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# MUSICIAN

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Canadian Musician is published bi-monthly by Norris Publications, a division of Norris-Whitney Communications Inc., at 832 Mount Pleasant Rd., Toronto, Ontario M4P 2L3. All rights reserved. Contents may not be reprinted without written permission from the publisher. Subscription rates: Canada: 1 year \$12.00, 2 years \$21.00, 3 years \$29.00, 5 years \$39.00. Outside Canada: 1 year \$15.00, 2 years \$26.00, 3 years \$36.00, 5 years \$49.00. Single copies \$2.00. To change your subscription address, please send your new address with your old address (including former postal code) to Subscription Dept., Canadian Musician at least six weeks before moving. Canadian Musician editorial, advertising and circulation offices: 832 Mount Pleasant Rd., Toronto, Ontario M4P 2L3 (416) 485-8284. Please do not send unsolicited manuscripts, artwork, photos. Query only in writing. Canadian Musician takes no responsibility for return of any unsolicited material. Member: National Association of Music Merchants, Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Canadian Music Educators' Association. Printed in Canada. Second Class Mail Registration No. 4666. Postage paid at Toronto, Ont.

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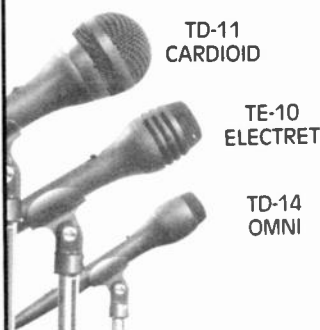
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# Feedback

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## Always Hated Cover Bands

I've always hated cover bands and I still do. But I'll admit I was drawn out of some perverse curiosity to your article "Breaking In and Breaking Out With Cover Bands."

Cover bands have always been the parasites of the music community to me. The craft of a cover band musician is not songwriting or musical performance. Their business is illusion and delusion. Agent Brian Pombiere's comment - "I always tell bands to read the fashion magazines, not the rock magazines." - was very telling.

This latest trend towards outright clone bands is especially disturbing. How can these people look themselves in the mirror in the morning - talk about an identity crisis.

While these bands may argue they are getting valuable musical and life experiences touring Northern Ontario playing Corey Hart covers, they are in my mind digging their own graves. Either they'll burn out musically, never to pick up guitars again, or they'll end up like Honeymoon Suite (one of the dozens of second rate Foreigners and Loverboys).

Dave Chambliss  
Montreal, PQ

## "Musicians and Their Money" Shocking and Enlightening

Jonathan Gross's article "Musicians and Their Money" was both shocking and enlightening.

The Nylons' situation I found especially interesting. Here's a group that's appeared on the *Tonight Show*, has 10 solid years under their belts with their two latest albums selling 300,000 copies each, and they only make \$800 a week on salary. These guys are stars and my dad the accountant makes more.

Another thing I can't understand is how a band like the Nylons who have the most streamlined show in Canadian pop music, lose \$140,000 on a Canadian tour. No wonder Platinum Blonde is only making \$600 a week each. It's enough to make me hang up my Strat and stay home.

Clive Derek  
Winnipeg, MB

## Where's The Afterburner?

In regard to the article by Benjamin Russell on the Afterburner practice amp (Product Report, CM June 1986): Could you please send me more information on this product as it is the exact item I've been trying to locate for some time. The article neglected to mention such important information like distributors or the manufacturer's address (is this because it's not on the market yet?). Anyway, I phoned all the right businesses in Vancouver and none have heard of this amplifier. Please help, as I need to get one as soon as possible. Thanks.

Fritjou Capra-Moore  
Vancouver, BC

(Contact Art White Music, 11 Progress Ave., Unit #22, Scarborough, ON M1P 4S7 for more information - Ed.)

## Attic Has Spent \$500,000 On The Nylons

Regarding your article in the August 1986 issue on "Canadian Musicians and Their Money", I wish to clarify the comment "Although Thompson is not angry with Attic Records, he says the group has not seen a nickel in royalties even though both *Seamless* and *One Size Fits All* sold upwards of 300,000 copies each."

We have not received any royalties as none are due. Attic has financed three albums, and has already spent substantial amounts on a fourth. Contrary to what many people assume, recording a Nylons' LP is a very lengthy complex procedure. *Seamless* cost over \$150,000.00 to produce. Attic financed three videos, subsidized English and European tours, and assisted us when we had financial problems earlier in our career. Attic has expended over \$500,000.00 on The Nylons. Foreign income always lags behind domestic income, and we must wait until Attic receives foreign income before we are credited with our share. Obviously, this delays our recoupment or royalty income. Attic has done everything that could reasonably be asked of a record company.

Wayne Thompson  
Manager of The Nylons

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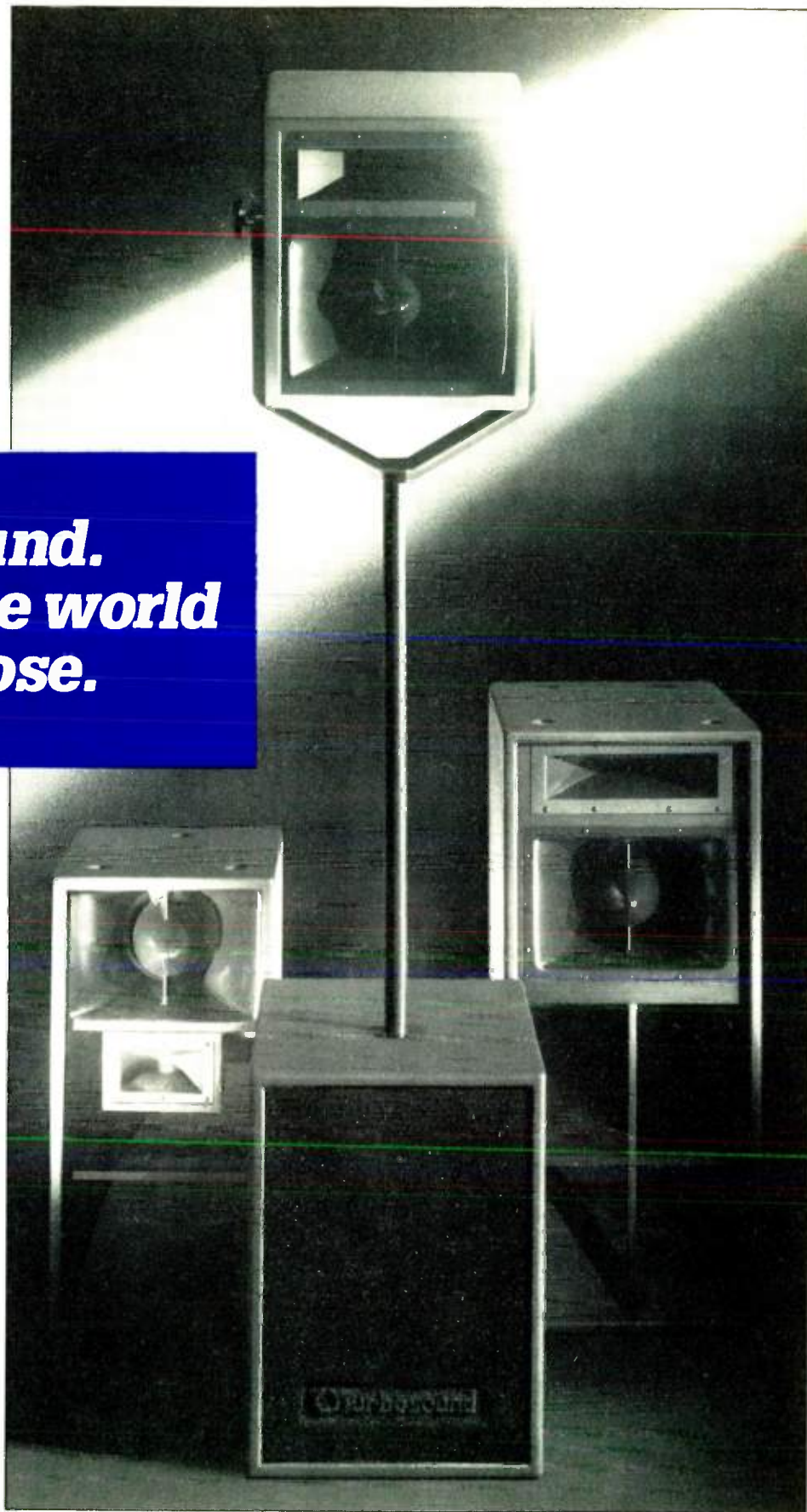
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# Notes

BY HOWARD DRUCKMAN  
TIM O'CONNOR  
TOM HARRISON  
DARA ROWLAND

## Frank Marino Shoots Back

An old cliché of the music business is that you need thick skin to deflect the carping of critics and the constant second-guessing by record executives.

Frank Marino must have callouses to put any farmer to shame.

Despite almost libelous reviews throughout his 15-year career and a recent two-year wrangle to get out of a record contract with CBS, Marino is back with his first record in three years. And he's backing it up with a 60-city tour of North America that he hopes becomes 120 dates with his five-piece band.

Since releasing the first Mahogany Rush album, *Maxoom*, in 1972 at age 17, the Montreal guitarist has been vilified by critics who complained he unabashedly stole his career from the grave of Jimi Hendrix. And his legendary arsenal of foot pedals led to accusations he was better with gimmicks than music. He's also been dogged by a preposterous rumour about an acid trip and inheriting Hendrix's talent that ranks up there with the "Paul (McCartney) is dead" tale.

For a guy dumped on more than Barry Manilow, Marino is cheerful, glib and without bitterness as he explains his absence and shoots back at his critics.

"My relationship with CBS was so dead, they were giving it the last rites. It was the most horrible thing," he joked before a blazing show at a Toronto club packed with fans just pleased to see him again. Marino, 31, said the U.S. division of CBS didn't put his last album, *Juggernaut*, in record stores even though it was No. 1 on 187 U.S. radio stations for three weeks. He said CBS wanted "Frank the rock and roller," but *Juggernaut* was a return to Frank the over-achiever - with drawn-out guitar epics and textured soundscapes.

Once freed from the contract through an out-of-court settlement, Marino started a year's work on a new record, *Full Circle*, released in May on Maze

Records and distributed across North America by A&M. The long break also allowed him time to re-evaluate his music, which ranged from experimental guitar and symphonic treatments on his earlier records to screaming rock and roll on his later records - 11 in total.

"What I realized was that we had become just like any other fucking rock and roll band. We had lost whatever it was that made us special around the time of *Mahogany Rush IV* and *Strange Dream*," he said, adding the new record marks a return to "more artistic" material.

Having gained control of his career again, there was also "that" rumour to exorcise from his haunted past. (Even the most malicious Hollywood gossip rag would be hard put to top this one.) Legend had it that even though Marino had never played the guitar before, he inherited the talents of Hendrix after a bad acid trip when he was 14. The story goes that he hallucinated during the same trip that he was becoming a large tree and the vision inspired the name Mahogany Rush.

"The media took the facts and went two-plus-two equals five," he groaned. He said it was true he landed in hospital after taking too much acid and he started to play the guitar, but "anything else is sensationalism."

"I learned exceptionally quickly and maybe quicker than anyone else ever did, but more because I had to. It was therapy, because I was so screwed up. I mean really badly. I would play it religiously because in my mind it was saving my life."

While he was in the mood for setting the record straight, he argued that critics were unfair with their accusations that he was a Hendrix rip-off artist. "How come they never threw that at the other ones who did it? Why is it OK for Stevie (Ray Vaughan)? Why is it OK for (Robin) Trower? Why? Because they didn't do it as well?"

What about the complaint he



used more equipment than NASA to cover up a lack of talent?

"I had a pedal board six feet long by three feet deep and two-tiers high with 28 foot pedals and everyone said I couldn't play without it. Now I use a board about two feet long with hardly anything on it and now everyone says I don't use enough pedals. And now they're heralded as the greatest thing since sliced bread. I can't figure this out."

He says he never doubted his talent as an innovative guitar

master - he was just "ahead" of the times. "Eddie Van Halen taps the fretboard with his fingers and everyone goes nuts. But me and other guys did it five and six years ago. It just didn't catch on then."

Right now, I don't let anything bother me ever. I do whatever I have to do and I do my best. I give 150 percent of myself whether I'm playing to one million or one person."

Tim O'Connor

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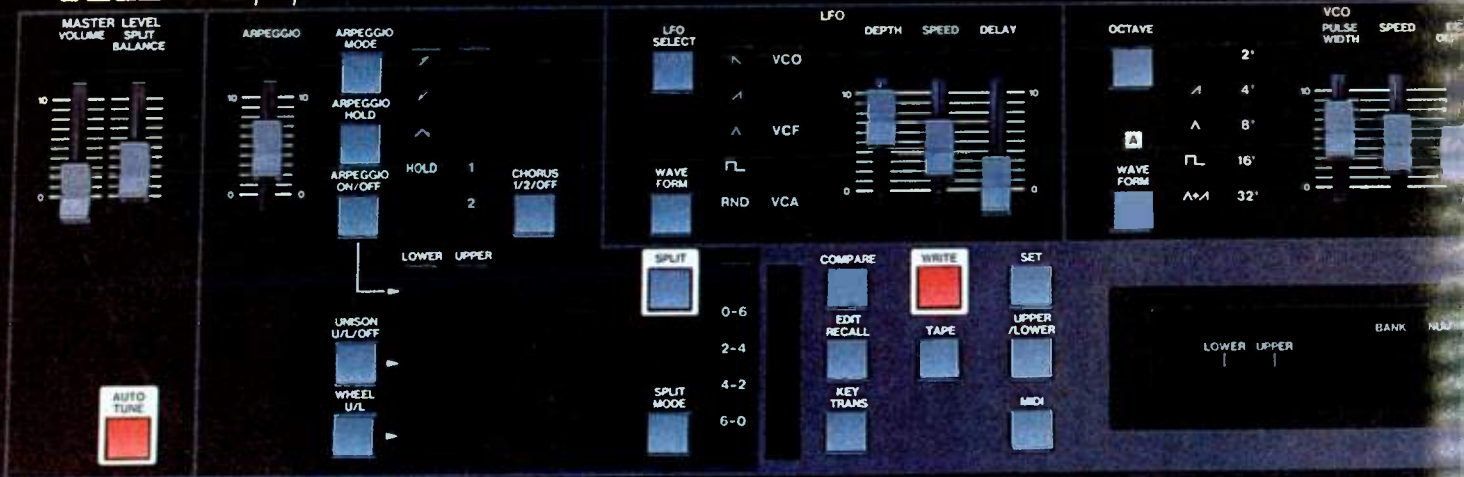
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## Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll — A "Non-issue" In The '80s

The stories of great musicians who limped off stage too high to play, or who were sent home from the studio, are legendary, a sad part of rock's history. Jimi Hendrix once ended a Madison Square Garden concert after a few songs because he was tripping on acid. Jim Morrison rarely made it through the last Doors' gigs without forgetting words.

But as society and the music industry has taken a swing further to the right in the 1980s, more musicians say they don't use drugs. They are too concerned with making money, performing their best and staying healthy. That was some of the conclusions reached at a public forum - Rock's Role in Drug Abuse: Myth or Reality - attended by about 400 people in late May in Toronto. The forum was sponsored by the Addiction Research Council.

The participants agreed that musicians aren't willing to jeopardize their chances of getting radio or video airplay because of an image seen as influencing young people to take drugs. The panelists included singers Lee Aaron and Ian Thomas, video director Rob Quartly and Christopher Ward, a MuchMusic vee jay. Jonathan Freedman, a University of Toronto psychology professor, and Ron Clavier, a psychologist with the Clarke Institute of Psychology, were also on hand.

While Aaron and Thomas admitted they and many other musicians had experimented with drugs in the past, they said most of today's rock and rollers are professional and serious about their craft - and believe that drugs impair performance and destroy creativity. Most participants

agreed that rock musicians and rock videos are cited unfairly as influencing young people to take drugs.

"People assume because someone is in a rock group they use drugs or have some kind of venereal disease," a jovial Thomas said to gales of laughter. He said he doesn't use drugs because he'd "become a Hooverhead and end up in the dumper."

"I think drugs and rock and roll is a non-issue," Ward said. "It may be in their (musician's) backgrounds, but they don't condone the use of drugs."

The image of the stoned, emaciated musician was more applicable to the 1960s, Ward said, and that scene died with drug casualties such as Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison. Thomas noted that players who still use drugs try to keep it hidden while others like

Keith Richards are trying to come clean in public.

Thomas said the music industry was much like other high-paying professions that are considered glamorous and attract hangers-on who want to exploit the lifestyle. He noted that if even a minority of participants are seen as drug users - such as last year's controversy in which Major League baseball players testified they used cocaine - it doesn't mean everyone in that profession is a drug abuser.

Aaron, who was cheered loudly by her fans in black T-shirts, said it was, "becoming more of an uncool thing to take drugs. Most of my friends are musicians and they are not involved in drugs. Most people don't want to work with people who use drugs."

TO

## Independent Festival Turns Into Fiasco in BC

Vancouver's Festival of Independent Recording Artists ended almost as soon as it had begun when two members of Slow dropped their drawers as the finale of their abbreviated 45 minute concert at Expo 86.

The festival, which was intended to be both a showcase of 16 artists representing the West Coast's aggressive independent recording scene and an acknowledgement of its importance to the cultural life of Vancouver, had been scheduled to run for a week at Expo's Xerox International Theatre. It had taken nine months to organize and select the groups who embraced the goodtime folk/rock of Rick Scott to the theatrical electronic dance gothicism of Skinny Puppy. FIRA began faultlessly with Twentieth Century on August 4th, B.C. Day in the province, the start of B.C. Week at Expo and retirement day for Premier Bill Bennett who'd been honoured at Expo that afternoon.

Slow began its set at 8 p.m. intent on living up to its billing as a

young band "brilliantly out of control." This was interpreted as hurling obscenities at Bennett and the audience while, in the heat of the evening, singer Tom Anselmi doffed his shirt and jeans to storm barefoot around the stage in innocuous baggy boxer shorts.

After a few elderly people and shocked parents had wandered into the open air and non-ticketed theatre and then hurried away to complain, Expo cut Slow's set short at 45 minutes, which is when bassist Steve Hamm removed his clothes and, in a manner of speaking, flew his flag of indifference for the audience. Anselmi did the inevitable by hanging a bare ass at the crowd before leaving the stage to be greeted by members of the Vancouver Police. They were not amused.

As the police considered pressing charges of indecent exposure, nervous Expo security called in director of support services, Paul Brinton to look over the situation. Brinton simply cancelled the night's concert as the closing act, Poisoned, was set-

ting up its gear.

Having already been tipped off that something was wrong, the remaining crowd of 1,000 who'd stayed to watch the popular Poisoned, reacted with anger when told over the public address that the night's concert had been cancelled without an explanation and they were to go home like good little children.

While police questioned members of Slow backstage, a fight broke out between an angry Poisoned supporter and Anselmi and Slow's manager, Tony Beck, who only before had been boasting about the publicity this was going to generate. A justifiably disgruntled audience was creating its own scene, chanting and can-can dancing on the stage while the hapless Expo security ineffectually tried to control them. Poisoned supporters went to Expo's guest relations booth to fill out pad after pad of complaint forms and 200 people wandered to the on-site office of the BCTV network to stage a sit in. Ultimately, BCTV, which calls

itself "your Expo network" ignored them but had to cut its 11 p.m. news broadcast short due to the chanting protesters outside.

Tuesday afternoon, Expo's entertainment directors held a press conference to announce that the entire festival was cancelled "for reasons of safety and security," a meaningless statement issued as a red herring to disguise Expo's own short-sightedness and clumsiness in the handling of the show the night before.

Tom Harrison

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Three O'Clock Train

## New Magazine Focusses On Musician's Medical Problems

A new magazine devoted to, as its title explains, *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, is now available. A collaborative effort between an editorial board of 12 medical specialists and an artistic advisory board of 8 educators and performers (including cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and choreographer Jacques D'Amboise), MPPA will provide a much needed guide for problems peculiar to performers.

"The purpose of MPPA," according to its editor Alice Brandfonbrener, MD, "is to promote interest in the medical problems of performing artists, to help in the search for and dissemination of information, and to promote the well-being of this vulnerable and valuable segment of our society."

Specialists that MPPA will draw

on for their expertise will include otolaryngologists, neurologists, hand surgeons, dance therapists, and psychiatrists. Articles will include: "Overuse Syndrome in Instrumentalists," "A Focal Movement Disorder in the Hands of Six Pianists," "Special Effects (Stage Fog, etc.) - Risks to Performers," "Differential Diagnosis of Rheumatic Diseases in Performers" and "Stage Fright - Psychoanalytic Interpretation."

*Medical Problems of Performing Artists* is a quarterly publication and costs \$56 for an individual annual subscription (\$60 for libraries/institutions). For phone subscriptions call: (215) 546-7293, or write to MPPA, P.O. Box 1377, Philadelphia, PA 19105-9990.

Perry Stern

## Three O'clock Train's Wild Mutations

You could describe Montreal's Three O'Clock Train as a "country-punk" band if pressed for an instant pigeonhole, but it's a bit like trying to explain the theory of relativity by saying "it's complicated."

"It's all a question of labelling," says bassist Dave Hill. "The image people give you is often different from the one you want. Country music has always been our base, lyrically. We play rock'n'roll, it's just that some of the songs sound country. The idea is storytelling, and honest songs about experiences."

In fact, the Train's distance from their own stories often makes for some pretty wild mutations on the standard country themes of jealousy, lust, loneliness, anger, etc. Their recently-released EP, *Wig Wam Beach*, has even managed to stir up a little local controversy, at least among the humourless.

Most of it centres on the song "Stupid Little Angel," which features the lines, "I can put my hand on her heart/And let her know who's the boss/I can put my hand on her throat/And let her know just what she's got to lose."

"We got a lot of shit for that, from totally misguided people," says Hill. "Any song that starts out with 'A stupid little angel came knocking at my door/I didn't let her in/You can't trust no-one these days' is obviously about a psycho! You have to allow the lyricist a certain amount of license in his work, which a lot of people aren't willing to do."

In "The Devil Likes Me," a jealous lover insists Lucifer is going to help him kill the boyfriend that's taken his place.

It's a fantasy, right?," says Hill. "Everybody's thought about doing something wicked to their ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends. You don't do it, but the next-best-thing is to fantasize about it."

While their occasional sense of irony falls somewhere between hardcore and Randy Newman, "Fake Honeymoon" is a traditional country ballad that could easily be sung by George Jones or Merle Haggard. And much of

*Wig Wam Beach* is straight-ahead bar-band rock in a rootsy mode.

