Professional"), a new model of its Clear Professional headphones but with the addition of a magnesium (Mg) cone for greater dynamics with an improved tonal balance across the full audio spectrum.

The Clear Mg Professional circumaural, open-back headphones are designed for music creators looking for a reliable tool in terms of quality and transfer speed. While the first Clear Professional headphones incorporated 1 5/8-in. full-range speaker drivers with aluminum/magnesium M-shaped inverted domes, the Clear Mg Professional has these same speaker drivers, but in magnesium. After four years of research and development, the engineers at Focal says they have designed this new material to obtain a more optimized combination of the key criteria for speaker drivers of lightness, rigidity, and damping.

Thanks to this new cone, combined with the frameless 1-in.-diameter and 1/4-in.-high copper voice coil, the sound experience is made more precise, delivering detail across the full spectrum while preserving tonal balance. The flexibility of the surround offers lightness, plus more dynamics and impact across the full frequency spectrum. The open grille inside the earcup extends the high frequencies and follows the "M" profile of the cone more closely to further reduce adverse effects.

For more information, contact Focal Naim Canada: 866-271-5689, ordersca@focal-naim.com, www.focalnaimamerica.com.

Boss EV-1-WL Wireless MIDI Expression Pedal

Boss has introduced the EV-1-WL, the first MIDI expression pedal with Bluetooth wireless connectivity.

The EV-1-WL provides wireless MIDI foot control for Boss products like the EURUS GS-1, Waza-Air and Katana-Air, music apps on mobile devices, and anything that can receive MIDI Control Change (CC) messages via Bluetooth MIDI. USB and MIDI TRS jacks are also available for wired control of computer music software and standard MIDI devices. And with the free EV-1-WL Editor app for iOS and Android mobile devices, users can fully customize the pedal for their needs over Bluetooth.

The EV-1-WL provides cable-free foot control for the synthesizer engine in the new EURUS GS-1 electronic guitar, allowing players to operate pitch bend, filter, and other functions. And with external footswitches connected, the EV-1-WL becomes a mini Bluetooth pedalboard for the Waza-Air wireless personal guitar amplification system and Katana-Air guitar amplifier, providing patch selection, wah/volume control, and more. In addition, the EV-1-WL can communicate wirelessly with a standard five-pin MIDI device that has the Roland WM-1 Wireless MIDI Adaptor installed.

For more information, contact Roland Canada: 604-270-6626, www.roland.com/ca.

Fender Kurt Cobain Jag-Stang

As part of its 75th anniversary models in 2021, and also commemorating the 30th anniversary of Nirvana's seminal record *Nevermind*, Fender has introduced the Kurt Cobain Jag-Stang guitar. It combines the late, iconic Nirvana frontman's favorite elements of both his Jaguar and Mustang guitars.

The unique Jag-Stang comes equipped with the same features that made it Cobain's ideal instrument. As per his 1993 specs, the instrument features an alder body, 24-in. short scale length, 7.25-in. radius rosewood fingerboard, and vintage-style single-coil and custom humbucking pickups. The Mustang guitar slider switches provide the flexibility to dial in four distinct settings for a variety of in- or out-of-phase tones — useful for recreating Cobain's classic punchy guitar sounds. The new model is available right- and left-handed.

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



PreSonus Revelator io24 USB-C Audio Interface

PreSonus is shipping the Revelator io24 USB-C audio interface, which integrates high-headroom mic preamps, a two-channel loopback mixer, and extensive processing to deliver professional-sounding results for streaming, podcasting, and music production.

Flexible and versatile, the Revelator io24 is the only audio interface designed for both recording and streaming, according to the company. Its easy-to-use mixer lets users quickly record Zoom calls or Skype interviews and add backing tracks and sound effects for podcasts, livestream performances, music production, and more. The Stream Mix mode is engaged with the click of a button, and the complete mix – analog inputs, loopback channels, reverb, and effects – are routed to the USB output. From there, it can easily be sent to streaming software.

Two analog mic/instrument/line inputs with PreSonus' professional-grade XMAX-L microphone preamps, which can be stereo linked, make the Revelator io24 a high-quality production front-end. User can also get two balanced 1/4-in. line outputs, a high-powered headphone output, professional metering, and zero-latency monitoring. Up to 24-bit, 96 kHz audio can be recorded to the included Studio One Artist or other recording and production software. The Revelator io24's simple loopback mixer makes it easy to add backing tracks to livestream performances or conference in a Zoom call to a podcast.