Singer/songwriter Mack Mackenzie sounds like John Fogerty, and the band often fleshes out their arrangement with Stones-y guitar riffs and rough harmonies. The strings on "Honeymoon" were provided by Man Without Hat Stefan Doroschuck, who was a member of the Train (under a pseudonym) for part of last year. "It Must Be The Drug" and "Hold Me Tight" are soulful workouts, while "Train of Dreams" is the sort of thing John Cougar Mellencamp reaches for but never seems to grasp.

"We've all had this music bug up our ass for at least 20 years," says Hill. "So we know all this stuff, and it just comes out subconsciously. Songs just fall into place, and you go with what sounds best for the song. You want to arrange the song so the combined effect of everything has a certain unity."

Hill expresses the Three O'Clock Train philosophy as follows: "Rock'n'roll has always been a diversion, entertainment, escape. In this age of rampant politicization and social conscience, when somebody's yelling at me about unemployment or South Africa, I can read about that in the paper."

"This might be where that country mentality comes in: I want to go dance, go pick up a girl, have a good time, go home, get laid, that sort of thing. That's the attitude."

"To go and see a show with the same mentality as going to see a lecture at university - there's something wrong about that, to us."

Howard Druckman

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**C**ongratulations to the Franciscan Quartet, first place winners at the 2nd Banff International String Quartet Competition, held at The Banff Centre.

**T**he Franciscan Quartet was formed in 1982 at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, from which all the members have graduated with Bachelor's or Master's degrees, or both.

In 1984 the Franciscan Quartet was the first quartet to be named Fellowship Quartet at the San Francisco Conservatory. In 1985 it won the Wardwell Fellowship at Yale University, where it is now in residence, working with the Tokyo String Quartet and serving as teaching assistants.

Northern Telecom welcomes the opportunity to celebrate new talent and excellence in both the visual and performing arts. By encouraging young artists today, we are making an investment that will pay rich dividends for generations to come.

As a showcase for excellence in musical talent and as a training ground for young performers, the Banff International String Quartet Competition is the finest event of its kind in the world. Northern Telecom was proud to be a partner with the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts in staging this competition.



*left to right: Wendy Sharp, violin; Julie Kim, violin; Margery Hwang, cello; Marcia Cassidy, viola.*

Photograph: Karen McDiarmid, The Banff Centre.

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## Musicians Need Income Protection Says Arts Group

Earlier this year the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), presented a brief to the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance in Ottawa. The brief urged the Commission to "consider the dilemma the artist faces when dealing with Unemployment Insurance." The CCA represents ACTRAC, PACT, Canadian Actors' Equity Association, l'Union des artistes, the Syndicat des techniciens et techniciens du Quebec, and CAR/FAC, who also submitted concerns and proposed solutions to the commission.

CCA National Director, Brian Anthony, stated in his presentation that, "Unlike many workers, artists often have many sources of income, can work for a succession of employers...and their work period can vary from a few hours to a few months. Artists must pro-

mote themselves and their work, must often incur training, travelling and accommodation expenses in order to obtain employment, and must often invest in and provide their own materials. All this for an average salary that falls below the poverty line."

The CCA's recommendations to the Commission included; "1. Make all cultural workers eligible for social security programs without penalizing them through their chosen employment status. 2. Allow professional organizations and cultural-sector unions to set up income-protection funds to which cultural industries' employees, employers and the self-employed would contribute. 3. Develop a registered income protection plan similar to the registered retirement savings plans, to be administered by contributors. 4. The creation of a guaranteed minimum income plan for all artists and cultural-sector workers."

The commission will be responding to the briefs in the fall.

PS

## New Company Aims To Protect Songwriters

Back in 1977, an American DJ started a rumour that led John Woloschuk down the long and winding road towards...accounting. The rumour, that a little known Canadian band, Klaatu, was actually The Beatles in disguise, fueled a worldwide success story that sadly ended in lawsuits that are still pending. Years went by without proper accounting of royalties and sub-publishing revenues. Woloschuk, a founding member of the band, became particularly involved in the ins-and-outs of music related accounting while trying to solve their problems and by 1963 his studies earned him a certificate as a Certified General Accountant.

Now, using his years of experience as a "wronged artist," Woloschuk has formed Songwriters' Protection Inc., to

help other artists realize the full economic value of their labours. Although large organizations like PROCAN and CAPAC ensure the collection of performance rights royalties, Woloschuk recognizes that some less than scrupulous production companies and publishers are out there taking advantage of inexperienced writers. "I don't want to be alarmist," he explains, "but while most of them are reputable, some aren't. In return for being recorded (new artists) have to give away all or a portion of their publishing, and, since most revenues are cross-collateralized the production company seeks to apply excess expenses against other sources." Namely, publishing revenue.

In cases where an audit has been called, or legal action has been initiated, Woloschuk claims that money is found owing to the writer 95 per cent of the time.

Songwriters' Protection Inc., can be reached by calling (416) 925-SONG, or by writing to 2 Gloucester St., Ste. 201, Toronto M4Y 1L5.

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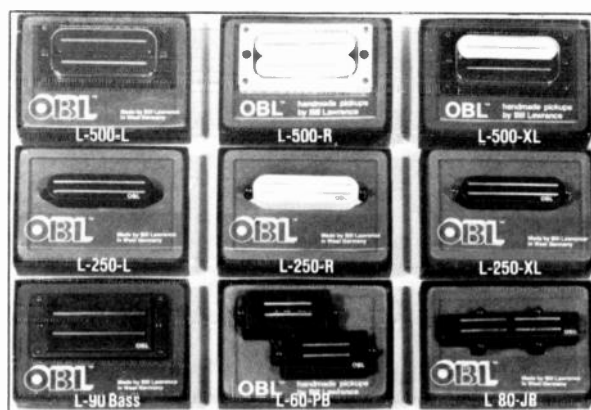
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## Jazz Greats at Expo

The most difficult task for Canadian Jazz great Jim Galloway during Jazz Canada's 8 day stint at Expo 86 this month will be "how to showcase everyone in only 45 minutes." Described as a star-studded jam session featuring some of Canada's most famous jazz musicians, Jazz Canada is the creation of Galloway, who last year brought together rhythm section Ian Bargh, Neil Swainson and Terry Clarke, with guitarist Ed Bickert, Guido Basso on trumpet and flugelhorn, and Rob McConnell on valve trombone to join him for three test concerts in Toronto.

Galloway, an international talent whose many appearances with the Metro Stompers and Wee Big Band as well as his weekly CKFM radio shows have made him an integral part of the Canadian jazz scene for over 15 years, hopes to retain the current "cross

section of Canadian jazz artists" as a nucleus around which other talents can be added or subtracted for future dates. Alan Nagel of Hart/Murdock Artists' management, who represents Jazz Canada, describes the group as "not only a musical event, but an historic opportunity," pointing out it's the first time this country's top jazz performers have been gathered for a continuing project under one cover name. Collectively, every kind of influence and style has been brought to the group; individually, the musicians have impressive credits.

Galloway's soprano saxophone performances in traditional and mainstream jazz have earned him international recognition, appearing often at the annual festivals in Montreux, Bern, Nice and Edinburgh. Guido Basso, a band leader in his own right, has played with Duke Ellington,

Quincy Jones and Count Basie. Ed Bickert, internationally renowned for his guitar work with Boss Brass, frequently performs at Monterey and Montreux Jazz Festivals. Rob McConnell, leader of Boss Brass, is an RCA and Innovation recording artist and performer at Monterey Jazz Festival. Ian Bargh, a leading pianist on the Toronto jazz circuit, is a regular contributor to Galloway's CKFM radio show *Toronto Alive*. Terry Clarke, who has toured extensively with Oscar Peterson, Jim Hall and John Handy, is also a member of Boss Brass and appears regularly on Galloway's radio show. Neil Swainson, bassist, is also part of the radio show and has worked in the U.S. and Europe with Woody Shaw.

Although each performer is a "star" in his own right, Galloway insists that compatibility is key to Jazz Canada's success, noting that no one in the group suffers ego inflation. Inflation of another kind, however, could keep them from those future plans.

"Over the last 15 years travel costs have become so prohibitive, so astronomical, that without assistance (touring) would be almost impossible," stated Galloway. Although Jazz Canada received favourable response from the federal government's Department of Communication (Marcel Masse remarked that the group was a "major attraction for fans who love this exciting musical form of folkloric origin"), who granted the ensemble funds to offset touring costs to Expo 86, their future is uncertain. "Corporate sponsorship is integral," says Nagel, "and we're working on it." It will be difficult to work around each member's busy schedule, but Galloway and Nageel hope to tour the group at least two weeks a year.

Dara Rowland

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## Bryan Adams Tries Production

At only 23 years old, Bryan Adams is sort of the Wayne Gretsky of Canadian rock. He's rewritten the record book as the first native talent to sell more than one million records in Canada with *Reckless*. He has dazzled the old pros like David Foster and Anne Murray with his knack for winning melodies and his scoring touch with basic, hard rock.

And like No. 99, Adams isn't afraid to take on new challenges. Even one as daunting as producing two songs for "the queen" of soul, Tina Turner, for her next album. For if he misses the mark with Turner, critics may snort that the short, blonde kid from North Vancouver was playing out of his league with Turner. Vancouver is two thousand miles away from Detroit in more than just geographical terms.

Adams, though, has spent most of 1986 at home since coming off the road in November, writing songs with writing partner Jim Vallance for his followup to *Reckless*. But Adams also took three weeks out of his own schedule to play on the caravan for Amnesty International with other artists such as Sting and U2, on top of producing Turner.

Between stops on the Amnesty tour, Adams said in an interview in Toronto that his collaboration with Turner was "the first thing I've ever produced outside of my own work." Vallance and Adams wrote one of those two songs for Turner's album, which he expects to be released around Christmas.

Adams backed up Turner during her European tour last year and their nightly duet was a highlight of the road trip. It also gave Adams a better grasp of her talents, which made his first foray into the producer's chair easier - and even caused some tension between them.

"It was great because I know Tina," he said, breaking into a

wide smile and shifting very quickly on a plush hotel chair. "It was fun, but she also looks at me as a bit of a nitpicker because I try to make her (really) sing... I sang with her on about 20 shows - I know her capabilities and I'm just trying to capture some of those burning notes on tape."

Did he learn much from producing Turner, who went from misery with Ike Turner in the '60s and '70s to become the most celebrated comeback story of the '80s. "Oh yeah, you can't help it. She's the queen," Adams said gleefully.

He mixed the songs in early June in New York - the same weekend as the Amnesty International windup concert in New Jersey - and said he was returning to North Vancouver to sift through the many songs he has written with Vallance.

The cheerfulness that marked his comments about Turner disappears when he's pressed about his followup to the monster smash *Reckless*. He refuses to discuss what the songs sound like,

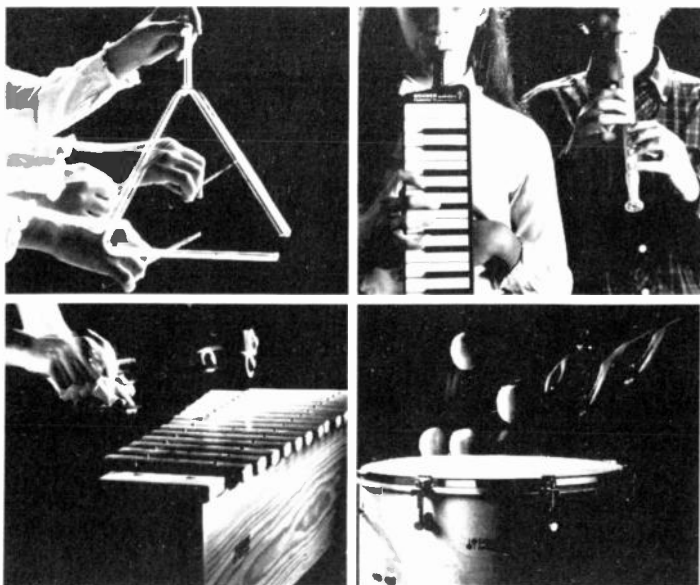
saying only "what I write today might be totally different tomorrow."

He also bristles at the question of how much pressure does he feel in attempting to follow up *Reckless*. "It's just important to do what you do," he sighs, looking down quickly at his wrinkled white shirt, black jeans and white high-top basketball shoes.

"I don't feel any pressure. I've felt internal pressure on each record I've done. I'm not trying to make *Reckless II*, that would be a mistake. I'm sure that Van Gogh didn't want to paint the same masterpiece twice, it would have been a mistake. I have no pressure time-wise and artistically, I just want to write the best thing I can write. Whether it will be a social awareness song or a love song, it will be Adams," he declared, making a subtle reference to the influence the Amnesty caravan may have had on him.

Tim O'Connor

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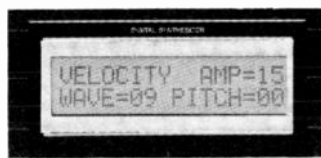


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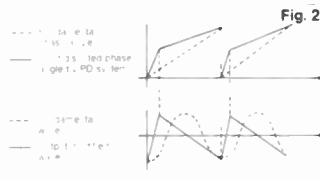


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# Records

## Scott Merritt

### GRAVITY IS MUTUAL

Duke Street  
Produced by Roma Baran  
Engineered by John Naslen  
Recorded at Manta Sound

Scott Merritt's new album, *Gravity is Mutual*, finds the singer/songwriter/guitarist making music of world-class international quality.

For one thing, it was produced by Roma Baran, who's twisted the knobs for New York performance artist Laurie Anderson (and played guitar for the Roches). For another, she brought guitarist Adrian Belew and percussionist David Van Tieghem, both reputable art-school studio pros, to the project. Merritt's typically reggae-fied rhythmic structures have been richly textured, and his lyrics are moving into abstract and sometimes topical territory. Great things have been predicted for the record.

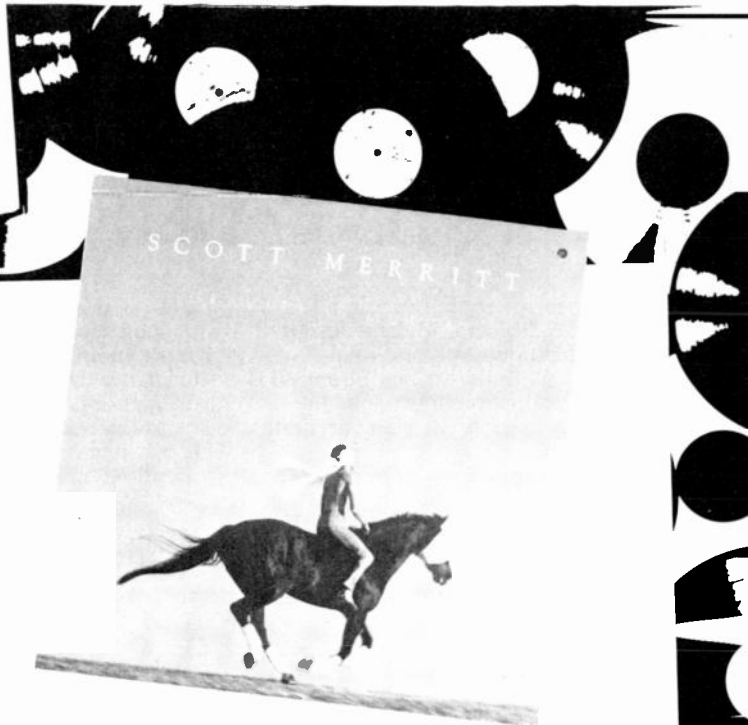
Merritt himself - a quiet, unassuming fellow and gentle soul - sees it as no giant step, but a progression. His ten years in music began with a garage band in his native Brantford, Ontario; wound through the folk scene in London, Ontario; and saw him release a record with a band last year that was comfortable with 1980s technology.

"The big leap about this new record," says Merritt, "was having a lot of freedom. All of a sudden there was an actual budget to do a record." He credits Duke Street for allowing him the chance to work with Baran, his producer of choice.

Comfortable with her approach, Merritt experimented a lot with his songs, as is his wont. "For some overdubs on 'Goin' to the Movies,'" he explains, "we wouldn't let the performer hear the track, but just let them play. We'd give them just the idea and a key signature. The introductory piano in 'Movies' is a total accident. We did that a lot on the record, and I like to work that way as much as I possibly can."

In a similar vein, the slide guitar lick in "No Shirt No Service" - somewhat reminiscent of Steve Miller's "The Joker" - was almost accidental. "There was a hole left in those sections when we did the bed tracks," says Merritt. "And the first thing I did when I picked up the guitar was that sound. Like in *Trivial Pursuit*, it's sometimes best to answer with the first thing that comes into your mind. That's usually the right thing."

Some see Merritt's increasing use of technology as ironic, since he took a relatively anti-machinery stance on "Transistor," his most noted song last year. "Like anything, its use



and misuse," he says. "There's good uses for all these things, and foul and corrupt uses as well. I'm not sure myself where those lines are, though I'm really convinced they exist. It's partly a question of fighting fire with fire."

Lyrically, Merritt has become more sensitized to various issues. "Raise A Ship (For the Benefit of Clergy)" criticizes TV evangelists and their misuse of the medium; "Lockstep" addresses middle-class reactions to the nuclear threat; "Goin' to the Movies" links the mass escapism of 1950s America with that of 1980s America; "No Shirt No Service" is about judgements based on clothing.

Much of the imagery is quite abstract. "Myopia" presents boy scouts, lemmings, closets, and

badges in a surrealistic swirl; "No Shirt No Service" finds words bouncing off of people and getting trampled underfoot. There are hats and shirts all over the record, and the repeated line, "You don't have to be a genius to see."

"I don't want to belong to a club about this whole thing," says Merritt. "The only luxury I feel I have over others is that I'm granted enough time to look around as I go. I don't have to be too preoccupied with stapling the boxes shut and moving them down the line, or adjusting the bolts on the next piece of metal that comes by. I have the great opportunity to remove that time, and my job is just, to be a human being. It's unbelievable freedom."

Howard Druckman

## Various Artists

### SPOTLIGHT 86

MCA Records  
Studios: Profile, Inside Trak,  
Ocean, Mushroom  
Mixed at: Little Mountain Sound

This is the second compilation LP to be produced from Vancouver's Spotlight showcases, but unlike its predecessor, called *Vancouver Seeds 3*, which was recorded live at the Town Pump, *Spotlight 86* is entirely a studio effort.

What *Spotlight 86* does share with *Vancouver Seeds 3* (the Vancouver Seeds LPs being similar in nature to Q107's Homegrown series) is a strong, unified sense of place and time.

Spotlight's six semi-finalists - Twentieth Century, Daryl Burgess and The Rhythm Snakes, Hoi Polloi, The Shape, XYZ and Six Billion Monkeys - each were awarded studio time among their various prize packages and collaborated with available local producers. The album was co-ordinated by Rock Headquarters, the production house of Bruce Allen Talent and mixed, for the most

part, on Little Mountain Sound's SSL board.

Despite the presence of six different bands and eight different tracks, *Spotlight* is a remarkably cohesive, extremely accessible effort by any critical or commercial standard. Stand outs, however, are Twentieth Century's high harmony "Without Your Name", which is a conscious nod to Brian Wilson circa *Pet Sounds*, Daryl Burgess's "Matter Of Time" and "Walking On The Water" and The Shape's "Why."

The obstacle faced by any hometown compilation with partisan media sponsorship is that

other commercial media like to pretend it doesn't exist, while other markets across the country usually have no interest. MCA and Spotlight's sponsors know that they have a hot collection of songs and artists on this record and are trying to downplay the involvement of the sponsors while emphasizing Spotlight's consistent quality and the excited support of a major label. The record will be supported by two videos and singles (one each by Spotlight finalists Twentieth Century and Burgess) and if successful, should be a model for other such hometown compilations.

Tom Harrison



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## Manteca

### NO HEROES

Duke Street  
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On the heels of their international agreements with RCA in Germany, Polydor in France, WEA in Malaysia, Whirl in Barbados, and RPM in Africa, Toronto's Manteca were recently signed to a Canadian deal with Duke Street Records. It guarantees the nine piece jazz-funk outfit two albums, two videos, and five years of support, which is one of the best-ever deals for instrumental music in Canada.

Though Manteca have released two records and played for seven years together, their first Duke Street release is a fresh breath of the band's typically energetic eclecticism.

On a rave-up like "MCT," for example, Caribbean verses give way to a chorus full of soul horns. "That's one of our trademarks," says Manteca co-founder, percussionist, and producer Matt Zimbel. "The whole form of the tune is a samba kick and high-hat. And then the chorus section was a Phil Collins-type thing. That's what we really have fun with, is

blending those influences together. That's what makes Manteca different."

As producer of the album, Zimbel went for an open feel. "I called myself the hole-keeper," he smiles, "because on many occasions I was just trying to keep the air, and leave the spaces alone."

"On 'Danceteria,' for example, we saw things as offsetting each other from a stereo perspective. On one side is a very, very dry synth, on the other is the guitar. We used no reverb and a lot of short delays, and really gave things their own space."

While the band's musical chops are well beyond reproach, one widespread and persistent criticism is that their music sometimes lacks an edge. That notion should be laid to rest with "Fungus Amongus," a brief, pungent percussion jam that's right in the pocket. And Manteca were spontaneous enough to record one track, "Heart of Darkness," in one day.

"We started at 10 a.m. and finished at 4 a.m. the next day," Zimbel recalls. "That was the only tune we did that way on the whole album. And it was really weird, because we put the drums down last."

As for the criticism, Zimbel understands. "What we've always tried to do is be accessible without being pappy. We've tried to allow

people the opportunity to dance if they want to, or to sit and think about the music if they want to."

"If people want to come out and move, fine; if they want to really listen, hopefully they'll find enough depth to keep them interested."

The record company's working on that possible interest. "They're treating us like a pop band," says Zimbel. "We have the T-shirts, the posters, the single, the video, and the 12-inch single. If we're going to compete in the pop-music game, we have to have the same tools as other musicians do."

Zimbel hopes Manteca's example might be encouraging to

young jazz-oriented players across Canada, who face great difficulty in pursuing a musical career these days. "I just hope that what we're doing might bring a little bit of strength to people who are out there thinking, 'God, there's not a chance in hell of doing it.' Really, really hard work and determination is the key."

HD



## Kim Mitchell

### SHAKIN' LIKE A HUMAN BEING

Alert Records  
Producer: Kim Mitchell  
Engineer: Paul Northfield  
Studio: Morin Heights, Montreal

Kim Mitchell's second solo album since splitting from Max Webster shows that he has struck a fine balance between his love affair with adolescent lunacy and well-tempered pop. Mainly, it shows his continued improvement as a writer - it's full of good hooks, solid compositions, and it rocks like hell led by his fiery

guitar, even though he's clipped his wings a bit.

In explaining why his solos are more concise on many new songs or non-existent, Mitchell said he had to find a middle ground between himself as producer and as a guitar player. "Oh that part was really hard. Because as an artist, I'd go, 'Well, if this thing is going to be on the radio, the last thing they're going to want is a fucking guitar solo.'"

Another adjustment for Mitchell and his three-piece band was that, unlike *Akimbo Alogo*, the new material was not already part of their stage show before they began recording. And for the single "Patio Lanterns", the

band put the song together in the studio without rehearsing it - a first for Mitchell.

"I walked into the studio and played it for the guys once with just an acoustic guitar and sang it," he said. The band didn't hear the song again until the bed tracks were finished and then, they started throwing it together. Basically we were running blind. I didn't even know there was going to be acoustic guitar on it. But for the other songs, we had a good month of rehearsals."

*Shakin'* is also a vastly improved 'sounding' album, and his first to be released on compact disc. He recorded on analog tape, mixed it down to digital, mastered it

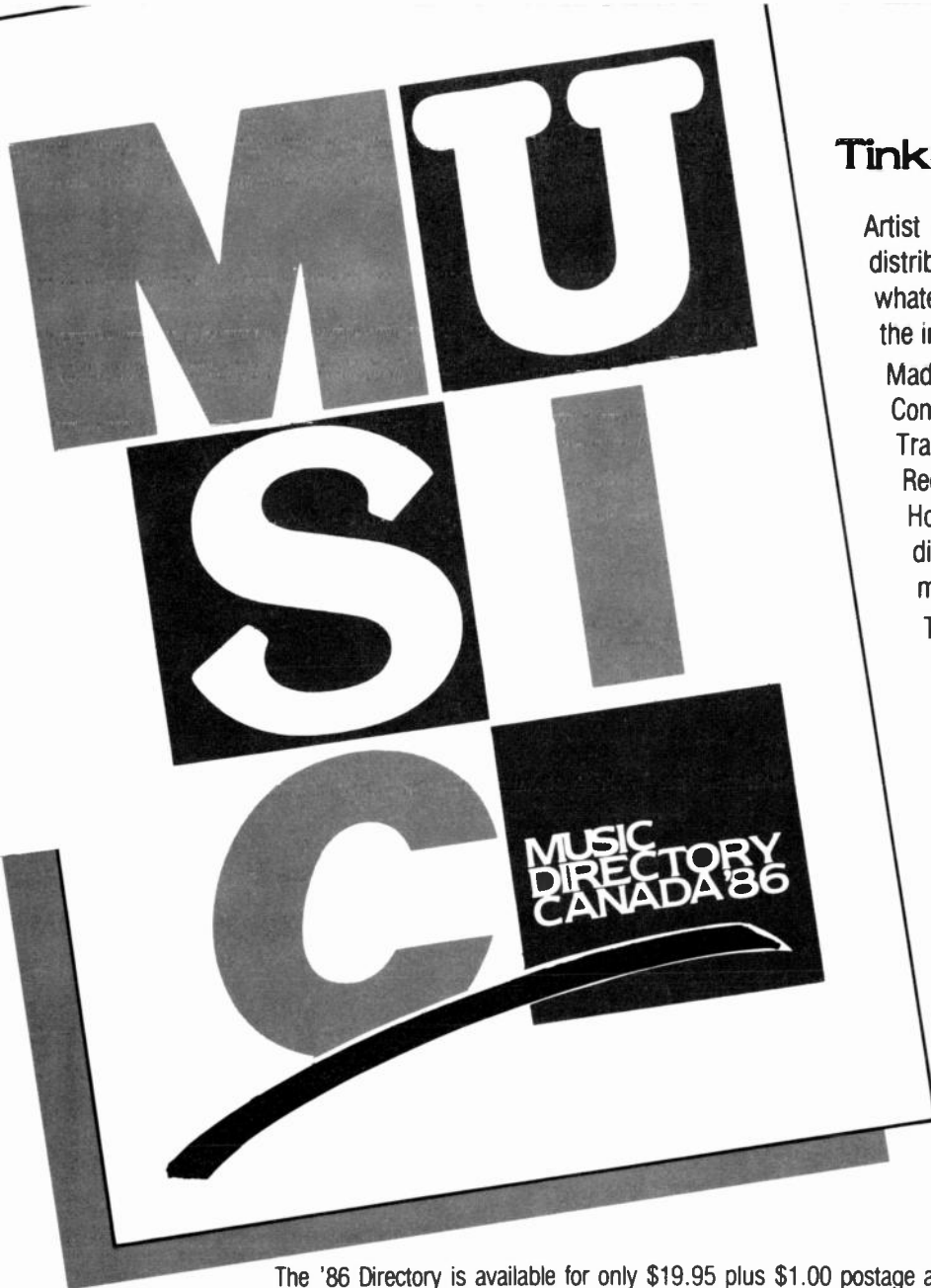
digitally and cut to metal. "Digital is more transient (than tape). I describe digital as like there are trap doors at your feet and they just open up and the bottom goes forever."

Mitchell said many rock albums are too abrasive when the volume is turned up, and he wanted "a clean, unabridged, punchy rock album."

"I wanted to be able to crank up my stereo and have it still pleasant to listen to even though there are distorted guitars and stuff."

Tim O'Connor





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World Radio History



## Cowboy Junkies

### WHITES OFF EARTH NOW

Lament Recordings  
Engineer/Recordist: Peter Moore

Cowboy Junkies play a style of music that has been conspicuously ignored by most contemporary urban bands – the blues, but with a twist. Instead of coping a traditional song and changing the lyrics, all but one of the songs on *Whites Off Earth Now* have “borrowed” words with original musical interpretations. Among the lyricists credited are John Lee Hooker, Robert Johnson, Lightning Hawkins and, surprisingly, Bruce Springsteen (for “Statetrooper” off the acoustic *Nebraska* LP).

While once the band had a “trashy, hard sound,” accor-

ding to bassist Alan Anton, Cowboy Junkies have gone for a “laid-back sparseness” that elevates them far and away above most of their peers. Using only basic instrumentation, (the band is comprised of Anton and three Timmins siblings: Michael on guitar, Peter on drums, vocals by Margot) and a minimal, practically non-existent, production they capture both the spirit and intent of the most primal form of rock music.

*Whites Off Earth Now* was recorded by Peter Moore who spends most of his time as producer/engineer for direct-to-disk classical music. Although he has worked with rock acts before (Robbie Rox, Sheep Look Up), he’s developed what Anton describes as a “purist” attitude towards recording that eschews electronically manipulating the sounds. He used an \$8,000 CALREC Sound

Field microphone (used in BBC studios), recorded directly to digital on a SONY F1 videotape recorder (it contains a decoder that turns analog to digital), and cut the record, “directly from the digital master tape onto the lacquer with no compression or EQing to lessen the dynamic range of the tape.” In all the record took eight hours to record, four hours to set up the master (to combat the “mediocrity of the system”) and two hours to cut.

The CALREC contains four internal mics that can manipulate the sound field in a limited way. You can focus in on the lower or higher frequencies and there is also a minimal amount of left and right panning available. An essential element to the process is using a room whose ambience you’re well acquainted with, and for that reason the album was recorded, literally, in a garage where the

band had done most of its rehearsing. Anton explained that, “the beauty of having everything on one mic is that you never have to worry about one mic being out of phase with any others.” The difficulty in the process is that there is no control after the fact on the volume of the recording. When, for example, there’s a guitar solo, Michael Timmins had to know exactly when and how far he should turn up his amp, or they’d have to start the song all over again. Even still, they only had to do three or four takes of each of the original twelve songs (there are nine on the LP) to find versions they were all pleased with.

Anton explains that Margot Timmins’ vocals went through, “a cheap P.A., but she stood close enough to the CALREC to get some natural voice sounds.

PS

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## Idle Eyes

### LOVE'S IMPERFECTION

Warner Brothers

*Produced by: Michael Beinhorn*

*Engineered by: Howard Rissen  
(Ocean Studio) and Bob Rock  
(Little Mountain Sound)*

Due for release on the Atlantic label in the United States, September 14, the second Idle Eyes album is preceded by the single "Sandra Doesn't Live Here Anymore."

It is a single whose fuller sound, sharper bite and rhythmic subtly characterize what is unmistakably a major leap for this Vancouver band which had recorded its first album before the original line-up had even played a gig or knew what it was supposed to sound like.

The present line-up, with latest addition Scotty Hall pro-

viding the gleaming, slashing guitarisms, was not so burdened, having spent the past year traipsing around concert halls and Top 40 bars with a Most Promising Juno in Tow.

It was, however, thrown for a loop when the first thing producer Michael Beinhorn did was to sit them down for a session of listening to music from Senegal, Vietnam, Eno's fertile brain, Billy Idol's fallow hips and New York's funky street-corners.

Inveterate liner note readers will know that the ex-Material jazz-funk-fusioneer also produced the second Parachute Club LP and will have recognized Beinhorn's knack for knitting together fluid, inventive and kinetic rhythm tracks. He repeats this trick on *Love's Imperfection*; the cassette-party of Senegalese do-wop and Harlem rap are the first step in this methodical madness.

"If you're making pop records, you should be at the forefront of pop music, not listening to what other people are already doing on their records," Beinhorn says, chagrined to admit that although he tried to avoid it, he succumbed to the temptation to employ the ever-popular (see: Phil Collins) Fairlight orchestral shot. "With the tapes I wanted the band to absorb the sensibility of it rather than listen for sounds."

This was fine with Idle Eyes leader Tad Campbell, who was ready to try on anything if it would subvert what people might expect of Idle Eyes.

"The new album has a lot of different feels," Campbell states, running down a track list that bounces in tone and intensity from "Sandra" to "Power Game" to "In Your Room." "My feeling is that it doesn't matter whether or not it has an Idle

Eyes "sound," it is whether the song is a good song."

The July signing with Atlantic held up the LP's release by a few months while the band and label dickered over whether to record an extra track. Ultimately they went with the current track listing and its promise of at least three singles - "Love's Imperfection", "Sandra", "Burning" and the LP's big ballad, "Silent Lies". The staggered, driving rhythm of "Power Game", spanish guitar solo by Hall on "Silent Lies", the dramatic "Lonely House" and hard rock of "Wind It Up" take Idle Eyes in directions undreamed of on their first LP.

*Love's Imperfection* was recorded at Ocean with the exception of drums, which were laid down at Little Mountain. The LP was mixed to digital (Mitsubishi A-800 two track) from Little Mountain's SSL board. **TH**

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## Tom Cochrane

### TOM COCHRANE AND RED RIDER

Capital Records

*Produced & Engineered by: Patrick Moran and Tom Cochrane, Ken Greer, Fraser Hill & Rick Hutt*

*Studios: Rockfield, Wales and Cedartree, Kitchener*

Tom Cochrane thinks the production on this record is, "the closest we've come to achieving what we initially went in to do." What they'd hoped to do was to, "keep the record simple and lean," and to, "create a more ambient live sound." But as more and more musicians are coming to realize these days, Cochrane among them, it appears that, "sometimes with traditional (sounding) songs, you have to approach them less traditionally."

Certain key instruments, particularly the twelve-string guitar, snare and high-hat, were enhanced or re-created technologically in order to find a happy medium between the "live sound" that Cochrane hoped for and a "trashy, bar-bandish" sound it might have been reduced to. Other aspects of the recording, including the vocals, guitar and steel guitar were recorded under much more time honoured conditions.

For the most part, Cochrane played his Gresch Nashville Tennesseean from the sixties, but instead of a twelve-string he used a Steinberger Trem Tron through a Rockman and delayed through AMS. He used a capo on the neck and used the Trem Tron to raise the pitch to a G. The result is almost indistinguishable from a Rickenbacker 12-string (so much so that while recording with it at Metalworks, Rik Emmett - a Trem Tron aficionado himself -

couldn't tell the difference). He describes it as having "almost a mandolin sound at the high range, and it stays in tune." He adds, however, that though Steinberger is, "good for clean 12-string sounds, if you played anything too high it would sound too perfect, instead of nasty like a Rickenbacker."

The snare was harmonized almost an octave higher and was played through a Yamaha REV 7 Digital Delay. On the record, though, you hear only the reverb, not the signal. Cochrane says that, "by utilizing that and leaving the other sounds dry gives it a spatial dimension." In addition, producer Patrick Moran would record certain drum sounds from as many as five different perspectives in the room, in order to create the "live" ambience. Occasionally a drum machine was used for the high end effects like high-hat and tambourine.

John Webster's keyboard parts

were kept "elegant and simple," for which he used primarily a PPG 2.3 and its catalogue of organ, string and "rural harmonium" sounds. An Emulator was used to add "texture and colour," and on some passages they'd use the echo of a sound, rather than the sound itself. Ken Greer played a 1963 Strat with a Badass pick-up and a hot-wired Fender pedal steel from the early fifties. For the latter a Dan Armstrong Purple Peaker was used as a compressor, and an Orange Squeazer was, "the only thing used in the chain for the steel guitar, Ken gets a lot of his sounds by technique."

Cochrane felt the vocals on his last album were, "too abrasive," so this time, "if the mood wasn't right we'd pack it in." Taking his time, he used a Shure SM 7 microphone found most often in radio stations, though both Gordon Lightfoot and Anne Murray use it as well.

PS

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World Radio History

# Product Report

## Alesis XT:c Digital Reverb Unit

BY JIM BURGESS

**T**he Alesis XT:c is a rack mount digital reverb processor with stereo inputs and outputs. It uses four basic reverb algorithms to generate a wide range of reverb effects.

Each algorithm has a basic program and a modified program that are preset by the manufacturer, although the user does have control over a number of reverb parameters at any time. Although it's not possible to actually store user modifications to a program, all changes can be made quickly from the front panel of the unit.

Predelay is available to delay the reverb signal by up to 200 ms. A separate decay control provides adjustment of the overall reverb decay time, with a maximum of 15 seconds available. Control of the frequency content of the reverberated signal is provided with a damping option which causes the high end of the reverb signal to decay faster than the low end, a useful capability for simulating natural rooms. A variable high frequency roll control is also available to filter out high end components in the output signal. Similarly, a low cut option permits the user to cut all frequencies below 200 Hz.

Hold is available to create the effect of infinite reverb. Sounds bounce con-

tinuously around an impossibly "live" room (the actual sound will vary depending on what algorithm is selected) to create a variety of unusual sonic textures.

The XT:c also provides controls for input and output levels, as well as a mix control to vary between wet and dry extremes.

The XT:c sounds great. Although the lack of complete programmability is obviously a limitation, I found that it was possible to create a wide range of reverb sounds quickly from the front panel. The reverb effects cover everything from small rooms to huge caverns, as well as some very contemporary sounds such as gated and reverse reverb. Unfortunately switching between the preset programs often causes a noticeable glitch in the sound. If you need to switch between programs in a mix this could create a problem. Furthermore, adjusting the decay time also causes some glitching in the output; no problem if you set up the sound and leave it, but not very useful for changing parameters within a mix or overdub. And, curiously the unit does not have the now almost obligatory MIDI port to permit program changes to be controlled from a sequencer or other MIDI device (if you need this capability, check out the Alesis MIDIVERB).

*(Jim Burgess owns and operates his studio Saved By Technology).*

## The Performer by Fender

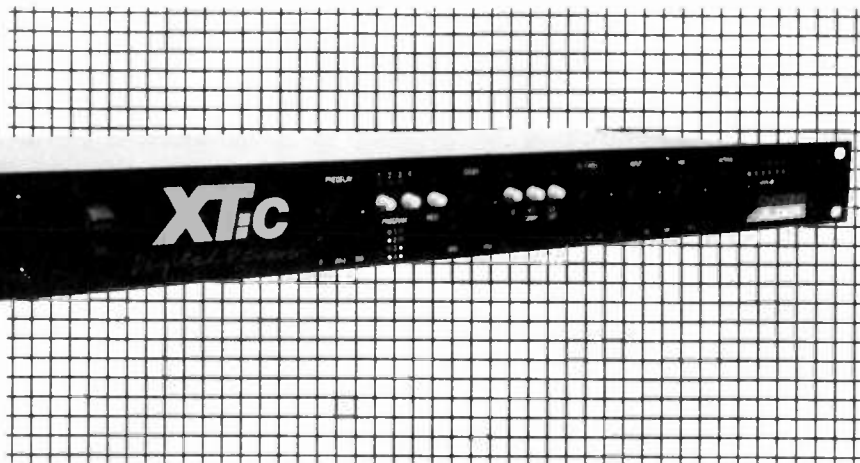
BY NORM McMULLEN

**W**hen certain manufacturers introduce new products or change which has become traditional, it usually causes heads to turn. It happened when the Volkswagen people opted for something new after decades of faithfully producing the ever popular "Beetle" - or when Coke announced it had a new taste. In similar fashion, Fender creates a little sensation when it launches a new product which doesn't seem to reflect that traditional Fender image we've come to know over the past thirty-plus years.

While the Fender Co. has developed different models throughout its history, the "Performer", its latest, has a radically different image. Perhaps its aim is to attract those in the market not inclined toward the more traditional Fender styled guitars: that is, thin, fast necks, single coil pick-ups and familiar Stratocaster or Telecaster body designs. For what is immediately striking about the Performer is its appearance. The body has neither the classically smooth lines of the Strat' nor the out and out chunkiness of the Tele'. Instead, it sits somewhere in between with its own unique "like it or leave it" body shape.

The body is made of bass wood to which is given a contoured waist and top bevel. It receives a polyurethane finish which is especially tough, durable and shiny. The maple neck is the adjustable bolt-on type with rosewood fret board providing 24 jumbo frets. The fretboard's profile curvature is flatter and the neck wider than that of a Tele' or Strat', giving it a more of a Les Paul feel. I found it very comfortable for chord changing and string bending.

Fender has kept the electronics relatively straight-forward while affording still a fairly wide variety of sounds. I'm unable to tell you what these two covered Humbuckers measure in at in terms of output but they deliver rich thick tone and are quite hot. Each can be made to func-





# Product Report

tion as a single-coil unit by the flick of a switch and, as such, produce that clear distinct Fender sound.

The controls are simple: one master volume, one master tone and a three-position selector switch. I was impressed with the general performance of the vibrato assembly. The arm had a smooth, not too rigid action when depressed, that suited my style well. In a couple of recent recording dates I gave the whammy bar a pretty vigorous workout. It held up very well requiring only minor tweaking of a couple of the six individual fine tuners located on the bridge assembly to restore it to pitch.

I like this guitar, aesthetics aside. Afterall, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It really does fulfill adequately the player's needs and that's what counts ultimately. All in all I had great fun playing the Performer and that's certainly criterion for judging just how well an instrument performs. (Norm McMullen is lead guitarist with *New Regime*.)

## FM Drawing Board, A Comprehensive DX-7 Editor-Librarian For The Apple II

BY RUSS WALKER

Software programs with musical applications make up a very small percentage when compared with all the business applications available. And since almost all of these products are developed south of our border, it's nice to come across someone who has developed a music program here in our own backyard.

The way to spot one of these data tweekers is by the dazed look in their eyes from months glued to a computer screen. It should be mentioned to their credit that these independent programmers are rarely hired to do this but rather work on their own time driven by a wild desire to create new and better programs.

Such a mastermind is Scott Carroll, who designed and wrote FM Drawing Board, working on the premise that the DX-7 would be a

much easier animal to leash if one had a visual aid to help program new sounds. Of course musicians have also demanded a better storage medium than costly RAM cartridges that don't hold many sounds.

To make sure I got the full picture on this comprehensive tool, I had Scott come down to the studio and give me a full tour of the program. I should mention that the package includes a 99 page manual written by John Amadio that covers every detail of the application for those musicians who think computers are only used by accountants.

### The Bank Editor and Patch Librarian

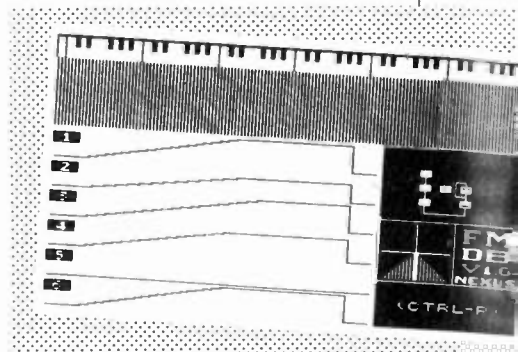
The FM DB can hold two banks of 32 sounds at any given time as well as providing two voice buffers to facilitate moving the sounds to the voice editor, sending them back and forth from the DX, or just rearranging them within the bank. These banks are catalogued on the disk for speedy access. There is a help screen to give you a list of the commands available and I found it took little time to find my way around this part of the program.

### The Voice Editor

Here's where FM DB gets interesting. At any time, while working in the librarian area, you can quickly move to the editing screen and tweek one of your sounds, or, create a completely new one.

The voice editor displays two operator envelopes at a time for editing and analysis. Below the high resolution graphics display there are four lines of text which show all the parameters for the operator currently being edited. You also have the option of viewing all six operator envelopes on the same screen. The graphic representation of the envelope of an operator displays a measure of the volume (across time) of that operator during the playing of a note. On the DX-7 there are eight parameters which together make up the shape of an envelope, four levels and four rates. For those who own a DX-7 and have experienced frustration while programming I can't say enough about how much more easy it is (not to mention more fun!), when you have a graphic display while editing.

Here are some of the features of



the voice editor: **SWEEPING PARAMETERS**; FM DB provides a feature that allows you to quickly sweep through the values of any envelope parameter and see the different envelopes as overlays on the same screen.

**COPYSWAP**; this allows you to copy data from one operator to another or swap data between two operators.

**MANUSCAN**; allows you to display the harmonic content of a modular/carrier pair at any point in time. This is a unique feature that lets you see the harmonic content of a note change as you change the modulating operator.

**DESCRAMBLER**; Scott tells me he feels that the order in which the algorithms are arranged in the diagram on the DX-7 doesn't make it easy to relate similar algorithms to each other and thereby try out sounds with these related algorithms. In the manual then, he has included a new order of the algorithms to simplify this task. Since algorithms 28 and 7 are musically similar, they appear consecutively in the new ordering. You also have the ability to change algorithms and retain all operator data.

Even though the manual is both thorough and easy to understand, Scott has placed help screens in the different areas of the program so that you can move quickly from day one.

Conclusion; FM Drawing Board is a well put together package that must be seen if you own an Apple II computer.

(Russ Walker is engineer at Sound Design studio in Toronto).