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

Native Instruments Ashlight Granular Synthesis Instrument

Native Instruments has released Ashlight, the third and final instalment in a trilogy of instruments that explore the depths of granular synthesis.

The instrument was built in collaboration with Frank Elting and Amsterdam sound design agency The Solos, who have a long list of credits on blockbuster films including *The Predator*, *Glass*, *Mad Max: Fury Road*, *Creed*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Game of Thrones*, and others. Ashlight turns to the darker and colder side of granular, with harsh textures, muted keys, cinematic atmospheres, and pulsating textures. It follows on from vocal-based Pharlight and Straylight before it. Ashlight expands the series' concept with a specially-recorded library of samples ranging from bowed carbon to metal containers, waterphones, feedback cycles, cymbals, synths, and field recordings. Users can also load their own samples into the engine.



As with previous releases, the tone and timbre of the sample content is expanded and explored in minute detail via the instrument's granular engine to reveal ethereal and cinematic sounds that uncover new complexities and sonic textures. The grain layer is matched by a sample layer that includes keys and glock sounds, as well as synth pulses that can be shifted and brought to life using the built-in arpeggiator.

For more information, contact Native Instruments North America: 323-467-5260, info@native-instruments.de, www.native-instruments.com.

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HOT GEAR



D'Addario Guitar Hand Training Bundle

D'Addario has released its VariGrip and FiddiLink tools together in a guitar hand training bundle. This strength and agility kit is meant to improve performance by enhancing hand strength and endurance.

The VariGrip tool is for pre-show warm-ups and maintaining conditioning when away from your instrument. It has adjustable tension for each finger, molded finger pads for added comfort, simulated strings for building and maintaining calluses, and a molded palm pad for added comfort.

The FiddiLink is designed to help improve finger strength, control, and dexterity with a convenient pocket-sized design, and for the first time, it is available as an individual unit.

For more information contact D'Addario Canada: 905-947-9595, 800-268-6855, info@daddariocanada.com, www.daddariocanada.com.



Latin Percussion Tony Succar Signature Timbales

Latin Percussion (LP) has partnered with two-time Latin Grammy Award winner Tony Succar on its new signature timbales. The Tony Succar Signature Timbales are based on the Tito Puente model, and feature a combination of rainbow chrome over brass shells complemented with black nickel hardware and black LP drum heads.

The new plating offers distinct colour variations, making every set unique. The 14- and 15- x 6.5-in. timbales are mounted on a heavy duty, height-adjustable stand with an anti-rattle sleeve and die-cast geared tilter. A sturdy cowbell bracket, timbale sticks, and tuning wrench are also included.

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



JodyJazz HR* Once Clarinet Mouthpiece

JodyJazz has expanded its selection of HR* Series clarinet mouthpieces with the introduction of the HR* Once model.

The Once mouthpiece has been developed in response to requests from the Banda music community for a clarinet mouthpiece with a larger tip opening than the size 10 model, which was previously the largest tip opening available. The HR* Clarinet models in tip openings 1-5 have a classical sound and feel while being nice and free-blowing.

Tip openings 6-10 are brighter and louder to cut through many live situations that clarinetists find themselves in. The new model, which is JodyJazz's first size 11, has the largest tip opening of any commercially-available clarinet mouthpiece on the market, the company says. This provides an even bigger sound, which is desired by the Banda music players in the U.S. and in Mexico.

For more information, contact JodyJazz: 912-964-4705, info@jodyjazz.com, www.jodyjazz.com.

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HOT GEAR



Orange Glenn Hughes Signature Crush Bass 50 Combo Amp

Orange Amplification has released the limited-edition Glenn Hughes Signature Crush Bass 50 and, fittingly, its colour is deep purple. Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Glenn Hughes was the bass player and vocalist with classic rock icons Deep Purple, and he is also known as the bassist and vocalist for Trapeze, Black Country Communion with Joe Bonamassa, California Breed, and more recently The Dead Daisies.

The Crush Bass 50 compact combo is inspired by Orange's flagship AD200 and OB1 bass amplifiers and blends some of the most defining elements of each. It is designed to provide the essentials of a recording amp and delivers warm, clean bass tones, vintage growl with fat low end, and blendable overdrive. Plus, the limited edition is finished in a distinctive tough purple vinyl with a silver coloured plaque with "Glenn Hughes Limited Edition."