# The TOA D-5.5 Electronic Music Mixer

BY DAVE McNALLY

It is nice to know that someone out there cares about the needs of the lowly electronic musician. Buried in a sea of cables, surrounded by MIDI-fied electronic keyboards, he desperately searches for the intelligent (but until now, missing) answer to the proverbial dilemma; "What manner of thing can I plug all these patchcords into, and how can I afford it without selling my girlfriend into white slavery?" Well, the incredibly sympathetic engineers at TOA Electronics have come to the rescue, in the form of the D-5.5 electronic music mixer.

The D-5.5 is a rugged, good looking 8-input stereo mixer that incorporates all the necessary features (and the odd whistle or bell) that demanding electronic music makers have been asking for since the earth Mooged.

## System Features

The mixer has 8 inputs, 4 sub groups and a stereo and mono sum output (8x4x2x1). It has been thoughtfully designed to be expandable to 32 inputs by adding two D-5.5E expansion units.

An interesting feature is the ability of the rear panel to rotate 90 degrees so that the mixer may be used console-style, or as a rack-mountable unit.

Perhaps the most unique and endearing thing about the unit, is the presence of a 2 input by 4 output MIDI thru function, allowing one to patch up to 4 MIDI keyboards, controlled by up to two slaves, without the time delays associated with cascading MIDI gear.

Input channels 7 & 8 have stereo RIAA inputs for turntables with magnetic cartridges. In my system, this feature allowed for some great equalized samples into my Emulator II, thru the sum output on the D-5.5.

The D-5.5 has two auxiliary sends, which can be "pre-EQ and fader" "QR" post-EQ and pre-fader," or "post-EQ and fader." This allows terrific flexibility in setting up

isolated monitor mixes. The auxiliary sends may also double as effects sends, in case you want to do George Martin impersonations. There is also a regular effects patching loop, which (get this!) is returnable to all four groups, stereo left or right and auxiliary 1 or 2 - plus it has crossfade, pan and level controls. As if all this isn't enough, there's an on-board spring reverb (mono) which is post EQ and fader.

## DX7 Memory/Function Expander By Grey Matter Response

BY JIM BURGESS

Looking back to the dawn of the MIDI Age, it's amazing to see how far the MIDI capabilities of instruments have come along in the short couple of years since the first MIDI synths became available. Yamaha's DX7 is one of the very first MIDI instruments and also happens to be the single most commercially successful MIDI product ever developed. These unusual circumstances have created an entire sub-market for products that add new features to support the multitude of DX7s out there.

None of these products seem to be nearly as complete and sophisticated as one developed by a small but ingenious Chicago-area company known as Grey Matter Response. E! defies simple description; it adds such a wide range of brand new capabilities to the DX that you end up wondering how they did it.

Most of E!'s capabilities can be broken down into one of the following categories:

- Memory expansion and management;
- Improved MIDI implementation and capabilities;
- New master controller and live performance features.

E! is an innocent-looking circuit board with an array of chips that is installed inside the DX7 and replaces 2 of the Yamaha ROMs which are part of the DX's operating system. Installation is straightforward and simple, although Grey Matter do recommend that you

have it done by a qualified service outlet. The installation takes about 15 minutes for a technician to complete. If you really must do it yourself the manual does contain the necessary instructions and only the simplest of tools are required. Properly installed, the board looks and feels secure and able to withstand a lot of moving around.

Unlike most other DX add-ons, E! does not require the installation of switches or rotary pots on the exterior of the DX7. Once the installation of the board is complete, all of E!'s operations are accessed from new software pages controlled from the DX's regular touch button/data slider system. As a matter of fact, Grey Matter's latest add boldly proclaims, "Knobs are for doors!"

Both Yamaha Canada and Yamaha International (US) have, after inspection of E!, stated that the installation of E! in a DX7 does not void their warranty if installed by an authorized Yamaha Service Center. Far from not supporting the product, Yamaha has played an important part in the development of E! by providing the technical information that its designers needed to develop the product.

Armed with the necessary technical information, E!'s designers Steve and Jack Kellogg set out to completely rewrite the DX7's operating system, adding features and capabilities that probably hadn't been thought of back when Yamaha engineers created the instrument.

The operation of E! is straightforward and logical. Like a regular DX, selecting "Function Select" brings you into the page where the function parameters are normally accessed (the "brown" parameters on the DX panel). Once inside the Function Page, however, two brand new pages can be selected by using the "Operator Select" button to step through them. The MIDI Page addresses most of E!'s MIDI functions and the Memory Control Page provides management of E!'s large sound memory. The "Operator Select" button is used to cycle through all 3 available pages from within the Function Mode. □



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## MAKE THE RECORD FROM HELL



# MPH

BY PERRY STERN

Whoever invented the term "Rock 'n' Roll Machine" must have had a band very much like Triumph in mind. In the face of radio programmers that have gone soft-headed with yuppieism, against an ever-changing backdrop of fashion conscious video personalities calling themselves musicians, and in the wake of a tidal wave of pseudo-disco and stadium anthems, Triumph relentlessly churns out a style of music that the experts regularly pronounce to be deadlier than a doornail. And if it weren't for the millions of people who regularly buy Triumph records and attend Triumph concerts, the experts would be right.

Mike Levine, Gil Moore and Rik Emmett have been making records for ten years now ("eleven in September," Emmett corrects). *The Sport of Kings* is their ninth and, though they're loathe to admit it, its importance in the future of Triumph's career is pivotal. It's not so much a matter of how well the record will sell, a band rarely has had so solid a base of fan support as this one, rather it seems really to be more important that the album be *appreciated*. And it's not as though the band will crumble if things don't work out as well as they hope, but the prospect of making the *tenth* album will be that much less attractive. Recording, on any level, is hard work, but for Triumph, *The Sport of Kings* may just as well have been called *The Record From Hell*.

There's something milquetoast about seeking "appreciation" (a word the band would *never* use), but in the context of heavy rock music, being appreciated – by one's peers, by the press, by record companies – or, rather, not being appreciated is the albatross around many a guitar-star's neck. People just don't seem to take the art form seriously. But the fans do, and one of Triumph's greatest triumphs has been the ability to look their critics squarely in the eye and wait for as long as it takes for them to blink. And the critics always have to blink first because, in the end, they have to admit that

Triumph is one of Canada's, if not North America's most successful rock acts. We're talking consistency here, and endurance.

A year-and-a-half ago, after many months of litigation, Triumph made the move from RCA to MCA. The album *Thunder Seven* (which went platinum) was released almost immediately, and the double live set *Stages* (which is now close to double platinum status) followed after about nine months. For the band, and for the record company, the next release would actually be the "first" MCA/Triumph release because, as Moore describes it, the other two albums were more or less "inherited" from RCA. "They made only one request in the entire first year-and-a-half of our relationship," Moore says of MCA, and it was to, "use a producer and have it be Ron Nevison."

Now while that may seem an innocuous request, especially with Nevison fresh off the success of his efforts with Heart, Survivor and Ozzy Osborne, the fact of the matter was that Triumph never had more than a co-producer on any of their previous albums. Even still, the band met the request with enthusiasm. The prospect of working with a hot producer piqued the boys' interest and the possibility of getting radio airtime with the help of Nevison's expert ministrations was a key factor in setting the deal. You didn't hear heavy rock on AC radio until Heart's last album with Nevison at the helm came out, and with the door broken down MCA wanted Triumph to get inside, quick. "They were looking for the guy with the magic wand," Moore says.

The plan was simple. Starting in January, Nevison and his partner Mike Klink, would start working with the band in pre-production. After the bed tracks were laid, Nevison would split to record Night Ranger (a project he never completed), and Klink would be in charge of the overdubs of vocals and guitars. When that was through, Nevison would return for the final mix and mastering. Nevison said he had some songs, exclusive songs, that he would bring with him into the project. Everyone wanted this record to be the band's most popular and they felt that

more variety in the songwriting would be desirable for embracing a larger, broader audience. "It was an effort," Klink says, "predetermined by the record company and the band, to get a commercial sound."

The plan was simple. Get some good tunes, get some expert outside input, get a real tight sound, then run the flag up the pole and see who salutes. After eight albums done *their* way, Triumph was prepared to give the other way a shot. They would even do some recording in L.A. What the hell, they thought, maybe a change of location will do some good. But even the best laid plans, especially simple ones, sometimes go awry.

All three members of Triumph are quick to point out that they hold no grudges against Nevison professionally. Levine, who worked most closely with him, calls Nevison a "brilliant recording technician," but in the insular world of a three-piece group, Nevison was like a bull in a china shop. The role of the producer is to take charge, give direction, make decisions, and there are a number of ways you can go about it. You can cajole, seduce, or demand, and Nevison opted for the latter. "It was his way or the highway," Emmett recalls. Levine would add later, punctuated with wry laughter, that it was an ineffective way to deal with "a bunch of old farts like us." During pre-production there was plenty of talking, lots of room for discussion, but that all changed and, as Levine says, "you have to be consistent." When it came time to actually lay the bed tracks, Nevison took complete control and the band felt shut out. Levine said it was as though Nevison was "changing horses midstream." Moore is more colourful; "It was like the full moon came out and hair started growing out of his face and hands."

Up to a point the band was more than willing to take it all in stride. They had made their commitment to Nevison, and there was his track record to consider (let alone a contract), and he *did* get an excellent drum sound for the beds, so everybody grinned and bore it. Feeling a little stepped-on was probably a "natural reaction" for Emmett. As far as being even slightly resentful about the tem-



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porary loss of control, he says that, "I think if you're artistic and conscientious about your work you feel that way" when someone else is in charge. "Ron was the first guy in eleven years to be let into the family circle," Emmett explains, "and this guy wants to be the patriarch."

Everything was fine until someone heard "One Chance," one of the "exclusive" tracks Nevison brought to the project, on the radio. And then the video was seen on TV. Emmett gives Nevison the benefit of the doubt by allowing that

the producer had his eye on the American market and that a domestic release by the song's Canadian writer, Stan Meissner, wouldn't effect a Triumph version, but Moore says, "We felt it hurt our integrity somewhat." Arguing over the practicality of keeping the song, and the reasoning behind Nevison's claims of "exclusivity" was the straw that broke the camel's back. Nevison cited "artistic differences" and never returned to the project after his initial involvement with the bed tracks ended.

"Producers leave records all the time," Levine explains with a shrug, and Nevison's departure was hardly treated as

a catastrophe. He is even philosophic about it. "When I heard about 'One Chance' I knew we needed a new song right away. I phoned Ricky and told him we needed a good Triumph rock 'n' roll tune and that he should go away and just woodshed 'til he got one. The song 'Somebody's Out There Somewhere' turned out so good it'll be the first single. Out of all negatives comes something positive." The problem wasn't so much that Nevison had quit, it was that the record was set up to accommodate his working style. It was too late in the day to re-schedule and re-locate the recording of an album that was half finished. It was already mid-May, and the record was to be finished in June.

The guys in Triumph aren't the kind of people who spend a lot of time kicking themselves if they think a mistake's been made. Not with studio time booked. When Mike Levine talks about the band "united", you know he means it, and that, as a rock 'n' roll machine, there would be no stopping the Triumph train once it got back on track. With Nevison gone, Klink was now the nominal producer - a situation that no one had a problem with.

"It started out as a 50/50 proposition

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*"Making an album is like passing a watermelon every single time."*  
**Gil Moore**

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with Ron," says Klink, "and then it became 100 per cent mine. It was only hard as far as the hours were concerned." Without Nevison, Levine had to re-gear his thinking about his role in the project and play catch-up with Klink. Now at the overdub phase, he had to hear all the tracks and all the takes so that he could be sure that he was satisfied with the work so far. Separated by the recording process, the band had not been communicating with each other about how they thought things were going. With Nevison gone, they were free to vent their frustration about the "experiment," and rallied around each other.

Because Nevison and Klink wanted to work on their home turf, the recording and mixing of *The Sport of Kings* was done primarily at the Record Plant in Los Angeles. None of the band was pleased with the situation (if you owned the best recording studio in the country, would you want to record anywhere else?) but they were resigned to it. The person who found it hardest was Levine, who returned to his traditional band role as man-behind-the-console with Klink. Moore says that it was hard for Mike because he had "no point of reference" for how the rooms in LA could sound.

For example, while Triumph usually

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records their drum tracks in the empty warehouse next door to Metalworks, this time Moore played in L.A. "The room was interesting because of its volume," Moore recalls. He estimates its dimensions as 65 x 65 x 24. "The room had a controlled ambience," Emmett adds. "There were ambient mikes that were high up in the back of the room so that it sounded like the kick was already gated. The delay it had sounded like gated reverb with ambient sustain." Unfortunately, though, Moore felt that there was "no value in the close miking."

For his part, Klink held up admirably and hung on to the basic plan he and Nevison had for the album from the beginning. A fastidious engineer, and a stickler for detail, Klink wanted to give Triumph a "tighter sound, more structured than it was before." While recording the drums he had the snare heads changed daily. He made Emmett retune his guitar after every take ("It drove me crazy," he confesses.) "It was a little difficult at first, but I think they need that outside input. They're not used to working as hard as I pushed them, doing parts over, getting them right." In the end,

***"No matter what the hassles were, or how much grief, I think the record is better because of everybody's involvement." Mike Levine***

during the arduous mixing process, he and Levine worked together, eighteen hours a day for thirty days. Laughing, satisfied with the final product, delighted to be finished, Levine states categorically that, "There's no way I'm ever going to record or mix a record in LA again."

If *The Sport of Kings* was, in fact, *The Record From Hell* for Triumph, it was a hard time born from a great idea. With a new label behind them, and a fresh outlook on the music scene, they wanted to break out of the cubbyhole that most of the industry had slotted them in. "Radio is ridiculously tight now," Moore explains. "It's really unfortunate for new talent. Shrinking playlists do nothing but destroy an industry that radio helped to create." For some time now it's been de rigueur to trash bands like Triumph in the press. "The fortunate thing for us," says Emmett, "is that we've got a base of fans who believe in us and who know they aren't going to get short-changed no matter what media shifts there are." Ever mindful of this Klink explains that while they may have gone for a more "pop" oriented sound he knew that, "to take a band like Triumph with a heavier rock

sound, you have to make sure it still represents the band." No one involved with the project thinks even one Triumph fan will be disappointed, and that, to a certain extent, is the bottom line.

"A learning experience" is how everyone, Levine, Moore, Emmett, and Klink, regards the making of Triumph's ninth album. If nothing else, the band learned how strong their bonds were to each other, and how well they could pull together when the going got tough. Levine says: "The bottom line for any band on the success ladder (if you want to climb it) is you have to trust some people, but you have to trust yourself first.

You have to at least *think* you know what you're doing and not let anybody convince you that you don't. As soon as you become insecure about what you're doing you're not going to be able to perform properly no matter what your task is. If anybody is allowed to instill any self-doubt in you, it will affect your performance."

The plan was simple, and though the course may have been rougher than they expected and they changed jockeys midrace, Mike Levine, Gil Moore and Rik Emmett are happy to be standing in the winner's circle with *The Sport of Kings*.

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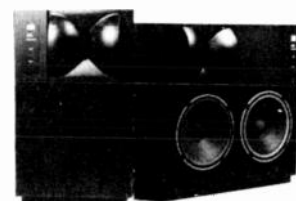
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## THE INSIDE TRACK ON THE SPORT OF KINGS

**Drums:** Gil Moore says that Nevison and Klink focused on the snare and kick sounds in order to get the "pop" sound they wanted. Nevison, he says, "didn't spend an inordinate amount of time chasing sounds except for kick and snare. I would see that as a result of his being more commercially oriented in his approach to drums." They brought in a "snare specialist" – Emmett says he was "a guy from Detroit with a southern accent and we called him Tex" – who used what Moore thought of as an interesting innovation. "He brought in five numbered snares that weren't old or rare but they were reconditioned so that they were better. Where the snare crosses over the bearing edge he lowered the bearing edge by about 1/32 of an inch so that the snare head is not taut right at that particular point. The bearing edge is perfectly smooth all around except for these two slight depressions where the snare crosses them. It had a very positive effect."

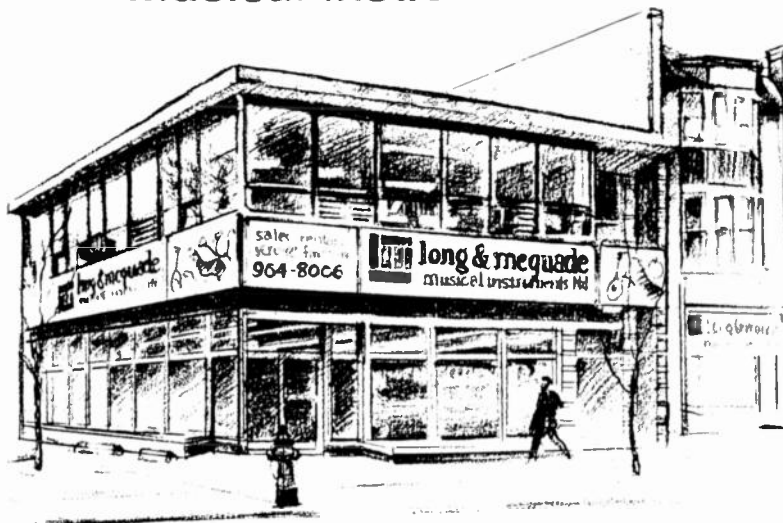
**Guitar:** Rik Emmett says he used a lot of new guitars on the record, mainly Yamahas, but also a Steinberger with a trans trem ("it's like a whammy bar that locks"). He used the latter on the song "If Only". "It's in the key of D minor with special tuning where you drop the E string down to a D. I used the trans trem to take the tuning of the guitar up a full tone so I could play it with A minor fingerings in the first position."

"I played pretty melodically on this record. A lot of that was Klink's influence. As I mature as a player that's something I value more highly. When you're young and aggressive and you want to show off your chops, you play really wild to impress everybody. But as you get older you realize it's not as valuable as finding the right melodic statement to be making and trying to remain appropriate to the song."

**Bass:** Not to minimize Mike Levine's efforts, but as Emmett says, "Levine? He didn't do anything he'd never done before." Speaking for himself, he gives an audible shrug and says, "I used the same '59 Fender Jazz I've used for eons." Levine plays keyboards as well, and on *The Sport of Kings* he was joined by three other keyboardists who added frills and flourishes to the record. Lou Pomanti and Scott Humphries played on all the tracks on the record (Humphries did most of the programming) except on "Just One Night" which was recorded in Los Angeles with Mike Bodicker. They used an Emulator, two DX-7s, a PPG and an Emulator SP12 drum machine. □



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# DAVID FOSTER

# M

THE MAN IN THE

IDDLE OF THE

Right down the middle of the road is where I belong," declares producer-composer-arranger-musician-expatriate David Foster. His work on, among many others, Barbra Streisand's "Somewhere", Anne Murray's "Now and Forever" and his own "Love Theme from *St Elmo's Fire*" have made the man an MOR icon over the last year, hardly a status that curries favour with the hawks of the critical establishment who scorn him as a Malibu-tanned ambassador of the music industry as platinum-coated Mammon. But viewed within the framework of his own cheerily disarming definition, Foster has few peers.

And perhaps that definition doesn't do him strict justice. "My strength could be fairly pigeonholed as 'easy listening'," he adds. To be sure, his rep rests on Streisand, Murray, Chicago's big ballads, Kenny Rogers' silken crooners. But you also have to reckon in Herbie Hancock, Bill Withers, Earth, Wind and Fire, not to mention Chaka Khan and her splendiferous belter, "I Feel for You". (Even Foster finds his flair for r'n'b amusingly incongruous. "I don't know where it comes from - there weren't any black families when I was growing up in Victoria, I never even *heard* of Marvin Gaye till I was 21...maybe it's reincarnation".)

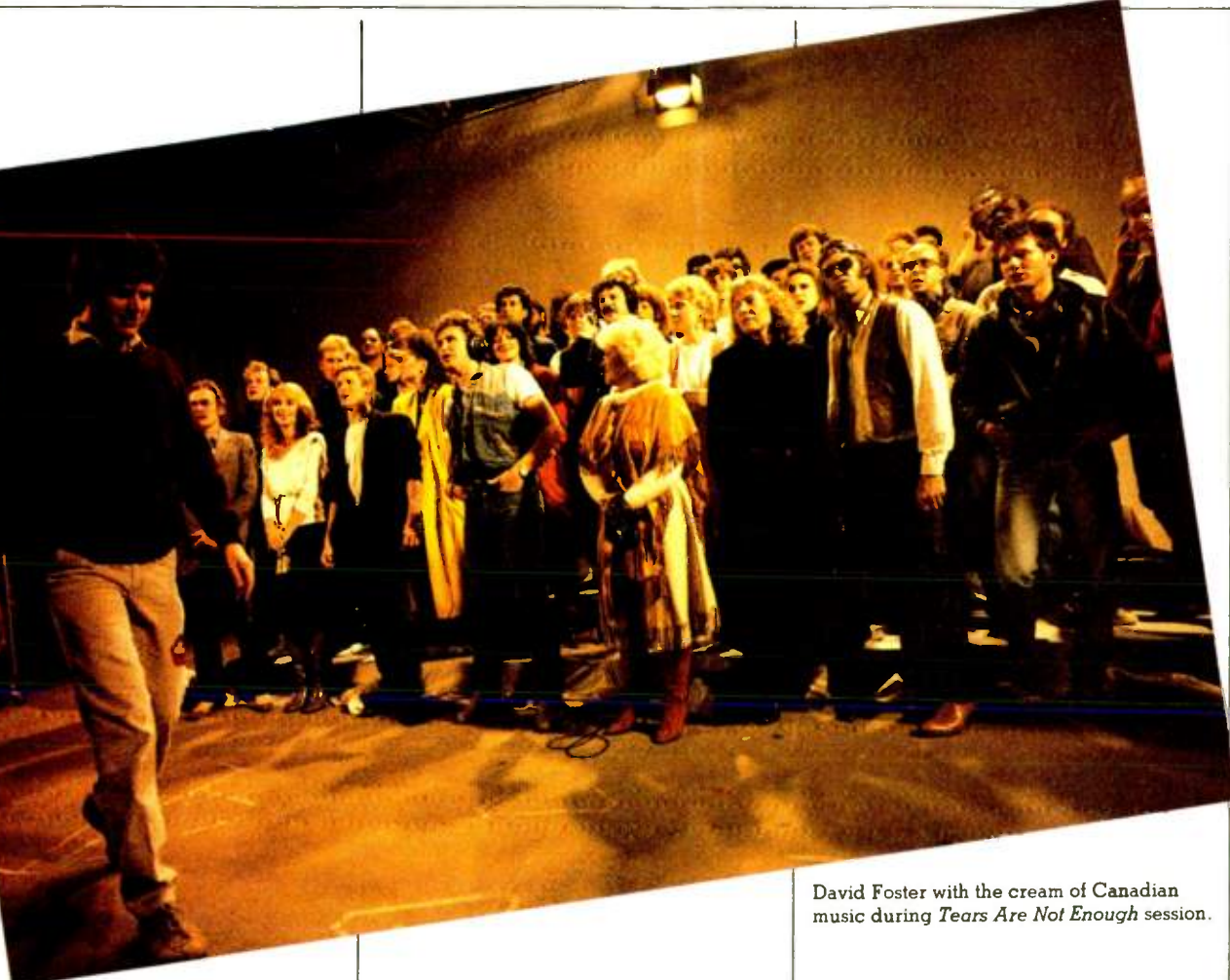
BY TIM BLANKS

In fact, Foster says he's comfortable with just about any kind of music, but he's imposed limits on himself. When he says, "I can't do everything," he really means "I *won't* do everything". Take for example, his attitude to what he calls "the English movement" - "I love it but I don't feel music that way." Not even as a challenge? "Of course I could fake my way through producing an act like Tears for Fears because they would only need someone to bounce ideas off. They would be doing the bulk of the work. But on most of the records I produce, *I* do the bulk of the work. That's the way I like it, even if it limits me to the way *I* write and play."

Which cues a discussion on the role of the producer. In the past, Foster has compared the making of an album to a marriage, with all the problems that attend forced intimacy between two virtual strangers. The options are simple - hands on or hands off. Foster

is most definitely from the first school of thought. "I'm the guy who'll be saying 'You need to get to the chorus earlier and you need to change the chords around before the chorus - let me show you,' and bang! I get the keyboard out and I show them how to do it. On most of the records I produce, I play most of the instruments."

If this sounds like producer-as-musician's nightmare, it should come as no surprise to learn that Foster's various "marriages" have been coloured by clashing temperaments and mixed feelings on the part of some of the "brides", even as they enjoy their Foster-spawned success. Discretion dictates that he not exhume the gory details, but he lets slip a couple of telling tales. The Tubes, for instance, could never sell more than 150,000 copies an album until they recorded *She's a Beauty* with Foster. It went on to sell 750,000, but by that time band members had already soured on what they saw as their usurpation by all the session musicians Foster brought in. His tyranny also cooled what had been a particularly successful partnership with Peter Cetera of Chicago. Cetera has left the band, Foster has just finished work on *Chicago 18* with another singer. He's philosophical about the personality problem. "Maybe it's wrong of me, but if an act



David Foster with the cream of Canadian music during *Tears Are Not Enough* session.

isn't delivering the goods on its own, then it's up to me to make it work so the act *can* deliver." Still, his measure of doubt reflects the relatively recent concern within the industry about the role of the so-called superstar producers, men like Foster and Trevor Horn whose creative tyranny is occasionally at odds with the talents they're supposed to be showcasing. "What you're saying is we maybe have too much control...there's some validity to that," Foster muses, "and the next five years are going to make the issue even more interesting. But we didn't plan it that way. We were just doing our job." And of course, the big, fat bottom line is that acts still have the option of *not* going to Foster, Horn and their ilk, a fact which Foster himself drums home as often as possible. "I've only said a thousand times that I have a formula for making records and if you don't like my sound or the songs I write, then don't even come to me."

On the other hand, signing on his services doesn't automatically mean Foster-ization either. "I'm as capable of *not* putting my personality on a record. I would say anyone listening to *She's a Beauty* would have a hard time trying to figure out if I had

anything to do with it, when in fact I produced, co-wrote and played on it."

The same might apply to Streisand's version of "Somewhere" on her *Broadway Album*. Foster quite deservedly regards the song as a triumph, not least because it involved the meeting and melding of two very distinct brands of perfectionism. "She's a perfectionist on a whole different level," he says. "She worries about things I wouldn't worry about in a million years." One instance he recalls is a problem with the echo on a certain word in the song. Because echo pots on a sound board aren't notched like EQ controls, it's impossible to return to the exact same spot with each pass of a mix, so Foster would just crank up the knob till the word sounded right. Streisand on the other hand is so fine-tuned that she could detect the difference every time. A perfect opportunity for fireworks? "Not by any stretch. She invigorated me. I felt I learned from her."

The emotional fallout from the marriage between Foster's eerie, keening electronic arrangement and Streisand's curiously desolate passion is such that any suggestion of "easy listening" is swept clean away. Not so,

unfortunately, with Foster's own recently-released solo album, which embodies the failings of the genre (uninvolving, forgettable, too much Muzak and not enough music.) The self-titled solo could legitimately be considered Foster's first (even though it yielded five songs that became hits for others, his 1983 Japanese recording was a strictly limited edition), which goes some way to excusing its tentative nature. However, failings notwithstanding, the album's already had some very positive results. Firstly, it's given Foster an invaluable artist's perspective on the producer's role. He ruefully confesses, "I became the artist I hoped I'd never be - the little guy who takes the tapes home at night and analyses them. I've now realised it's an artist's right to walk up to the producer and say, 'Hey, I don't like the way this sounds and I think we should recut it'. And if I don't have a great comeback, then we should recut the song, because they are the artists and they've hired me to do a job. I'll be trying to take that into account from now on, and that's a direct result of my experience with my own album."

Secondly, Foster's solo project has





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"Just beyond the fringe but worth the drive."

# DAVID FOSTER

contributed to his ongoing reevaluation of his relationship with the hightech machinery that's practically overwhelming the business of making music these days. As the comprehensive listing of robot keyboards on the liner notes suggests, Foster is making the most of the new technology, but he's also feeling ambiguous about its benefits. It's a relief to hear him declare that acoustic piano is "the most emotional instrument". After all, his roots are in classical training on the proverbial battered stand-up, an early appreciation of Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett, the Beatles... all of them good old *human* sounds. Like many keyboard players, he was overwhelmed by the potential of the Minimoog and the ARP string ensemble when Gary Wright introduced them to him while he was working on Wright's *Dream Weaver* album in the mid-Seventies. "Instead of writing a string chart and wondering what it sounded like, I could go into the next room and *play it*", he remembers. But now Foster is mortified that an entire swatch of sound can be programmed, then released at the touch of a button. "I pride myself that, with the records we make, the machines don't *sound* like machines. The trick is in achieving *depth* of sound". Through engineer Humberto Gatica, he's learned that depth is possible with delays and different kinds of echoes. And he always tries to mix in some *human* element - real drums overdubbing drum machines, computerised bass with real piano and live pads on top...and Foster likes to think 99% of the public won't know the difference between that sound and the machine-generated strings on "Somewhere". "At least, I have to believe that in my heart, otherwise I'm in trouble."

It's another disarming admission from a man whose brash exterior seems to allow little room for self-doubt. But self-doubt is precisely the mood that dogs David Foster as he faces the challenge of a career out there on his own. He's not wild about the look the record company imagemakers have saddled him with (he's actually much better-looking than those mousse-ed and stubbled cover shots let him be); he's unsure about the pressure he's under to *sing* more. And by way of closing our conversation, he issues one graceful plea for a little leeway to make mistakes. "I figure at this stage of my career, I should be allowed the luxury of having a little time to find an image, both musically and physically." □

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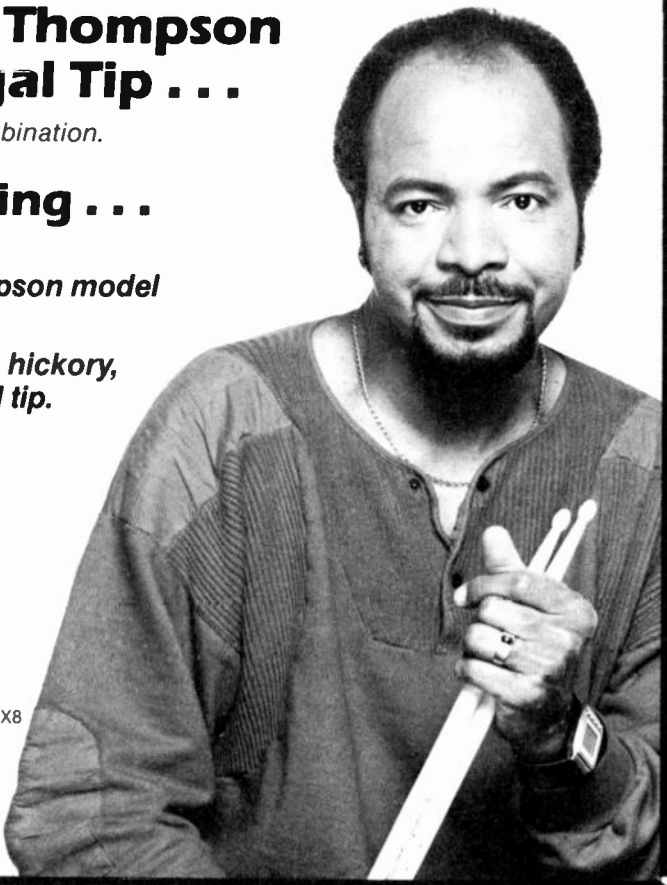
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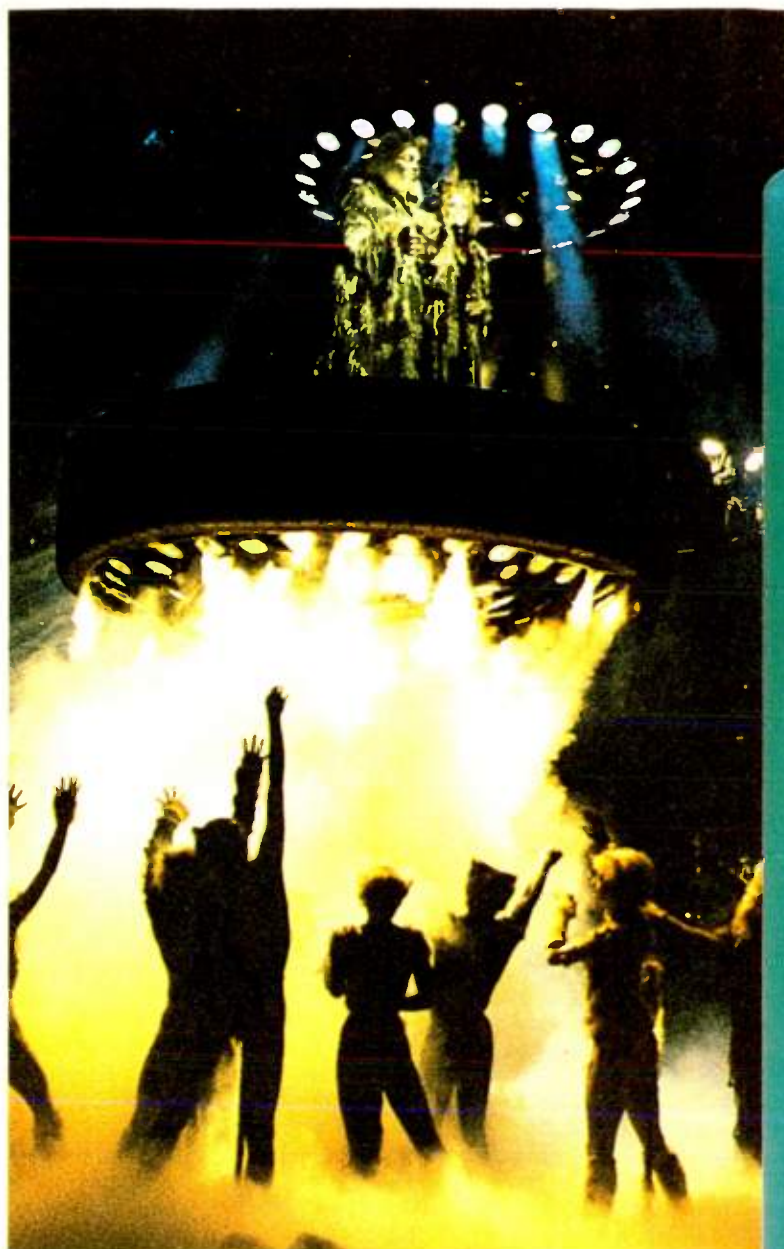


PHOTO BY LOU GLUCK



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# ON TOUR IN CANADA

# SURVIVING THE ROAD

BY JONATHAN GROSS

I can tell you exactly when I'm going to get diarrhea. Two days into Saskatchewan usually.

— Kim Mitchell

'Bushead and 'Head monsters' are two totally different things.

— Derry Grehan,  
Honeymoon Suite

Such are bywords, bylaws and general bullshit that goes with touring in Canada, a country whose unique problems offer a nocturnal terrain as tough to cross as the Himalayas. Where the only freaks are July snowstorms in Alberta and many groupies haven't solved the problem of facial hair. No van is too rusted, no guarantee too small, no venue too wretched. But everybody with a drive to succeed and license to drive does it, following a set of rules inscribed and reinscribed

ed almost daily on a soggy deli tray in pencil.

"I remember once we had a bread truck as our touring coach and it got a flat during a snowstorm somewhere in Ontario," recalls Kim Mitchell, in an experience typical to just about every rocker in the country. "And we had no jack. Everybody had to get out and lift it with the equipment inside. The first time around we managed to put the rim on backwards. I think my fingers were permanently disfigured for the rest of the tour."

Not that Mitchell or anyone else makes any great sums for their trouble. Mitchell says that his recent *Shaking Like A Human Being* tour was the first to actually make him any money, and only enough to keep him going until it's time to record the next album. But those aren't fabulous returns for seventeen years of pain and suffering. "Look, I would never have been in this business if I wanted to make any money," says Mitchell.

There is always that bit of noble sacrifice for the craft. But what starts the engines is more a combination of circumstance and happenstance. There is, usually, rent to pay or a manager in the background paying a phone bill, maybe even a record or video on the charts or a new guitarist to break in.

"I always felt that the reason guys like Paul Dean (of Loverboy) made it was because they didn't complain about what we put on their plate," says Ed Smeall of The Agency, Canada's one-stop for domestic talent in both the bar and concert variety. "You go back to Dean's days with Scrubbaloe Caine and Cannonball and see where he played. I'd get him a week in the Kapuskasing Inn and all he'd say was 'Thanks'."

"But then you'd get guys like Streetheart and Kenny Shields who were always giving me a so-and-so hard time

because their managers were telling them so. Now they're broke because they wouldn't work with what we gave them."

So be nice to the people you meet on the way up....

But there is a larger picture. Canada does not play the same as it did ten or fifteen years ago. In some ways it's better in others it's worse.

On an entry level, it has become virtually impossible to play the bars outside of your neighbourhood with an original repertoire. Not only has the club business dried up - Smeall says his club vs. concert ratio has dropped from 80/20 ten years ago to 60/40 - but owners are playing it safe with Top 40 cover bands.

"I'm managing a band right now called Identity Crisis and they're a great hard rocking act but I won't allow them to play covers because it will hurt their image and integrity", says Howard Ungerleider, the veteran road manager for Rush. "For that reason it's tough to get them work."

You can't name ten good bars in Canada that support new talent. Regional



Above: Loverboy  
Right: Honeymoon Suite



(l to r): **Geddy Lee (Rush),  
Strange Advance, Gowan**



economies down east and on the prairies are in the toilet which hurts business. Vancouver is recognized as being anti-east and six months behind the times. Even in Toronto the rooms are scarce, usually confined to the Queen Street scene where musicians are so desperate for exposure they'll work for no guarantees, scraping whatever they can out of door revenues.

"Of course that hurts our efforts to get guarantees outside of town because club owners now see they can get something for nothing," says Smeall. "And it is true that everybody's gotten very conservative."

The advent of video has made more club owners Top 40 conscious. They know that it's easier to work up a thirst on one rendition of "Jump" than the several return engagements it takes to familiarize a clientele to a "Tall New Buildings." Brian MacLeod of Chilliwack and the Headpins was recently fired from Richards On Richards in Vancouver because his combo was working on new tunes that weren't recognizable to the local yokels.

Of course the dollars still suck. Six-day gigs are still coming in at \$1500-\$2,000 a week. Derry Grehan of Honeymoon Suite says there exists a latitude in northern Ontario known as the "You Lose Line" over which an act is in deep trouble. "However, if you can live on \$80 a week and you can find a girl early in the run,

it's not that bad," says Grehan now well out of those woods.

"But a band has to realize that they have the power to make a club or evening happen and that they can't be pushed around," says Smeall. "They have to make sure they get what's coming to them. I remember I booked the Spoons into the Misty Moon in Halifax. Great room, tight owner. They pull up to the gig and, of course, there were no loaders for the gear. The band stayed in the car until the owner came out and asked why they weren't unloading. The road manager said he was promised loaders and wouldn't do a thing until they showed. The owner finally brought in the loaders.

"The band goes back to the hotel and come nine o'clock the owner starts looking for them. The road manager asks where the food was. The owner says 'Don't worry. The food will be here when they come.' The road manager says, 'No, they said to call them when I see the food. I'm not working for you chief, I'm working for them.'

"The food did arrive eventually. But that's what you have to go through sometimes. I tell all my acts to try and settle nightly on a week long gig, if possible."

On a concert level, the quality of life depends on who you are. For the promoter there is no such thing as the forty percent profit any more. Most acts work with a guarantee then promoter profit of 15-20 per cent before going into 85-15 splits on the balance. With the biggest

acts 90-10 proportions are not uncommon.

For the band, that means less of the complimentary hospitality (limos, booze etc.) of the old days but richer reward for their drawing power. But take in the cost of trucking, which has tripled with the hikes in insurance and gas, and the cost of a decent road manager (\$500-600 a week) and crew and nobody's making that much more.

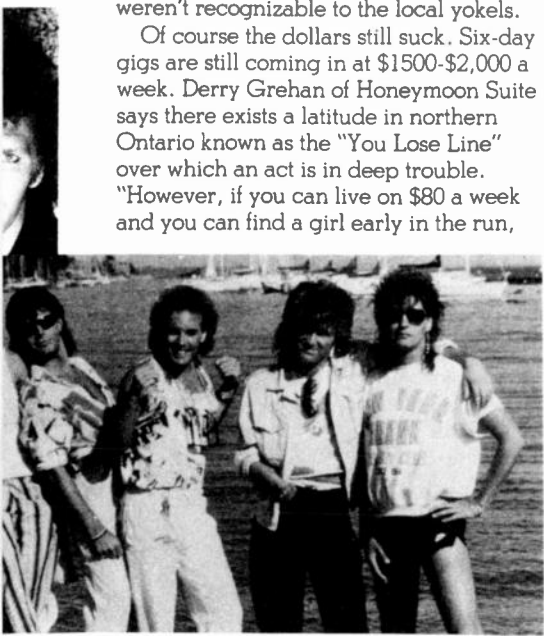
"The only reason Kim Mitchell is making any money this time around is because there are now two national promoters who are in the midst of a heated competition," says Smeall. "Concert Productions International now have to bid against Labatt's Blue Live. Mitchell did well for it."

The other thing keeping bands alive on the road is merchandising, the brain child of U.S. superpromoter Bill Graham. Platinum Blonde would have lost money on their 1985 tour if it wasn't for merchandising which was doing upwards of \$8 per head in some venues across the country. The tour gross was in excess of seven figures.

"You can always diagnose a band's future by their merchandising revenues," says Zoran Basic, former manager of Saga. "If ticket sales are strong but T-shirt sales are weak then you figure the band is good for maybe one more album."

But so much money often goes down the drain in needless production that many bands come up empty, time and time again. Ungerleider, who has designed a compact 'RDLM' lighting grid for Rush that fits into one semi where once he needed two, (savings of about \$3,000 per week) says money is just thrown away.

"One good example is this whole Vari-light craze developed by Showco and Genesis a few years ago. Very spectac-





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# SURVIVING THE ROAD

tular stuff but the cost jumped in a couple of years from \$150 a lamp per week to \$350 on a minimum order of 20. That's \$7,000 just for those which only supplement your regular truss. Not only is that expensive but I don't want to be a band travelling with what everybody thinks is Genesis lighting. But Saga wanted that image so they went for it."

The pound foolish, alas, aren't always pennywise.

"I don't like to name names but here's a classic example of what not to do as seen on a recent Strange Advance tour," says Smeall. "They were due in Kingston the day after a Montreal date. The promoter in Kingston did not get in touch with the road manager until the day before whereupon he was instructed to have crew at the venue for load-in at 9:00 a.m. That was their road manager's first mistake because had he advanced the date properly he would have known there was no chance he could have made it there by nine. The promoter finally woke him in Montreal at 10:30 a.m. and they didn't show up until late in the afternoon. The punchline was that all the extra hours were charged to the band in the final settlement. That's how money is lost unnecessarily."

The artists are usually way too busy to stay abreast of details. Mitchell says he's been asked what's it like to see the country and always replies. "I don't know, it's always dark." It's life on a bus - crowded rides, fitful sleeps and interminable waits between sound checks and showtime. Honeymoon Suite's coach is crowded with everyone from sound men to publicists.

"Bus Head is a disease of the hair peculiar to those of us who sleep on the coach," says Grehan. "You wake up and your hair has taken the shape of the pillow or whatever you slept on. It's an ugly sight."

Now the girls...

"Basically we got a lot of that partying out of our system the first time we toured the States. It was our candy store and we

did whatever we had to do. This time around we feel the pressure, there is more at stake and we have to be more business like. The girls still come around but mostly they're just kids who want an autograph or two. And, yes, there are the women who want to know you better. But we've managed to stay clear of the third variety, the dreaded 'Head Monster'!"

That appears to be the rule among Canadian acts. Partying is expensive. Herpes sores are unfashionable. A case of beer, a bottle of Jack Daniels is a given but promoters will no longer send a case of pop tarts backstage. One limo driver, who would like to remain nameless and discreet, agrees that there is very little of 'that attitude' around any more. Ungerleider says you usually have more trouble with British acts.

"Tears For Fears were not the nicest people when I worked with Gowan on their U.S. tour last year," says Ungerleider, whose reputation in the business usually precedes him. "They thought they were above it all and Larry wasn't getting treated very well until the promoters discovered that I was on the tour and all of a sudden Larry's food trays were looking better than theirs."

So everybody is generally keeping their noses clean. Even the fans. Ungerleider says where once the smell of cannabis permeated every arena, there is now nary a trace. The question remains whether or not the fans are getting a better product than they did in the golden age of arena rock in the late '60s and early '70s. Technically there is no doubt the new computer controlled sound and lighting systems, 'flown' from the rafters gives the kids a more professional presentation. Where once there were only two lighting companies in the country there are now six or seven. There isn't a venue in the country that can't be made to sound decent and clubs like Montreal's Spectrum and the Commodore in Van-

couver are among the best in the world to see live rock and pop.