For more information, contact Launch Music: 833-215-3207, info@launchmusic.ca, www.launchmusic.ca.



GrooveTech String Change Kit

GrooveTech Tools has released the String Change Kit for guitar and other stringed instruments.

The String Change Kit (GTSCKIT1) combines two of the most important string changing tools – string cutters and winder – while taking little space in the gig bag. The string cutters are compact and capable, with blades benefiting from a special heat treatment process for quick and easy string cuts. A protective cap keeps cutting blades out of harm's way during transit and storage. The traditional-style string winder is easy to use and offers precise winding action, with a pin puller for acoustic guitars.

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



PRS HX Amplifiers

PRS Guitars has released the HX Series of amplifiers. While not an exacting historic reproduction of the amp model, PRS says the HX amps capture the circuit and the flexibility and power of late 1960s British-inspired Jimi Hendrix tone in a straightforward design.

A continuation of PRS's HXDA amplifiers, HX amps feature a refined control layout and a newly-documented Hendrix Touring Circuit. This circuit is heavily inspired by one of Hendrix's custom personal amps purportedly used at Woodstock, which Paul Reed Smith and PRS Amp Designer Doug Sewell were able to study.

The HX amps bring power and balance in both 100W and 50W formats. Designed to push the high end so it is very clear, but not so much that it's harsh, the HX amps shine without glaring and allows for aggression that can be backed off for smooth, sweet tones, according to the company. The amps are also designed with internally-bridged channels with individual volume controls. This eliminates the need for a jumper cable and allows players to more easily dial in their distortion level and tone through blending the lead and bass channels, bringing more modern convenience to the amp. PRS has also designed matching 2x12 and 4x12 cabinets for the HX Amp family.

For more information, contact PRS Guitars: 418-558-8011, clangevin@prsguitars.com, www.prsguitars.com.



Casio PX-S1100 Digital Piano

Casio America has released the PX-S1100, the latest addition to the Privia PX-S series of digital pianos. The PX-S1100 replaces the PX-S1000 but retains its design in an ultra-slim body while offering an inviting keyboard touch and realistic piano sound. It's meant to be an affordable but high-quality piano for the entry-level market.

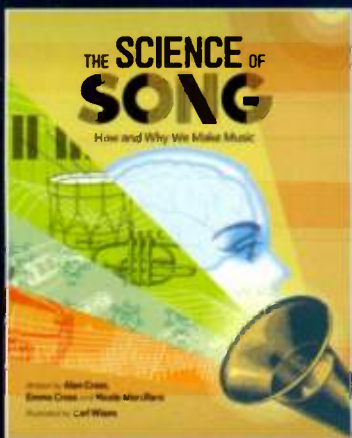
With slim, contemporary design with gold accents and three colour variations—black, white, and red — the PX-S1100 has a minimalist and clean appearance. It features a mirror-like, flat control panel and all settings are handled by touch buttons that disappear when the piano is powered off. The PX-S1100 boasts the simplest interface in the Privia family.

Despite its slim profile, the feel of the PX-S1100 duplicates a grand piano with a weighted action that is subtly heavier in the lower range and becomes lighter as the player ascends the keyboard. Improved string resonance reproduces the complex harmonics of an acoustic piano. Upgraded speakers and speaker positioning give the PX-S1100 a warmer tone, and the multi-dimensional morphing AiR Sound Source provides a sense of ambience, localization, and clarity.

For more information, contact SFM: 514-780-2070, info@sfm.ca, www.sfm.ca.

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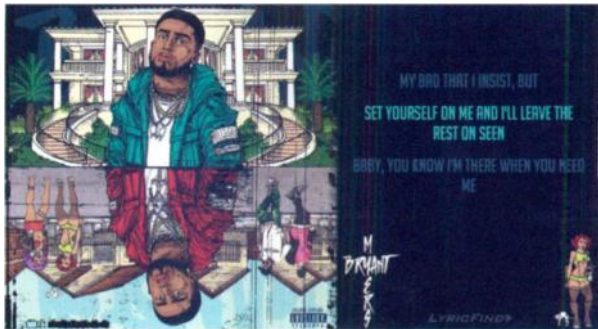
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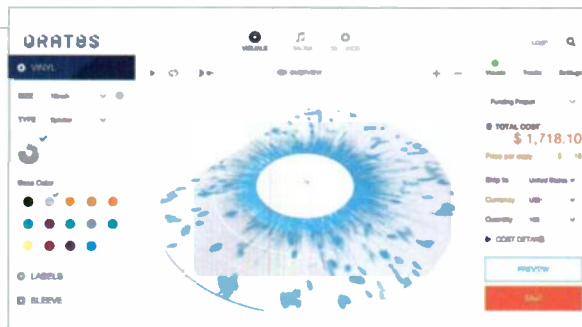
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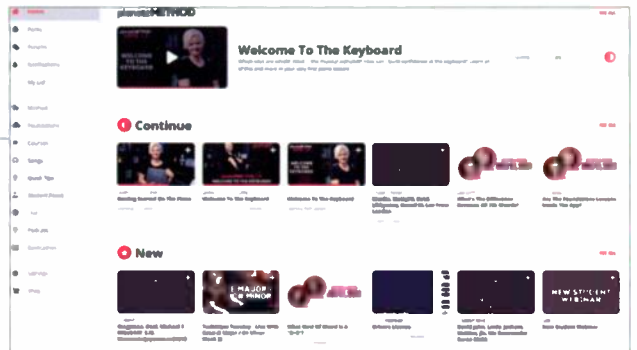
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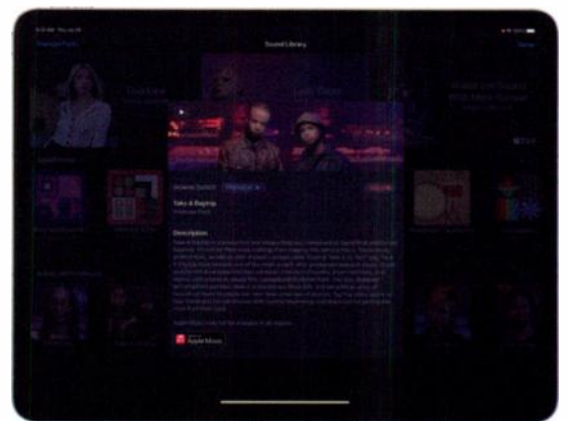
Canadian licencing company **LyricFind** is launching a new service that makes it easier for labels and rightsholders to turn their tracks into engaging lyric videos. Using proprietary technology, LyricFind's new tool automatically generates a branded video that uses custom backgrounds, fonts, and visualizers to animate a song's lyrics (or high-quality translations of the lyrics). The system has the ability to generate a high-quality video in seconds, making it ideal for catalogs and other large collections of recordings. The video creation tool also includes vetted translations in seven languages, as well as other features, allowing artists and rightsholders to customize videos that reflect their music promotion strategies. The service has no up-front costs to labels and artists, LyricFind instead receives some of the revenue generated from video views. www.lyricfind.com.



Qrates is a service that is meant to make it easy for indie artists to have their music projects pressed to vinyl. In Qrates' Vinyl Studio, artists design the look and feel of their vinyl and use the profit calculator to immediately see how much their project will cost, and how much they'll earn. The company says they provide full-service pressing, a global retail network, customer support, and artists keep up to 85% of profits. It also assists artists in launching crowdfunding campaigns to fund the specific number of records they need, or take pre-orders while the records are in production. www.qrates.com



Pianote provides online piano lesson videos that combine new-age technology while paying homage to the tradition of classic piano lessons. Its online courses and real teachers make it fun and easy to start playing favourite songs, with more than 100 popular hits to learn and play. Pianote students get access to on-demand video lessons from real teachers, who are available to answer questions and provide feedback and personal support throughout the learning journey. No connection between your piano and a computer is necessary. And for piano teachers, Pianote is a good supplement to lessons and reinforces teaching techniques. www.pianote.com.



Apple has added new Sound Packs from current chart-topping artists and producers to its free **GarageBand** DAW for iOS and iPadOS. For the first time, users can learn the art of remixing within the app with two new Remix Sessions offering step-by-step video instruction and featuring hit songs from artists Dua Lipa and Lady Gaga. Musicians can also now create songs with seven new Producer Packs full of beats, loops, and instruments created specifically for GarageBand by top producers, including Boys Noize, Mark Lettieri, Oak Felder, Soulection, Take A Daytrip, Tom Misch, and TRAKGIRL. An additional Producer Pack provides a special companion experience to the new Apple Original docuseries *Watch the Sound with Mark Ronson*, enabling viewers to experiment with sounds inspired by the music featured in the show. www.apple.com/ca/ios/garageband.