But the thrill, perhaps, is gone. If anything the business is overadministered. Ungerleider, a former agent in New York, fondly recalls the days of Graham's Fillmore West when you could see a billing of Delaney and Bonnie, Woody Herman and Led Zeppelin on a single night.

Remember when every show was an event where anything could happen? These days you won't see any surprise appearances because there's too many middlemen orchestrating the situation. Promoters, agents, managers, sponsors.

It takes a situation like Live Aid to create even the illusion of spontaneity. Video and TV, however, have become both boon and pariah. On the one side you've got a great promotional tool for club owners and record companies who want to advance a group before it comes to a particular market. Great exposure.

"On the other side you've got too much rock on television," says Ungerleider. "If you've got cable, a VCR and you watch Muchmusic, you're being bombarded with images that ultimately spoil the surprise and thrill of seeing that group in the flesh."

And there's very few groups that are important any more. Still less that can effectively command a stage because the new Turks are usually bionically built by a studio computer. The teen audience, too, has other priorities now whether it be fashion, stereos or college tuition. The death of album radio is another factor, putting the future on hold, paring repertoires down to the hits and putting musicianship in the background.

What keeps the business alive in 1986 is less of a need to hear *this* band on *this* evening but the old primal urge to leave the home, to be part of a scene populated by your peers. Live rock is no longer a socio-political event in the tradition of Woodstock but conspicuous consumption based on privileged seating and the financial freedom to shell out \$20 for a polyester tour T-shirt.

"What's really disturbing is that many audiences have gotten into the habit of throwing things at us," says Grehan. "Alright we are out with .38 Special. But there are quarters and bottles just missing my head. What possesses some kid to do this?"

To be sure, one thing hasn't changed in live rock. Classy, it ain't. □

(l to r): Saga, Kim Mitchell, Platinum Blonde





# FOCUS ON RECORDING

## PROLOGUE

**T**he red light goes off and you look up from your instrument to see the smiling faces on the other side of the glass. They wave you into the control room – you go in to listen to your brilliant solo on the giant monitors suspended from the ceiling and you smile too. It turned out just the way you wanted!

Could this be you? Is it your dream, to be part of the exotic and glamorous world of recording? Well, stay tuned to this article and we'll give you some perspectives and insights into what you can expect on your way to the top. It's a pretty wide ranging subject – specialized courses of study are offered at various schools, and whole books have been devoted to such related topics as signal processing alone, so we won't attempt to tell you "everything you need to know". What we will do is introduce you to some of the people, the equipment, and recording studio environments you're likely to run into along the way.

Whether you're making a simple demo in your basement or cutting tracks for your new album at a world famous studio, there are certain essential ingredients common to all recording. Obviously, there is the recorder itself, some sort of mixer (even if only the volume level pots on your cassette recorder), and a microphone to capture your voice or acoustic guitar, etc. The latter may be dispensed with if you only want to record electronic instruments. Apart from you, the recording artist, there are a couple of important jobs which are done in any session: the engineer runs the tape machines, mixers and signal processing gear; the producer helps the artist relate to the recording environment and co-ordinates the session.

In this installment of Focus On Recording we've taken a look at some of the primary studios, producers and engineers in Montreal. We've also focused on the MIDI recording studio and Manta Sound's new digital recorder.

By Benjamin Russell  
Jim Burgess  
Dara Rowland

keyboard splitting at a pre-programmed point and sending out data on a different MIDI channel for each side of the split point. Such a product will usually offer a variety of other performance controllers in addition to the keyboard such as wheels, breath controllers, sliders and pedals. The Yamaha KX88 is an example of a superb keyboard controller that is a pleasure to play and also serves as a versatile MIDI processor.

Most MIDI controllers don't actually make a sound on their own; they simply generate MIDI data to describe your musical performance in real time (as it's happening).

### Synthesizers

The choice of synthesizers for your MIDI system will be determined by the available budget and personal sound preferences.

Many of the popular synthesizers are available in a rack-mount format. If you don't need to have a keyboard on the instrument because you're already using something else as a controller, a rack-mount synthesizer might just make more sense. They generally cost several hundred dollars less than their keyboard-equipped counterparts and are considerably more compact and lighter in weight. That can be extremely important if you're going to have to move the system around by yourself.

Generally, the more synthesizer voices you have the more powerful your MIDI system can potentially be. If you're planning on using a sequencer as a composing tool the major limitation of your MIDI system will be the number of voices you have available at any time. The fewer synthesizer voices you have, the smaller your digital orchestra will be and the more you'll have to rely on your multitrack tape machine to build up parts by lots and lots of synchronized overdubbing.

It stands to reason, then, that the synthesizers you do select for the system be as versatile as possible.

### Sampling Devices

With sampling being all the rage these days, chances are you'll want to include at least one sampler in your MIDI system. After all, why not? With the present availability of so many low cost, high

## Designing Your Personal MIDI Studio

BY JIM BURGESS

**I**f you've been toying with the idea of assembling a MIDI system for your musical endeavours, you may have already been overwhelmed with the sheer amount of MIDI products available. How does one go about selecting the right combinations of equipment without spending the next year researching the market? Making the right decisions about your MIDI system can be tough, but if you're willing to do a little homework and planning, chances are you'll be able to make logical choices.

Learning to think of all of the equipment as a single MIDI system is the key. A system-oriented approach looks directly at the musical goals the equipment is to be used for and takes into account the available budget. The individual components are then assembled according to their specific features, capabilities and price/performance ratio (always be looking for most bang for your equipment buck).

The universal nature of the MIDI standard makes mixing and matching different products from competing manufac-

turers an easy task. During the last few years there has been a clear shift towards component-oriented music systems and less demand for the large, expensive "this-does-it-all" computer music system.

### MIDI System Components

Most MIDI products fall into one or more types of categories according to what they set out to do. You'll need to decide what categories apply to your needs and if your present budget doesn't permit getting all of them right away, listing them in their order of priority will make choosing the products for your initial purchase easier. Here's a look at some of the types of MIDI products you'll want to consider:

#### Instrument Controllers

This is the one you actually play – your axe. Depending on what instrument you play best, it could be a master keyboard controller, a MIDI guitar system, a MIDI drum/percussion controller, or even a pitch-to-MIDI converter for woodwind players and vocalists.

If you play keyboards, you may prefer the total luxury of an 88 key weighted-action keyboard controller. Most instruments of this type are capable of



PHOTO: DAVID LEE

Jim Burgess

quality sampling instruments, sampling is finally available to everyone.

If you're serious about sampling you'll need a unit that's capable of multisampling: the ability to play more than one sample at the same time. A multisampler is able to offer a broad palette of completely different sound samples at once for multi-instrumental production. True realism for natural sounds or instruments can only begin to be approached with many samples throughout the original sound's various pitch ranges.

Samplers of this type presently run from the Ensoniq Mirage at the low end to the new Fairlight Series III at the top – with lots in between. Many will want to consider the increasing number of products that occupy the "middle ground" – that is, those professional quality samplers that are available within a price range most musicians can afford, such as the Prophet 2000/2002, the Akai S900 or Roland's forthcoming S50 sampler.

## Computers and Music Software

This could be the most useful tool in your MIDI system. The diverse musical and sonic potential of a computer-controlled MIDI system in the hands of a talented musician or composer cannot be ignored. Every month the number of applications for computer technology in the music making process continue to grow by leaps and bounds. An entire industry has been created for music software in the last 2 years; as the MIDI standard became more widely accepted the number of music software developers in-

creased exponentially. The result is an incredible selection of music software products designed for many of the musical and sound creation applications MIDI is capable of serving. Right now that means mostly sequencer packages, sound editors and librarians, and sample editing software packages, as well as a wide variety of special-purpose and utility-type software that's hard to categorize.

Perhaps you've noticed I haven't mentioned the computer yet. It's simply not as important as the music software programs it's capable of running. Perhaps you already own a computer that you're determined to put to use. Maybe music isn't the main reason you're purchasing the computer in the first place. Otherwise, don't choose the computer – choose the software. That computer is nothing more than the hardware required to make the software work.

## Stand-Alone Sequencers

Although inherently more less versatile than their software-based counterparts, stand-alone, hardware-based sequencers have one important thing going for them: they're generally more suited to live performance. Most musicians simply don't want to share the stage with a computer terminal.

## MIDI Synchronization Products

Simply stated, the job of a synchronizer is to lock the speed of 2 or more devices together so that they play exactly in time with each other. This broad explanation has a unusually wide range of applications in the music and film/video industries. The major application is to make all of the sequencers and drum machines to play back in perfect time together.

## MIDI-Controlled Audio Signal Processing Devices

It wasn't long ago that the very first digital delays and reverb devices started showing up with MIDI ports on the back of them. The idea was simple enough: give a normal programmable delay or reverb unit the ability to change its programs via MIDI by responding to the same Patch Change command that the synthesizers do. This way, it was possible to use a sequencer to automatically change programs at specific musical points. During a mix or a synth overdub, this helpful capability freed up hands for more important things. Also, some users took to the idea of setting up pre-defined delay or reverb programs for their favourite synthesizer sounds and calling them up when that sound was selected from the front panel of their favourite synthesizer.



# FOCUS ON RECORDING

## Le Studio Andre Perry

BY BENJAMIN RUSSELL

**B**esides making hits, what do the Police, David Bowie, Luba, Corey Hart, Sting, and Bryan Adams have in common? Le Studio in Morin Heights is the denominator we're looking for. All have breathed the rarefied atmosphere and lived in the luxury of this idyllic retreat while recording their magnum opus.

Starting in a basement in a Montreal suburb (1962), moving to a renovated church in east end Montreal (1971), then out to the Laurentian Mountains north of the city (1974), Andre Perry has always had a reputation for quality recording. Early on he captured "Give Peace a Chance" on tape for John Lennon and Yoko Ono, putting him on the international map. Cat Stevens was one of the first artists to record in Morin Heights and the Bee Gees' "Saturday Night Fever" served to firmly establish Le Studio as one of "the" studios in the world.

From the moment you walk through the custom oak French doors into the richly appointed reception area, you're aware that opulence is the order of the day. The main building houses a video facility (including a computer graphics department), offices, conference rooms and lounges (complete with cappuccino machines and an extensive library of movies on video to while away the hours between sessions), and of course the audio studio which we came to check out. On the other side of a private lake are the guest houses where artists stay while recording. Everywhere attention to detail and the creature comforts of the artists and clients who come is evident. In the words of Yael Brandeis who administers the complex, "The artists who come here demand quality service. It's a very harmonious atmosphere - when you have work to do and you do it under this kind of condition, you do not have the useless stress you have normally. Therefore all of your energy can be really channelled into whatever you're doing, music or video or whatever it is and at the end of the day you find out that you've achieved a lot. People may not be doing their album faster, but they will be doing it better. There won't be any constraints from a creative standpoint. Everything is done in order to create a flow, unobstructed."

The studio itself is large (1,350 sq. ft) and beautifully designed with ceiling to floor windows overlooking the lake. The control room houses an SSL (Solid State Logic) automated console, two 24-track Studer recorders (which are locked together to give 48-track capability), JVC digital recorder and editor for mix-downs, not to mention racks of signal processing gear of every type imaginable. Replete with Yamaha QX1 digital sequencer, and TX816 rack of FM synths, as well as various other synths and drum machines (Yamaha gives Le Studio gear to test and make suggestions), like many studios, it's in a state of transition in the new world of MIDI.

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**"The leading edge  
of  
recording technology."**

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Engineer Paul Northfield told us how Le Studio fits into the modern high tech scene and something of the plans for the future. "We're about to take a major step in the Synclavier world. With Synclavier you'll be doing a lot of your programming in MIDI, you'll get your sounds on your (Roland) 707 drum machine and you'll get a bunch of keyboard parts down and then you'll say, 'OK, where can we go to upgrade this into a different world,' and you'll be able to do stuff like, OK, well here's all my tracks and you'll go and spend maybe 4 or 5 days in a place like us with a Synclavier, with access to a major library of sounds. You'll choose your sounds and all your arrangement work you've done will suddenly be turned into incredible sound. In terms of polishing and finishing a project you need facilities like this to really pull it all together."

The Synclavier system at Le Studio should be up and running as you read this, as Morin Heights continues to be the home of the leading edge of technology.

## Pierre Bazinet Producer



**I** think young musicians and young producers should really make sure they get the experience of playing with a live band because if you just know about drum machines you're gonna freak on a real drummer and think it's not right. Working with the machines is very fast and efficient and all that, but I see a very dull future for music if everything becomes too square and perfect. It's going to be boring."

The man speaking is Pierre Bazinet. The past 5 years have seen him working on a variety of projects, mainly in the French market. His latest work, however, includes Luba's "Between The Earth and Sky", and he's currently working with Bruce Murray.

We spoke with Bazinet in his pre-production studio in the center of Montreal. A quick glance around the room revealed an ideal set-up for putting songs together: an Akai 1212 recorder/mixer, Electro Voice monitors, a Macintosh computer with Performer software, an Emulator, a Roland Super Jupiter, a Yamaha drum machine, Lexicon reverb and much more.

For a guy with access to all the latest high tech gear, he's surprisingly down to earth about its application: "Tech is very important in the sense that I won't compromise on sound - the new instruments and boards give you such a wide horizon. But at the same time, you know, it doesn't make the song. The new gizmos, there's so much you can do with them. If you have a solid idea what you want to do, and most people do have an idea, then it's great to have all this around. For example, before you had a studio and all you had was a plate or a natural room as reverb, but I remember

saying to myself, 'Oh, I would like to have 4 plates,' because I was using one reverb on the voice and the minute I put another instrument it would start to wash and just wash the whole song. And that was bothering me, so when I heard the first digital reverb, the Ursa Major Space Station, I flipped on it. I was going, 'Yeah, yeah!' on snare, on guitar. We had just one and we were recording the tracks with effects because we wanted to have a different type of space on every track. That makes a record sound brilliant today if you use a few reverbs – short gated, and long, long ambience. So I think they are really necessary.

"But, you never create classics with just flashy stuff. I believe in songs that last. If you listen to my work, it's mainly to sound organic much more than technical. I try to get more of a live attitude out of those gizmos, it's the vibe and the feel – I use the Emu and synths to get more of an earth sounding type of approach, rather than just flash and cosmic effects. If you have a good sense of what you want out of them, they're, like, just tools."

How does he see the role of the producer? "People don't know – they are either very afraid of producers or they have those amazing expectations. In most cases they want a hit, except in some underground cases where they don't want any hit at all. But a hit is not only the song – it has a lot to do with promotion and marketing and so on."

"I let the technical guys take care of their job. I'll be picky about what they do but I never have any problems with technicians. There's so much bullshit about stuff like EQ, you don't have to be so precise about the frequency – the guy is going to turn the pot and when you get there you both know it – we all have ears. Sometimes I'll mic an amp myself because I was a microphone freak. I'm much more involved in getting the right sound out of the instrument instead of trying a thousand gizmos on it."

## Paul Northfield Engineer

**P**aul Northfield has a reputation as a brilliant engineer. He got off to a quick start when at the tender age of 17 he landed himself a job as a junior engineer working at Advision Studios in England doing sessions with Emerson,



Paul Northfield at the Morin Heights board.

Lake and Palmer. By 19 he was engineering Greg Lake's "C'est la vie" and "The Christmas song" – not bad for a kid! Following this he did 4 or 5 albums with progressive rockers, Gentle Giant.

After coming to Canada and Morin Heights' Le Studio, Northfield worked with the likes of Wilson Pickett and Roberta Flack, recorded *Permanent Waves*, *Moving Pictures* and other albums with Rush, worked with Mike Stone to engineer April Wine and Asia. His latest work includes Kim Mitchell's new album, *Shaking Like A Human Being*.

An energetic man with a mind that seems to be in 5 places at once (we guess it comes in handy on the job), when we talked to him, Northfield waxed enthusiastic about the future of music in the new age. "I'm starting to sort of settle in now – I feel comfortable with all the technology, the movement. I can feel where it's going, I can see where it's going. I find it very exciting. Living at both ends of the spectrum, being involved with the studio, and at the same time having some stuff at home to experiment and play around and do some pre-production work (I've got my own MIDI set-up – a Macintosh with Total Music software, an Emulator, a PPG and a bunch of stuff like that). Sometimes working with the computers can be quite analytical and the sessions can be quite cold, the feeling is sometimes missing, but I think that's because it's young. As an approach to making music, it's very new. I get excited by the technology and I get into it but then I can sit there and say 'Wow, I did computers all day today'. You miss some of the atmosphere, the spontaneity of just people getting together and playing music, but

I think that's partly because it's just young. I think once all the MIDI programs are really slick and bug free and everybody's familiar with their synths, once it all becomes really integrated, it will be all so much second nature that you won't think about it anymore."

"An example of what we're talking about is one day on Kim Mitchell's album, we did one track where we used a Roland 707 to program a drum part and then we changed all the sounds with the AMS. We went through this whole exercise and by the end of the day I was wrecked. I mean it was like, 'Oh my God, where's the feel in doing this?' even though we were pursuing a goal – we knew right from the moment the drum machine was programmed, I mean we were just swapping all the sounds one at a time with the AMS. But it was just so tiring to go through – at the end of the day your whole perspective is so distorted by the fact that you've just been sitting there with machines going 'click', and 'tick', and buttons and pressing and so little music going on, and so much analysis. But we came back the next day, and listened to it and it was great. You've just got to keep your perspective."

"I think in the future you'll have situations where the studio is a computer of incredibly high power and you'll just get a bunch of people together that sit and have the different concepts and ideas about how to put music together, some people that really understand mixing and sound, some that understand harmony, and some people that have great 'feels', but everybody's working at the same box. There's one box there that does the reverb, the mixing, the sound generating – everything. At that point it's just knowledge."



## DMS (Digital Music Systems) Recording Studio

**T**he fertile land of MIDI is a rich breeding ground for new ideas and approaches to making music.

Sprouting everywhere we can find studios the old guard wouldn't recognize as such, and a new job has been added to the list of those involved in recording - that of programmer. Sounds, sequences and rhythm specialists have found their place in the modern spectrum of music. George Klaus of DMS (Digital Music Systems) recording studio in Montreal is one of these pioneers.

"I have a background in retail, selling synths, including Synclaviers, and I became really involved in creating new sounds for the machines I was selling. It was an outlet for my creativity. Now I'm a professional programmer and for some years, I've been doing sessions and helping people produce their stuff. I was inspired by Unique (in New York) to set up my own MIDI oriented studio, complete with all my equipment, Synclavier (we're getting the MIDI update soon), Emulator, and so on. The idea was for DMS to be a place where people could put their project together with all of this and then they would go somewhere else to finish mixing. We're getting better and better all the time and now more people are doing the whole project here. We're one of the few studios around who include the use of all the keyboards and everything in the cost of studio time."

The studio certainly has no shortage of gear: racks of Korg EX8000s, Mirage samplers, the Synclavier, Emulator, SP12 digital sampling drum machine (Emu), Roland Octapads, Soundcraft 24-track recorder and console, Sony digital 2-track mixdown as well as Fostex Model 20 analogue deck with DBX noise reduction, plenty of outboard signal processing including Yamaha SPX90s plus a REV7 and a Roland SRV 2000 digital reverbs, Aphex Aural Exciter, and much more. The control room is where the old sound room would have been and it's large enough to accommodate even more gear which the artists and clients bring in themselves.

Roslyn Perez (Klaus' associate at DMS): "More and more people just bring in their sequences, save a lot of

time and just dump everything but vocals and acoustic tracks that they have to do. I have a background in classical piano and I used to think this was cheating, like, you look at sequencers and the things you can do, accelerating tempo - it seemed to me that I spent all those years training and now, you know, you can make amazing things technically. That's how I felt at first - I was like a purist - it had to be natural sounds, 'What is this, imitating sounds,' but now I'm seeing, in terms of MIDI, it's a good thing - it saves time for albums. There's something to be said about the old '60s bands that would record in one take live and everything, but the more sophisticated productions of these days are being done with this technology. I've learned to accept it. I get involved now myself in the keyboard sessions - I program the sequencers and so on."

Klaus wraps it up for us: "The studio is in transition - I don't like standing still - I like to keep things moving. We're looking to upgrade everything as we go along. At the NAMM show in Chicago we were looking at the new Otari 24-track. The Synclavier should be MIDI by August, and we're looking into the next generation of Emulator, the Emax.

## Manta Sound Goes Digital

**T**o provide their clients with the latest high tech recording equipment, maintain sonic quality throughout the entire recording process and attract domestic and foreign acts, Manta Sound Studio has become the first recording facility in Canada to install two Mitsubishi X-850 32-channel digital multi-tracks. According to Manta Vice-President Sy Potma, the investment decision centered on the recording advantages of the X-850 units, advantages that outweighed the equipment's quarter million dollar plus price tag.

Since digital recording was introduced in the late '70s with Sony's 2 track rotary digital equipment, the technology has been applauded by the public for its clarity and clean detail, and by technicians and musicians for its sharp accuracy, lack of distortion and absence of tape hiss. Save for heavy metal and some rock which benefit from the gritty edge of analog, digital technology convinced public and industry alike that eventual multi-track developments would only enhance its capabilities.

Since Sony's 24 track 1/2" tape models appeared on the market in early 1984, studios have been hard pressed to keep pace with advancing technology and competitive suppliers. For Manta, the choice was Mitsubishi.

Since its installation in February '86, the X-850s have handled the bulk of Manta's day to day workload, from pop LPs to commercials. A prime reason for the digital upgrade is the studio's expansive 66,000 cubic foot room, where larger, more complicated recording projects are now possible. John Naslen, co-chief engineer for Manta, finds the sonic quality of Sony and Mitsubishi digital systems comparable, indicating that Mitsubishi's added track capability was the system's selling point. From a studio's point of view, added track room and economy go hand in hand. By stripping time code, like-formatted multi-track recorders can be locked together. And although Sony's 24-track units, used in tandem, offer 48 tracks and Mitsubishi X-850s combine to offer 64 tracks, the near future will find single consoles independently providing 48 tracks. It's a contest measured in inches - Sony's 1/2" DASH format to Mitsubishi's 1" PD format - and track increments. Aside from technological advancements claimed by the manufacturers, producers I spoke with were more concerned with choosing digital over analog and having all those extra tracks at their disposal.

A recent X-850 user, Matt Zimbel, producer and member of Manteca, found the multi-track's added head room its best feature. With more flexibility in recording and the ability to effect more complicated recording techniques, Zimbel "was thrilled" with the results he achieved for the group's latest Duke Street LP *No Heroes*. "It was an amazingly liberating feeling...on the last day of overdubs there were plenty of tracks left." And after bumping his album from a 24 track analog machine to the X-850 to complete production, he found the transferred material "was brighter and had a harder sound, a more separate feel to it." Another feature he points out, was the machine's ability to punch in and out when doing a special overdub or repair.