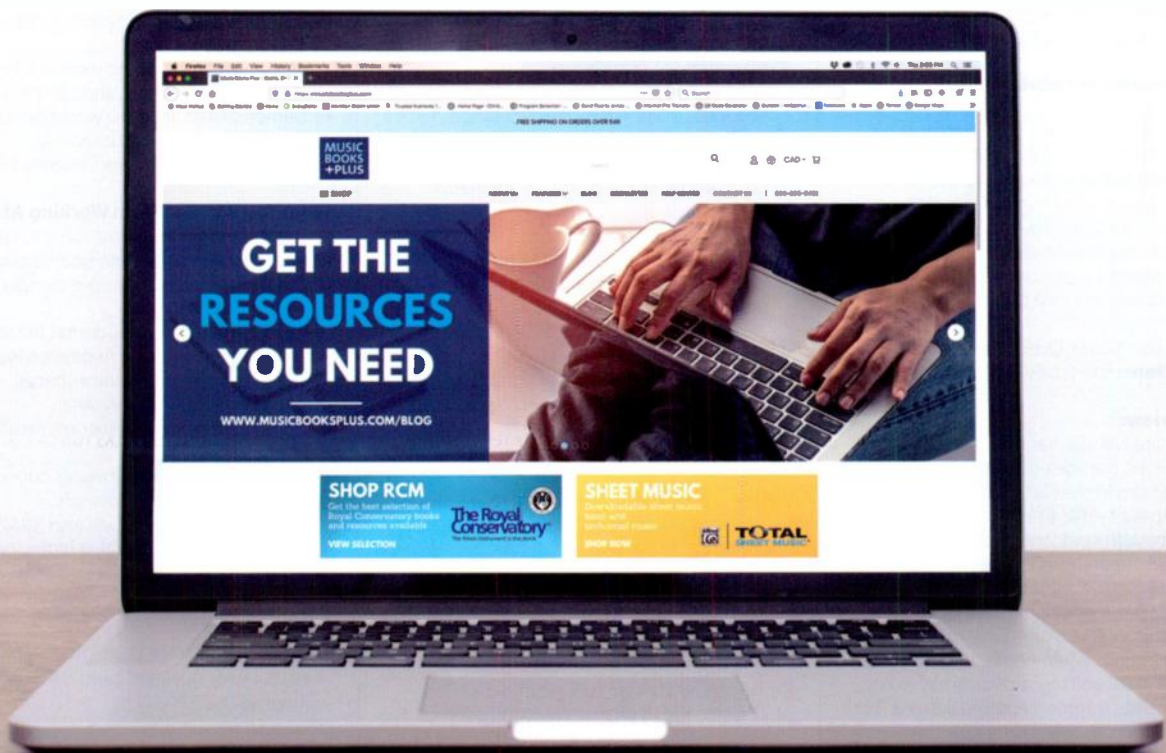
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What you will do:

- Manage relationships with key influencers;
- Sustain relationships with key audio consultants and sales reps and customers;
- Sustain relationships with commercial installation companies and support them in installing and supplying HPC solutions;
- Develop and sustain relationships with key influencers in other vertical markets such as houses of worship, corporate AV, theatre, conferencing, education, etc.;
- Help grow HPC distributed brands through user case studies and stories suitable for publication in all media (print, web, social sites etc.).

Product feedback:

- Gather data from influencers, customers, users and the sales channel on products and feedback to HPC to guide future requirements and represent the voice of the customer;
- Deliver market intelligence.

Technical Marketing:

- Deliver appropriate training as required;
- Attend trade shows, help with managing technical aspects thereof, man booths at shows;
- Aid consultants and installation companies in specifying and setting up complex systems.

Product Management:

- If appropriate, you will oversee the sales, purchasing, inventory management and marketing of select brands, to be discussed;
- Interact directly with suppliers and may assist in product development activities.