Producer Kerry Crawford (Bruce Cockburn) found the X-850's editing feature "a bit tricky" in operation. Crawford, whose previous work with the X-850 includes Molson's "Hard Days Night" commercial, is currently producing Hugh Marsh's LP on the unit.

*Dara Rowland*

# Marc Durand Producer

A man with opinions about the music business, Marc Durand wears many hats (pun intended) – he's not only a producer (Men Without Hats, and The Box, among others), but he's also a manager and runs a new record company called Alert Records. He's known in the industry as being a bit of a maverick and some people say he's the one who told Men Without Hats to refuse an invitation to appear on *Solid Gold*.

Durand got his start producing about 11 years ago when managing the band called Etc., co-ordinating the sessions while the band was recording some demos. Some years later he became involved with a Montreal group, Heaven 17, which evolved into Men Without Hats. Again, he found himself in the role of producer: "I'm not an engineer/producer who does that all the time. I became a producer because I was in the studio and I was in charge of the time and nobody else was doing it so I did it and I was successful enough to do it again. The business being what it is, there are very few specialized people, the music industry in Canada is still very small and it's hard to find people to rely on so you have to do everything yourself. That way I get the kind of work I expect, or should be done. I'm not saying that I am perfect but I don't feel there are many people around that can do what I would do, you know, in bringing out new bands."

We asked if he's the kind of producer who'll lean over the engineer and tell him to boost the EQ and that sort of thing. "Well, I give them a lot of rope, and I let them go on and I just talk to them when I'm not happy. But I let them build the track and put a lot into it and sometimes they will do everything and I will just put some colour into it and other times I will have to tell them, 'No, that's not the direction, I don't like that, give me something else more like this,' or sometimes when it gets to the final stages of the mix, I might say to add a bit more highs, but I will never say, you know, 1K, 2K. This is not part of my language, it's more basic than that. And it works."

So is the role of the producer mostly a case of keeping everybody in a consistent artistic direction? "For me, the only important thing is, how it sounds at the end. I have a tendency not to care too much how it's done. The final product is what matters and for me what matters also is to do an album on time, on budget, and that will do something, so

you can do another one after that. I do the best sounding cheap records on the market – the last Box record cost me \$21,000 and not too many people do gold records that cost that little. I did the first Box record for \$12,000 and sold 25,000. That's the only reason why The Box is still there – if I would have done, let's say a CBS album for \$100,000 that sold 25,000, they would have dropped me. Just like with Rational Youth which they did for about \$250,000 and sold 15,000, they dropped him."

Durand is certainly not one to be overawed by technology: "You have to be careful. Bands, studio people and engineers always want to work on the best, new, biggest, and best-known, but a lot of it is bullshit. We did the first Hats album with Korgs and Rolands and Prophets and we did the second one with the Synclavier. I don't think the second one sounds better than the first one. You have to know very well what you're doing with those things and you have to keep under control that they are only toys. It's very easy to put techno, but it's also easy to lose the basic feeling, you know, song oriented production."

Speaking of songs: "When I build a record with, let's say, 10 songs, what I'm trying to do is to get as many potential singles as possible, then there's album tracks, then there's what I call, where you stretch what is known of the band. I think it's very important to introduce new stuff, stuff that's very different from what the public is used to so you open new avenues for the band so in the

Marc Durand with MuchMusic's Erica Ehm

future it's not stuck in one image. I mean if you're known for heavy rock and you do a ballad, everybody is freaking out. It's important to establish parameters that are wide enough so that you have room to grow. That's the problem with the music business today, they don't develop artists – it used to be that an artist had maybe 3 albums to develop, now they put out the first single and if it doesn't happen, you're dead. They try to make monsters out of everything, so fast that they burn out artists. And that's why Ivan from Men Without Hats pulled out the plug and said, 'That's enough, I don't want anymore,' and freaked out everybody around. 'Safety Dance', who cares? You sold 2 million records – why do *Solid Gold* 10 times in the next six months – to sell 4 million?"

Any tips for would-be producers? "You need a good working relationship with an engineer to be able to produce a good record, and with the band also, you know, it's team work. I would say that normally engineers are under-rated and producers are often over-rated."

*(Special thanks to Richard Bois at Steve's in Montreal and to Richard Lasnier at Richard Audio for their kind cooperation in compiling background information for this article.)* □





# Tips

## FROM THE PROS

### GUITAR

#### PREPARING FOR DIVERSE SESSIONS

BY MIKE FRANCIS



Since this is my first article for *Canadian Musician*, I'll take a minute to introduce myself. I'm a free-lance guitar player and record producer and have been involved

for the last ten years in the Toronto studio scene. Here's a small sample of some of the things I've done as a sideman.

Records: Anne Murray

Doug Cameron (Mona with The Children)

Jingles: Milk

O'V

Labatt's Blue

Sweet Marie (seen on Much Music)

TV Shows: Fraggie Rock

Tommy Hunter

Needless to say I've done a little bit of everything as a sideman. Enough of that, now on to the article.

Upon talking to the people at the magazine, we decided to do an article about the variety of things you might encounter in a typical session and how to prepare for them. That is, walking in off the street with no previous knowledge of what your getting into, which is how it usually happens.

Doing a record date with your own band or close friends is one thing, but on a general basis that's not what day-to-day studio life is all about.

Most of my calls are to be at such and such studio at a certain time with a guitar. That's it. So you show up not knowing what type of instrument, or sound, or style you need at all. After a while you learn to live with this but the

first few times can be a bit scary, for me it was the first five years or so.

You may be able to play more like "Van Halen" than Eddie himself, but if the leader on the session needs a guitar part which is like "Chuck Berry" you better be able to do more than the duck walk.

I'll give you a small list of some ways to prepare yourself for the studio and then try and elaborate on each.

First: Listen to and learn to play as many kinds of music as possible. It's all good and you never know how much fun you can have till you try it.

Second: Learn to play rhythm as well as lead parts from songs you play with your friends.

Third: Study at least a little bit of music theory and harmony, and learn to read music.

Fourth: Experiment with different types of equipment, guitars, amps and effects and learn to play acoustic guitar as well.

My own musical background is based on Rock 'n' Roll, R & B and Country music, all what I would call roots music. So the first time on a jingle session when the leader told me this track should be like a "salsa" I was in big trouble. Unfortunately, I had never paid attention to anything like "Latin" music before, so of course I did a lot of laying out and a lot of scrambling. (When in doubt, lay out). What I found out after I learned a little bit about different types of music was that it all felt great to play and I enjoyed it. Good music is good music no matter what it is, and I've been very fortunate to have had my eyes opened up to a lot of things I might never had if it wasn't for being in the studio.

I quickly found out there were a lot of musical bags that I had no knowledge about whatsoever, and if I was going to survive in the Toronto studio scene I had better do some research and experimenting with different styles. Fortunately, about that time I had a bunch of close friends who coaxed me into coming out to jam sessions where the only thing we didn't play was commercial pop music. Again I was pretty intimidated at first, but I also found out it really wasn't that different from other things I'd already played. So again listen to as much as you can and play as many different kinds of music as you can,

you'll probably enjoy it and one way or another it will all come in handy.

Probably eighty percent of studio work is not playing hot licks and screaming solos. Most of the time it's fitting in and playing a rhythm part in a track that could be anything from Heavy Metal to Folk Music, or Be-Bop to Bossa Nova. Believe it or not they really don't care how fast you can play if you can't play a single string rhythm part and fit into a groove. Again, listen to rhythm parts as well as solos on records and try and analyze what's going on. A good rhythm part can sometimes contribute more to the overall feel of a track than hot licks, and they can be equally as much fun to do if you approach them with the right attitude.

Learning a bit of how theory and harmony work is also essential. For example, you may get to do a screaming solo on a track and you feel great about it. Then they ask you to harmonize it, and believe me they don't mean sometime in the next hour or two, they mean now. Consistency is the major factor here (being able to duplicate all the subtleties in a part). I've seen a lot of good players back themselves into the corner by not thinking ahead (while they're doing the first part of a three part solo for example) of how awkward it may be to match something they're playing. This is something we're all guilty of at one time or another. Once again, if you're not consistent with what you play and you have no concept of harmony, you're in big trouble.

Learning to read music is also important. At the very least you need to know how to find your way through a rhythm chart. But sometimes people write specific things out for you to play, and if they go to the trouble to write it out, of course they want to hear it. Unfortunately for me that was the hardest part of the whole learning process. I literally could not find my way through a chord chart when I started, let alone read specific lines. Fortunately though, there were a few kind hearted souls sitting beside me who saved my hide many times by showing me the parts, and sometimes switching parts with me if they had an easier part to play. Believe me I have thanked them many times. So once again if you are going to survive, learn how to read

music and study a bit of harmony.

Last of all, learn how to get different kinds of sounds and how effects work. I guess the thing here is to basically be inquisitive. If you hear something on a record that you like, play around and try to figure out how they got that sound. After a while you start to recognize what combination of amps, guitars and effects might have been used to achieve different sounds. A "Strat" sounds totally different from a "Les Paul", but not if you've never listened for that or thought about it.

One other thing I can't stress enough is learning to play the acoustic guitar. It really is a totally different animal than the electric in every sense, and you will get asked to play it a lot, probably when you least expect it.

In a place like L.A. players who are really incredible at specific things (specialists) can do very well, and that's fantastic. In Toronto though the industry just isn't big enough to support that kind of thing. On the other hand, I also believe that you can keep your own identity as a player and still fit into all kinds of other styles of music if you want to. A great example of that for me was my friend Brian Russell. He always sounded unique, but at the same time always fit in with whatever or whoever he was playing with at the time. (He's also done more sessions than the rest of us could begin to count.)

There are at least a million other things you need to be aware of to make it in the studio, but for now I'll have to leave the rest up to your collective imaginations out there. Whatever you do, take advantage of every opportunity you get to be in the studio, you'll learn something new every time regardless of how much experience you may already have.

So to sum things up, if you're really great at a certain thing and that's all you want to do, go for it, and more power to you. But if you enjoy playing lots of different styles, experimenting with sounds, and working at versatility, a place like Toronto may be right for you. As you can probably tell it's what I really enjoy. The moral of the story of course is to do it only if it's right for you.

## KEYBOARDS

THE FAIRLIGHT SERIES III

BY ROB YALE



the Fairlight Series III Preliminary Users Manual.

For the last four years I have spent most of my time and energy working with a sampling instrument/computer called the Fairlight CMI. The brainchild of two Australians, Peter Vogel and Kim Ririe, it was the first instrument of its kind. Prior to the invention of the Fairlight, the

I like reading manuals. In fact, next to a good science fiction paperback they make the best bedtime reading. For the last three months my bedtime reading has been

only instrument capable of reproducing natural sounds was a very clumsy affair called the Mellotron. The Mellotron used loops of magnetic tape, triggered by key depressions, to create sound. Of course the user had to contend with the same kind of maintenance problems that plague any tape recorder: tapes wear out and have to be re-recorded, and playback heads need to be cleaned regularly. The instrument possessed a certain charm, however, and had a very devoted following. Most of these fans of the Mellotron had a fondness for tinkering.

With the arrival of the Fairlight CMI, a simple method of accessing any sound imaginable was delivered into the hands of the musician. The instrument had with it quite a bit of powerful software for manipulating waveforms and synthesizing sounds. Nothing needed to be patched, there were no knobs to be pushed, and no oscillators to be tuned – all this, plus the promise that whenever the software was improved it would be made available to the user free of charge. If the hardware was revised, it would be upgraded at a nominal charge. I found that to be a great system. It meant that I never had to take a step backwards from my familiarity with the CMI.

I realised very early on, however, that the venerable Series II Fairlight had some serious limitations. These were mainly the sampling rate and sampling length. While I did become very good at working around these problems, I knew there had to be something better. For three years I pondered on what this better might be. I envisioned a new processor card which would plug into the old Fairlight, and BLAM! – with a couple of 12 Megahertz 68000s under the hood, I would sidle up to another stock Fairlight, roll down the window and innocently inquire if he would like to drag. It didn't happen quite like that. First of all, I expected the upgrade to happen about two years ago. Second of all it wasn't the simple plug-in card that I thought it would be. The people Down Under had much larger plans for the Series III.

After the original Fairlight had been on the market for a number of years the rest of the manufacturing community started to come out with their own answers to the Fairlight. In the time that had elapsed since the Fairlight's appearance in 1978, many technological advances had come on the scene. Faster microprocessors and cheaper memory chips with greater capacity made possible such instruments as the Ensoniq, Kurzweil 250, and Emulator II. Suddenly sampling became accessible to all. I began to get more than a bit nervous. After all, my investment had been considerable, both in time and in finances. My calls to Fairlight became a habitual kind of checking in, asking "is it ready yet?" I didn't know just what the upgrade would consist of, what it would cost, or what it could do.

And then one day a flyer arrived in my mailbox from Fairlight announcing the Series III. My mouth began to water at the prospect of being able to sample for over 2.7 minutes with specs that would make Compact Disc look noisy. I knew that I wanted one. The only problem was that this 'upgrade' was not just a simple hardware modification. In fact, the changes from the old system were so radical that Fairlight offered the upgrade as literally a

new CMI. While the system would cost well over \$100,000 to a new customer, previous owners were given a favourable price break, and a very generous trade-in on their old Series II. Needless to say, I knew I was going to do it.

Well, I've had the Series III in my possession now for about two weeks, and let me tell you while it's amazing how much of the new system is similar to the old, the differences outnumber the similarities. For one thing, there are a lot fewer pages in the Series III. The higher resolution monitor allows much more information to be displayed on the screen at once. I am finding this to be a great asset. The less time I have to wait for pages to change over, the sooner I can get the job done.

Another interesting thing about the Series III is its multitasking operating system. You start to appreciate such a system when you are working on a song in the sequencer, and decide that you need to change the parameters of one of the voices. You can transfer to the Effects Page while the sequencer is still running, and make your changes while the voice is still in the context of the song you are working on. Don't try to sample while the sequencer is running, though – at least not with Channel 1 turned up on the board. I scared the living daylight out of myself by trying this. It made a very loud and ugly sound that made me think I'd just blown up my new toy. I related this to Will Alexander at Fairlight: "Hmm, too much DMA" was his reply. DMA is not a new psychedelic for androids; rather, it stands for Direct Memory Access, something the Series III has to do a lot of when it samples.

Working with a piece of equipment this new can be both tremendously exciting and extremely frustrating. All of the basic goodies work, but they sometimes do strange things that make me want to commit ritual suicide in the middle of Cumberland Street. Like the case of the unerasable voice: I would set up a program to play certain instruments, and if I tried to change one of the instruments, no matter what I did, the original instrument would return to haunt me. I tried every experiment I could dream up to try and identify what I was doing wrong. I finally decided to call Australia. They were very patient with me, and took down my description of the problem. It seems that whenever a bug report comes in from a user, the programmers try to replicate the bug in their lab. In this case they were able to recreate the problem, meaning that it was a legitimate bug. I have been assured that it has been exorcised from future revisions of the software.

This brings me just about up to the present, and I expect that in a future article I'll go into more detail about the specific functions of the Series III. By that time I expect I'll have gotten several new revisions of the System Software, and I'll have lots to write about. I would also like to invite you to write to this magazine with any Fairlight-related questions you may have. I'll use these questions as springboards for new topics of discussion.

### Series III Specs

The features are outstanding: 16 bit true linear sampling; 98 Kz maximum adjustable



sampling rate; 14 Meg waveform memory; 140 Meg hard disk storage; Stereo Sampling (not implemented yet; 16 outputs; 16 voices which can hold 128 subvoices each; Fast Fourier Transforms (for synthesizing new sounds); A graphic MIDI implementation; A 16 voice version of the old 'Page R' called the Real Time Sequencer. The whole thing is tied together by some of the most ingenious system software I have seen this side of a Macintosh.

(Rob Yale, of Digital Music Inc., is well known as a pioneer in the field of computerised music. Yale's *Fairlight* expertise (using Series IIX) is evident on the recent albums of David Bowie (Tonight), Jane Siberry (The Speckless Sky & No Borders Here), FM (Con Test), Stan Meissner (Windows To Light), and Doug Cameron (Mona With The Children). His work can be heard on many popular commercials, including the distinctive Diet Pepsi "Taste Above All" spots. As well, Rob wrote and produced the Energizer commercials "Explosion" and "Light Power" which were recognized with a Craft Award at the 1985 Television Bureau Bessie Awards. He has also done extensive work for television, including music for CBC Midday and Midday and The Journal, CBC logos, SCTV, Owl TV and Women of the World).

*Fairlight* is represented in Canada by Computer Music International, (416) 964-1885.

## BASS

### BASS PLAYER'S PROFILE CHANGING STILL

BY ANDREW FRANK



Over the last ten years or so the role or, more importantly, the profile of the bass player in popular music has changed rather significantly. And

with any new found freedom comes the difficulty of choice; as a young bass player I am confronted with a labyrinth of choices and at times I find this perplexing. The crux of the situation is that bass is no longer simply a 'supportive' instrument. Not that being a good bass player in say 1968 was easier than it is now, not at all. The problem (or should I say challenge) is that the role of the bass is far less defined, and the limitations as to what one can or cannot play are almost negligible in comparison to before. What I'd like to do then, in an informal way, is to trace back to what I think are the roots of this change.

There are three basic reasons for this bass renaissance: technology, technique, and a merging of styles. In terms of technology, bass players have seen a tremendous increase in the variety and quality of instruments and amplification. Bass has always been an instrument particularly hampered by amplification. Obviously there are lots of people still playing vintage Fender basses, but

how many are still using Ampeg B-15's – the industry standard in the sixties. Whereas four years ago, I was using a James Brown special – a custom combination portable bar and bass amp. I am now using a modest Yamaha pre/power amp set up with a Kroth cabinet. The increased investment was actually quite small, especially considering the improvement in sound.

On another level, there's the possibility of effects. Inspired by Garry Adamson (of Magazine) and Jeremy Kerr (of A Certain Ratio), I started experimenting with chorus and flanging effects a number of years ago. This opened up a whole new range of sounds available to me. And now with people like what's his name with Paul Young using a fretless with an octave divider and Tony Levin of King Crimson making extensive use of conventional effects on a conventional bass as well as his unearthly sounding 'Stick'. Though I've yet to hear a bass synthesizer that seemed to justify the fuss, you've now got things like MIDI bass controllers. (360 Systems). Can Synclavier be far behind in doing for bass what it did for Pat Metheny's guitar? In short, bass players are limited only by their resources (which is admittedly very restricting for most of us).

The second area where the bass has found new freedom is in the realm of sheer technique. Thanks to basically two people bassists can now go where no one has gone before! The two in question are Jaco Pastorius and Larry Graham of Sly and the Family Stone. Jaco simply played like no one else had imagined possible. He, in fact, created two distinctly new styles of bass playing: The hyper speed bebop/r'n'b style associated with Weather Report and the heavily chorused ultra melodic style he pioneered with Joni Mitchell. Though Jaco is not really a pop bass player, his style was so revolutionary that it couldn't help but have some effect on pop music. Just listen to almost anyone playing a fretless and/or using effects and the influence is obvious.

Larry Graham's pioneering contribution is somewhat less renowned than Jaco's but to me just as important. He is the man responsible for popping and slapping. I read an amusing interview with him where he claims that his inspiration for slapping came from playing a stand up with an r'n'b band in the early sixties. He was always getting complaints from people who couldn't hear the bass, so in frustration he started getting more aggressive – much more aggressive. He probably wasn't the first person to do this with a stand up, but he was the first to transfer the idea to electric. At first the technique was used exclusively by funk and disco players but thanks to the disco/new wave crossover – eighties dance music – every player with enough fingers is doing it. I think even Mel Bay has a 'how to' book out.

Which brings me to the third factor which has altered the role of the bass: the unprecedented cross fertilization of musical genres in the past few years. Pop music is by it's very nature an ever changing hybrid of musical styles, this is nothing new. What is new is that bass is now much more of an instigator in the process. Continuing in the most general terms a large percentage of the music

popular today draws heavily on funk and to a lesser extent, reggae. The funk influence is obvious – you've got all kinds of bands putting a funky, danceable groove under traditional pop rock melodies and instrumentation. Everyone from Duran Duran to Billy Idol to Madonna is doing it. And without denigrating drummers, it's mainly the bass players who are affecting this change. Tied to this, on a somewhat subtler level, has been the effect of reggae bass on popular music. Most obviously there is Sting and the Police's pseudo reggae, but more importantly is the reggae aesthetic; reggae's sensitivity to bass. In reggae, the bass is the central instrument – 'you can't dance, mon, if you can't hear de bass!'

So what am I saying with all this? Plainly it's time to take full advantage of the situation. There's no more excuse for faceless, uninspired and pedestrian bassists. Keep a rock steady groove but by all means get outside and play a little when the opportunity presents itself. Don't worry about conventions, what can and can't be done. Beg, borrow and steal all the riffs and ideas you can and use them in a new way, put them in a different context; as Stravinsky once said 'good musicians borrow, great ones steal! Keep your ears to the ground, listen to all you can outside of pop music, always be on the look out for new, different players – and be ready to pick up on what they're doing. Apart from the people I've already mentioned, you might check out people like Jamaaldeen Tacuma (solo and with James Blood Ulmer), Michael Beinhorn (of Material) and Canada's own Rachel Melas (Animal Slaves from Vancouver); these are people not afraid to stretch the groove a little. Let's swing the pendulum a little to our side, and then let it settle.

(Andrew Frank is bass player with the Montreal group Seven Sisters).

## PERCUSSION

### FROM HEAVY METAL TANGO TO BEACH BALL ROCK

BY KEVAN MCKENZIE



In this issue I am going to talk about some recent sessions in order to illustrate how technology has changed the recording industry. Although I still play a lot of

regular acoustic drums, a number of combinations have also become the norm. On to some specific examples.

**Product:** Budweiser (several spots)

**Employer:** Rosinick Prods. (T. Rosnick, L. Natale, S. Mackinnon)

I have one set permanently wired with pickups specifically for triggering purposes. On this session we recorded the live drums as well as the triggered Simmons SDS7 sounds and mixed them together. This is a very quick and effective

way to enhance and alter the sound. One of the real considerations when doing any jingle is the dramatic time limitations involved. It doesn't matter how great a sound may be; if it takes you half an hour to dial it up, no one will ever hear it. These tracks stand out in my mind because of the high level of energy we managed to create. It's not always easy to get your heart started at 8:00 A.M.. A well written spot and great sounds make the difference.