What we are looking for:

- Strong existing network of contacts within the Architectural and Professional Lighting market;
 - Expert knowledge of the professional Lighting market and Lighting networking protocols and deployment;
 - Minimum 3 years in product support, sales or management experience;
 - Technical Background;
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 - Collaborative team worker and someone who will fit in with our existing team;
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What You Will Do

- Answer incoming calls from clients and enter the orders into the ERP system;
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- Report and resolve any receiving discrepancies;
- Ensure Logistics and Accounting receive all necessary information regarding waybill tracking, invoices, method of shipment, terms;
- Successfully manage vendor relationships and create harmonious partnerships with suppliers;
- Maintain inventory forecasts and ensure accurate data and item set-up for the ERP software;
- Establish and implement supplier guidelines, obligations, and service levels;
- Complete regular clerical duties on an on-going basis.

What We Are Looking For

- 3 – 5 years of related experience in both order entry and purchasing, preferably in a distribution or warehouse setting, with a background in technical support considered an asset;
- Able to read schematics;
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office Applications, knowledge of JD Edwards an asset;
- Excellent communications skills (written/verbal) and interpersonal skills;
- Demonstrated organizational ability and follow-through;
- Demonstrated ability to work in a fast paced, dynamic environment and can prioritize work;
- Demonstrated ability to work harmoniously in a team as well as autonomously;
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- Other benefits geared towards our number one priority: our employees;
- Most importantly, you will also have the opportunity to work with a highly talented, winning team!

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A Calmer Collision is the artist moniker of U.S. Gold Record-winning producer/engineer, Ryan McCambridge (Metric, Birds of Tokyo, I AM X), in collaboration with three-time Grammy-winning producer, David Bottrill (Muse, Peter Dinklage, Tool). A labour of love, the independent project grew from their professional work together with iconic artists like Rush and Mastodon, developed during downtime in their Toronto-based recording studios.

The music delivers a modern rock and roll feel that's influenced by the darker side of '80s new wave, with elements that are reminiscent of The Cure and Depeche Mode. It manages to be equal parts classic and modern, though not pastiche. And like those classic bands, and unlike a lot of current indie rock, A Calmer Collision has not forgotten the value of a good chorus, with songs like "Lost Bloodlines" and the lead single "Higher Laws" offering them up in spades. The music also attracted contributions from McCambridge and Bottrill's wider music community. Erik Alcock, whose voice and writing has contributed to songs by Kanye West, Nas, and Eminem, lends additional vocals to "Higher Laws." As well, Jeff Schroeder of The Smashing Pumpkins can be heard on "Willing to Burn" with guitar work that punctuates the album's closing crescendo.



SUPER FREDDY

What:
Hip-Hop/R&B/Afrobeat
Where:
Montreal, QC
Visit:
www.direct.me/superfreddy24

Super Freddy is a Cameroonian-Canadian artist blending hip-hop with R&B, jazz, soul, afrobeat, and house influences and samples in order, as he says, to tell stories and travel through space. Impressively, he's able to sing and rap in both English and French and do it very well in both languages. Though he has been making music since 2008, his first foray into the music industry was in 2015 with the release of his *MTL Nights Vol. 1* mixtape, followed up by a series of performances and showcases in Montreal.

After three years of regularly performing around the city, releasing music and collaborating with artists such as UZUAZO and E R R O R, Freddy spent time working on his craft in the U.K. and New York. Now back in Montreal and part of the Ice Coast Entertainment Collective, his most recent project, the three-song *MERCURIAL EP*, is an exploration of the themes of physical distance, diaspora, and third culture experience, disconnection from one's roots and family, as well as feelings of loss and change, presented through an Afrofuturist lens.



SHANNON ROSZELL

What:
Symphonic Indie Rock
Where:
Kawartha Lakes, ON
Visit:
www.shannonroszell.com

Singer-songwriter Shannon Roszell has been turning heads with her powerful and distinctive voice that elicits memories of the late, great Cranberries front-woman Dolores O'Riordan. And like the Cranberries, Roszell's music offers an expansive spin on rock and roll. Her latest single, "My Escape," which is produced Frank Gryner (A Perfect Circle, Rob Zombie, Emm Gryner), is a surrealistic, summer requiem inspired by Canadian poet Alden Nowlan's *I, Icarus*. The music fuses orchestral voicings with searing electric guitar and her captivating vocals.

"With 'My Escape,' I tried to capture that moment when you've been pushed so far, you want to scream at the top of your lungs. The fantasy goes beyond that and imagines that scream having enough force to break a window, allowing escape by flying through a cool, night breeze. Because who hasn't dreamed of flying, especially to escape a summer heatwave and a broken heart?!" Roszell explains. Her debut album is expected in the spring of 2022 and we'll be keeping our ears out for it.





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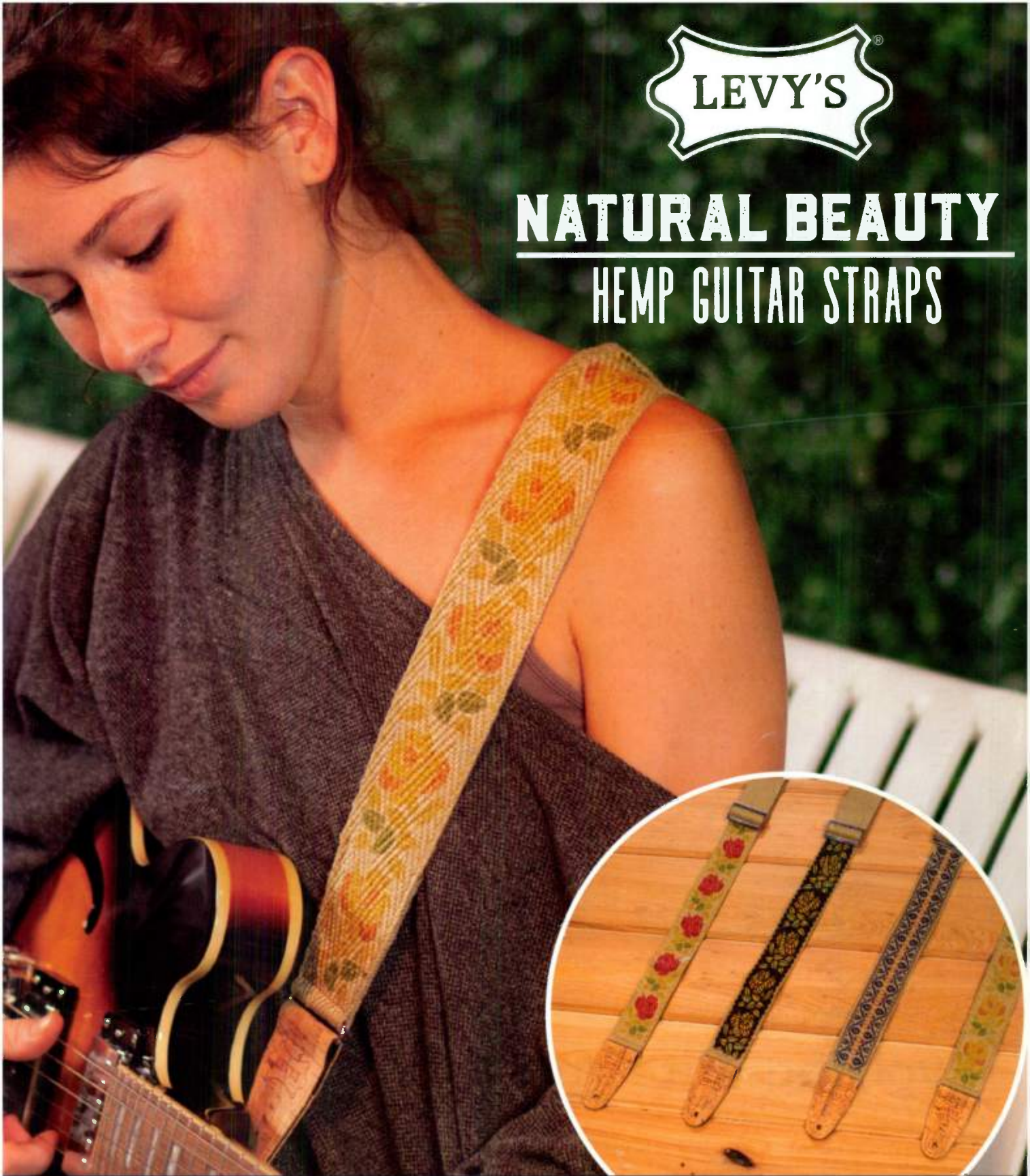


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