**Product:** Amstel Beer

**Employer:** Doug Riley

Although all of the drums on this track are acoustic, it sounds somewhat electronic. This is due to a combination of Gary Gray's magic touch and AMS digital effects. Many engineers don't realize how much the sound in the headphones affects the way the musicians respond to the music. You can't be rockin' if all that's coming out of your cans is peep! peep! My favorite engineers are the ones who understand this and consistently deliver a drum sound that inspires.

**Product:** Black & Decker (several spots)

**Employer:** Tom Szczesniak

All of these tracks were pre-programmed on a Linn drum and recorded using a combination of Linn and triggered Simmons. I received the charts from Tom a couple of hours before the session. Tom's charts are specific and extremely legible. This makes programming very efficient as I know the basis of what is desired plus I always try to add a few ideas of my own. The real task here was that every spot consisted of two very unrelated tempos. I used the Roland SBX 80 synced with SYMPTE to drive the Linn and sequencers, programming it as we recorded. Fortunately it went without a hitch. (Anyone with experience in syncing will appreciate this last statement).

A couple of recent tracks for Dal Bello proved to be diverse. Lisa likes to program all the machines herself so the feel is generally well defined. On the first song the drum part sounded quite complete by itself so we only used cymbals and a couple of tenor toms. However, we covered the toms with towels and used them to trigger two bass drum sounds in the AMS. Unusual and very effective! The second tune was more open in terms of feel. We went for a big trashy kind of drum sound with almost no padding in the bass drum and lots of room ambiance combined with more triggered sounds. Steve Webster and I messed with it for a while before we finally decided to go with our old stand by groove that just never seems to let us down: the "heavy metal tango".

On Sheree Jeacocke's last album I was credited with playing drums inferring "drum set". As it turned out, I did play most of the kit eventually. Let me explain. Graydon Hillock programmed all of the tracks on MSQ 700 and Linn. We then set about adding and replacing various drum parts. Instead of triggering sampled sounds, I played the snare parts live. Graydon felt this would add some spontaneity and air to the tracks. We tried a number of different snare drums but ended up using my \$29.95 REMO PTS. It sounded great. One thing to be aware of here is that your balance is quite different than when playing a full kit. This is because normally

you are sub-dividing the meter with all four limbs. When one or more of these is taken away you have to adjust your body rhythm in order to groove. Don't get freaked out if you have a little trouble at first. Take a few deep breaths, centre yourself and try riding on a pillow in order to feel the time better. It will make quite a difference. The toms, cymbals, and electrics were recorded in the same way. One of the great aspects of this method is being able to punch in if a part isn't perfect or needs to be altered. Generally drummers are not afforded this luxury as there is too much mic leakage with a complete set.

**Product:** Labatt's Blue Light (several spots)

**Employer:** Air Co. (S. Kessler, R. Armes, T. Tickner)

Robert described this track as "Beach Ball Rock," my personal speciality! The basic drum track was programmed. I started by playing everything except kick (all acoustic) and ended up playing toms and cymbals only. Especially in jingles, there is a fine line between creativity and screwing around. I experimented with some Sandy Nelson type fills and the response was terrific. One thing I've noticed when playing with machines is that the time is less flexible than when playing to a click. With a click, there is still some elasticity. You can alter the feel and remain with the click. But with computers you can't, especially if you are doubling specific parts. You have to be absolutely relentless, or to state the obvious: machine like.

**Product:** O.V. Light (several spots)

**Employer:** Air Co. (R. Sherman, J. Lenz, M. Hukezalie)

The call was for acoustic drums, Linn, and Simmons. On these kinds of sessions the real test is not whether you can work all this stuff, but if you can actually set it up in time! The next tricky bit was programming the Linn 'on the fly'. The first few times I had to program right on a session, it was a little unnerving. Being handed a lead sheet while the rest of the rhythm section is getting sounds is not the ideal way to come up with an imaginative, well thought out program. Fortunately the Linn part was already together thanks to the writers. I made a couple of changes, dialed up some sounds and we laid it down. Next came the real drums. In this case I played the entire kit. Although there are no set rules, more often than not I'll only play parts of the set if there is already some form of drum track.

I had wanted to touch on a popular and oft misunderstood topic: "The endorsement game." However it seems I'm out of space. Maybe next time.

*(Kevan endorses products by Grooves, Sabian, Trak, Remo, Rims, & Puma.)*

*If you have any questions feel free to write c/o Canadian Musician.*

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# Tips

## BRASS

### DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING YOUR SOUND

BY TONY CARLUCCI



**W**hy do players have a deep, rich and big sound on their horns and others do not? Only one percent of all the young trumpet students who come to me have

what I consider to be a good trumpet sound. To add to this, some of these students have a good sound limited only to their middle to upper middle register. All of them have very small sounds in the upper register.

Don Johnson in his *CM* brass article *SOUND CONCEPT* states, "The development of our initial sound concept is formed by musical environment and listening habits during beginning years." I think this statement is right on the money. When I question my students about their listening habits, the one percent that have any kind of decent sound also have at least one favourite trumpet player that they listened to. The others did not listen to any trumpet recording at all, mainly because they had no clue of existing trumpet players.

In my early years of trumpet playing, I had my father as my musical role model. He played trumpet in a marching band and had a big but warm sound. He also impressed upon me the importance of listening to other trumpet players and opened my eyes to players like Doc Severinsen and Italian virtuoso Nino Rossi. Most young trumpet players start in junior high school at the age of 12 or 13. Unless the music teacher understands the importance of ear training in conjunction to sound development or the student has a parent that can turn them on to a trumpet star, the young student has no role model.

The first and probably most important thing that you can do to improve your sound is to broaden your listening habits. This habit also will improve your musical phrasing and conception. The following list of trumpet players is what I recommend my students listen to during their spare listening time. Doc Severinsen, Winton Marsalis, Herb Albert, Jerry Hey, Maurice Andre, Marvin Stamm, Woody Shaw, Manny Laureano (Minnesota Symphony) to mention only a few.

Aside from this type of ear training, I have my students also apply a crescendo and decrescendo to all their daily routine exercises. This approach helps the students to familiarize themselves with air flow, breath control and diaphragm development, which is so important in achieving a good sound.

For students with a weak upper register sound, applying a crescendo to any exercise that brings him to the top range of the horn will force him to increase the air pressure as he ascends. This increase in air pressure will eventually result in a better sound at the top of

the horn and at the same time increase his embouchure strength. For overall sound consistency, practicing double and triple octave scales achieves the best results here. I tell my students that the upper register is merely an extension of the lower register, that is, the embouchure sensations and sound integrity of the lower register must be carried into the upper register. Doc Severinsen is the perfect example of sound consistency. His low G is as big and bright as his double C. After air flow and sound consistency have been mastered, and presuming your embouchure setup and development is clean, manipulating your sound to suit your taste from here on is just a matter of equipment. This includes everything from mouthpieces to thickness of the brass that your horn is made of. In terms of the variables on the trumpet, - silver plating, small to medium lead pipe bore sizes, and light weight (thinner metal) horns - all have a tendency to sound brighter. This sound lends itself more to modern music than to traditional styles. Lacquer horns made of the traditional brass weight and with medium to large bore sizes have a tendency to sound darker. This sound is more conducive to classical and more traditional styles of music. The variables on the mouthpiece are just as broad. Shallow cups with small back bores and wide rims produce a brighter sound and make the upper register easier to play in. Deep cups, larger back bores and thinner rims produce a darker sound and have a tendency to make the upper register harder to play in.

In my last article *HORN MAINTENANCE*, I mention that my sound was improved greatly after I visited with Mr. Bob Reeves in LA. From him I learned of two other factors which play a role in the trumpet sound equation. The first one being the size of the mouth piece sleeve. Mr Reeves has developed a mouthpiece with interchangeable sleeves. Different sleeves produce slight changes in back pressure which gives you the option of selecting the amount of back pressure you prefer. This is an extension of refinement of the lead pipe size and mouthpiece back bore size you have already.

The second factor that Mr. Reeves has discovered which affects the sound and also the tuning is the valve alignment. Aligning the valves perfectly with the trumpet tubing might only require the slightest adjustment but it makes enough of a difference to warrant its justification. To put all these equipment factors together in the right combination for you to achieve your desired sound takes a lot of trial and error effort. As a matter of fact, if I may be so bold to say, I don't think there's one trumpet player, beginner or pro, that will admit to being totally satisfied with their sound and isn't always trying something new with their horns.

### Horn Maintenance

The saying "take care of your body and it will take care of you," I believe also holds true with your trumpet. Keeping your horn clean and in good working order will help prevent any embarrassing moments, such as your valves not working properly in the middle of a solo. Or even your tuning slides falling out and hitting someone in the audience on the head.

A good example to illustrate the importance

of keeping your horn's inside clean is the story of a student of mine who came to me looking to solve a problem he had with his sound. I commenced by breaking down his embouchure set up and playing approach. I found nothing that would relate to his problems but nevertheless I went ahead and gave him exercises to improve his sound in which he diligently practised. After a couple of lessons with no improvement, I finally decided that it had to be something wrong with the horn, or mouthpiece. When I tried the horn with my piece, I found that it had incredible back pressure, making it feel as if the lead pipe was tiny. I immediately checked the pipe under the light, and found, you guessed it, almost no light coming through at all. The lead pipe was so clogged with dirt that the student could not get any decent air flow, obviously resulting in a very thin and cracky sound. After cleaning the horn, his next sound could have been heard all the way down the street because he was so used to over-blowing.

I, myself now follow the advice that Bob Reeves gave me when I visited him in Los Angeles, last year. This advice is to run a piece of cloth through the lead pipe every time you have finished playing. The best piece of equipment to accomplish this with is a commonly-used piece of cloth with the string and weight attached to it that clarinet players use. The only adjustment you should make to this cloth is to cut the cloth down a little to insure it goes through the lead pipe fairly easily.

Mr. Reeves also mentioned that this procedure will help prevent the corrosion of the lead pipe due to your acidic saliva. When the lead pipe does corrode the smooth edge inside the horn becomes rough and jagged. This in turn will create resistance thus making your job of producing a good sound that much harder. The treatment of your mouthpiece should go under the same guidelines. Clean the mouthpiece with a brush and run water through it after any playing session.

For the valves, cleaning them as often as you can is also a good standard. Take them out and run warm water through them, then dry them very well. When oiling valves, I find roach oil to be the best for my valves, but experimenting with various kinds of oils is a very good idea. No player's trumpet is the same, therefore the oils each of us use will be different as well. While in L.A., Mr. Reeves realigned my valves while customizing my mouthpiece. All horns, old and new, need realignment and, believe me, the 10% improvement I noticed is well worth it. Even the tuning on my low D, C, middle Eb and everything above high C, is also greatly improved.

A word to the wise. If you're ever in the North Hollywood vicinity of L.A. I encourage a trip to Mr. Bob Reeves. I promise he'll work wonders on your horn and mouthpiece.

In terms of keeping your horn cosmetically clean, the only silver polish I have ever used is a product called "Twinkle." It's a very mild non-abrasive polish which will not scratch your horn. As a second choice, using soap and water regularly can be just as effective.

In conclusion, the proper consistent maintenance of your horn can help prevent untimely errors or problems with sound during an exposed moment of a performance.

Remember, anything resembling a science experiment should be left in the lab and not in your horn.

## WOODWINDS

REEDS, RECORD DEALS, DANCING

BY EARL SEYMOUR



**T**his issue, I'd like to pass along a few hints on a variety of topics, the first of which is a very personal and touchy one: reeds. There - I've said it. Reeds. Bane of our existence. Bearer of joy one day, bringer of madness the next. Everyone, of course, has personal preferences as to brand and strength, as well as a variety of rituals and techniques for finding and improving good ones. The only point I'd like to mention is how I treat a reed once it is chosen and on the mouthpiece: I *never* let the reed dry out once it is in place, and I never remove it until it is pretty much worn out. The reed seems to establish a "seat" once it's clamped on. A seat that can never be duplicated once it's disturbed. I find that keeping it moist (done by covering the holes in the cap, and keeping the whole neck in a small leather pouch), and in place, makes the reed play better until it loses strength. If a reed does happen to dry out on me, I stand the whole mouthpiece in a tall glass of lukewarm water for a few minutes, thereby moistening without disturbing the seat. This simple rule doesn't make finding them any easier, but I'm getting more life out of reeds (usually 2 weeks). Another thing to try is clipping the reed when it is new. I like to do this to get a slightly thicker tip, which gives me the kind of "bounce" and resonance I like. In addition, I find that it makes the reed a little on the stiff side, but it usually settles down to a comfortable strength after a few hours blowing. Once it gets there it stays comfortable for a *longer* period of time. My preference for clipping is a very personal one, but, you know there's nothing more frustrating than getting a great reed that quickly wimps out in strength. I'd rather battle with a tougher beast knowing that in a couple of nights it will be comfortable.

I'd also like to comment quickly on a more general topic that I've had some experience with: "Recording bands," investors, record deals, etc. While an investor or backer can be a lifesaver when launching a project, bear in mind that you pay heavily in many ways, for a long time, for this support. It's an easy trap to fall into in the initial stages when money is flowing and hopes are high. Too often costs go much higher than is reasonable. Expensive demo sessions,



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## Tips

needless travel, extravagance in all areas will come back to haunt you. It goes without saying that you have to spend money to make money, and proper production and promotion are essential to building an act, but be careful. Five years after your album comes out, you don't want to *still* be hearing about the 12 bottles of Dom you drank when the mix was finished, or the 37 lawyers' meetings (only 17 of which were necessary), or the video that had a catering budget larger than your annual income.

This all leads to my next cautionary tip: Production Deals. In this case, a band signs a deal with a production company, who in turn signs a deal with a label. This normally occurs when that production company has a sizeable investment in that band. If you can keep yourselves relatively free and clear, you sign direct and avoid another middleman. I'm sure this is very *old* news to a lot of people, but groups are still making these same errors every day.

My last topic, of course, deals with my favorite aspect of the saxophone: appearance. Let's delve quickly into the realm of dancing (as essential to success as "big hair"). Nothing quite rivals the potential of grunting, leaping, puffing, stomping and grimacing to impress people. Really. Your audience will refuse to acknowledge your artistry unless you're in a constant state of seemingly agonized motion. A good practice technique is to blow long, steady tones in the middle register at mezzo-piano while bouncing on a trampoline. Now try working on grimacing at the same time. I use a little mental stimulation to help me, such as thinking of root canal work. This can usually make you knit your brow into furrows that you could grate cheese on. Try these tips. The chicks love 'em. Soon you'll be leaping off a 10 foot riser onto the stage, rearing back so that your head touches the heels of your fashionable footwear, locking onto your mouthpiece with a death grip of muscle and bone and emitting a high pitched wail not unlike that of a terrier being sawn in half. Ah, show business.

Earl Seymour - Hairstyles for the studio:  
Own stuff: simple rinse, dried in a natural breeze (makes you feel so, so free!);  
Rock & Roll: What else! - "Big Hair";  
Singles: A simple pony-tail tucked under the collar of a crisply ironed sport shirt. (Let's them know you're "ready for business".)

(Earl Seymour is a busy session player and regular member of The Arrows.)

## SONGWRITING

SONGWRITING A TEAM EFFORT WITH CHALK CIRCLE

BY CHRIS TATE



**F**or Chalk Circle, songwriting is very much a team effort. We are four individuals working together towards a common goal - the completion of a

good song. However, the order of events leading up to the completed musical work are never the same twice. I still haven't been able to decipher the specific Chalk Circle method of song writing. Let me explain.

Because there are four contributing writers in the band, songs develop in a number of different ways, from conception to completion. Here are a few simplified examples:

1. "Jamming" in a rehearsal situation and relying on improvisation to inspire the beginnings of a song;
2. One member may bring a completed song to rehearsal with a very definite musical direction in mind which is communicated to the other members;
3. A very basic musical idea (riff) or chord progression may be introduced at the rehearsal, giving the other band members room to improvise and take part in the initial creative process.

Within these very different approaches to songwriting, there is a common element inspiring creativity - rehearsal, often synonymous with hard work. Rehearsals as a band are essential in developing the initial musical idea. Don't be afraid of experimenting or having fun with the first draft of your song. Most often, a good song is nothing more than a good idea. By considering bridging, tempo, arrangement and possibly transposition, a noticeable improvement can be heard in the finished composition.

While we were in pre-production with Chris Wardman (producer for *The Great Lake LP*) we went through the motions of each song slowly and meticulously analysing each part and then putting the song back together again. Originally, we didn't think these songs needed fixing and had considered them to be finished products. As it turned out, Chris' arrangement skills and objectivity helped us to get the most out of each song.

We have had to learn through trial and error, to adapt a basic attitude towards priorities in the rehearsal space. The number one priority is always the song. Through constructive criticism of whole sections of an arrangement or individual parts, we continually try to improve previous musical ideas. Needless to say, each of us has had our respective egos bruised on several occasions, whether it be because a favorite bass riff is "too busy" or a new vocal harmony that you worked on all night "just isn't quite there." Suffice it to say that possessing

add this one when touring. Put a fan on stage to keep away the second hand smoke. It really helps and sends it back to the audience.

Of course, you never go on stage without warming-up. Do facial exercises some sit ups, push ups or anything that can get your heart rate up. You should also do some physical activities during the week. I personally try to swim at least a mile five times a week. Other performers work out in the gym and even Bruce Springsteen is reported to be pumping iron these days. A great deal of energy is needed for today's music so get those muscles in shape. If you lose your voice you lose your work.

Body language can tell so much about a person. If your shoulders are slouched, your hands in the pockets, not standing tall will show insecurities on your part and the audience will immediately pick up on it. You must show confidence. Knowing your instrument will give you confidence. The difference between an amateur and a professional is that an amateur makes a mistake and it shows over the total body and everyone sees it. A professional makes a mistake and everyone thinks it was rehearsed that way.

## ARRANGING

ARRANGING MUSIC FOR  
COMMERCIALS

BY RON BURROWS



**T**his issue we're going to talk about finding solutions to various arranging problems one can encounter when faced with strict criteria from an advertis-

ing client; and ways to write and arrange to suit your client's needs without endangering your integrity, or the integrity of the music tracks.

Before we get into this discussion, let me first make clear that there are as many different ways to write and arrange to a given criteria as there are writers and arrangers. They all would approach a writing and arranging project from different angles, based on what they had found (through experience) worked best for them. No one method is better than the next, and nothing is ever carved in stone. Draw from other people's experiences and expertise, and adapt it to suit your own purposes. (This is just my quaint way of saying that you're going to be subjected to MY personal experiences with certain aspects of writing and arranging for jingles, not thoughts

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## Tips

from "The Universal Handbook with the Definitive Answers to Everything Musical").

I've chosen a corporate campaign from our files to write about.

The client was the Crown Life Insurance Company. They were producing television spots with a different Olympic sporting event as the subject of each ad: runners competing in a relay race, a gymnast going through her routine on the balance beam, a figure skating team performing their patented 'death spins,' and a downhill skier racing through a slalom course.

We were asked to write one piece of theme music, and adapt it to suit the four different spots. You can imagine how varied the pace of action is between a gymnast on a balance beam, and a skier racing downhill. All four spots had to be related by the common theme to establish continuity, so the post-scoring and style of arranging were determined in part by our emotional response to the action upon viewing each spot, in part to the strong sense of tradition and competition of the Olympic games, and last but not least, in part to the way that the film editor had cut the spots together.

I'm going to use the slalom skier spot as our sample case, as the master score for 'Slalom' was written with the thought of utilizing some of the outboard effects gear at the recording studio.

The visuals for the spot opened on the skier at his place in the starting gate, preparing himself for his run downhill. There were shots of him jamming his boots into his bindings, pulling his gloves on more tightly, adjusting his ski pole straps, inhaling and exhaling nervously, and having flashbacks to earlier runs he had made on the hill. Lots of tension and anticipation being built visually. The next segment has the starting gate opening, and the skier leaping forward to begin his run. There are several quick cuts as the skier makes his way through the slalom course, to the final segment, where we see him crossing the finish line, and doing one of those beauty sideways stops (I don't know what the official name for one of those stops is, but the snow sure flies nice in slow motion).

We got a pretty good feel for the spot after watching it a couple of times, and decided to use nine violins, two trumpets, a piccolo trumpet, two French horns (sorry, horns), synth, electric guitar, electric bass, piano, and a combination of acoustic and electronic drums. I know it seems odd to have that many violins without violas or celli, but the strings were going to be used as much for effect as they were for their contribution musically to the arrangement. The French horns would be used to establish the hook for the theme we had written, and strangely enough, the first four notes sounded a lot like the first four notes of 'O, Canada,' and the first four notes of the Olympic fanfare, although that was just a coincidence if anyone asks.

We had 14 seconds to build up the tension as the skier waited in the gate, 11 seconds to get him down the hill, and four and a half seconds to underscore the super at the bottom of the spot. (A super is that bit in film and video when a logo or printed message comes up on the screen).

Now that you have an idea of the visuals,

and the instrumentation, I'll explain the development of our arrangement.

I should mention that the tempo was set at 120 bpm, which means we worked to a 12 click in the recording studio. By knowing the real-time value of each beat, we were able to pinpoint the spots where we had to match a musical shot or effect to that of the picture, and write it into the arrangement. This aspect of post-scoring is really interesting, and deserves an entire column, so I'll tackle that one at a later date.

Back to the development.

The piece started with the violins split, holding a high D and a D an octave below. They held this note with no vibrato for most of the first section to provide the tension we needed musically. The synth held a low D, with the oscillator filters being opened manually as the tension mounted. The French horns introduced the fanfare the second bar in, to establish for the viewing audience what the stakes were for this particular skier. The trumpets and piccolo trumpet echoed the fanfare, and this is where we used the outboard gear I mentioned earlier.

Because the skier was flashing back while in the gate, we had to express some kind of subconscious, or dream state. And keep the tension building. So when the trumpets echoed the fanfare, I wrote a repetitive sixteenth note passage that extended for an extra bar and a half. When we did the mix, we applied DDL to the sixteenth-note passage. We achieved the dream effect we were after, and actually contributed to furthering the tension as well.

To peak the tension just before our skier leaves the gate, the strings had a fairly massive glissando happening, the synth had started grinding out low D eighth notes, and the French horns sounded one last call to arms.

At this point, I was glad to see the guy finally leave the gate.

We gave him a fairly exciting ride down the hill, and as he shoots by the finish line, the brass got to play the fanfare, backed by the entire orchestra, signalling the skier's triumphant arrival at the bottom of the hill.

I'll recap the criteria, and how we arranged to suit.

The client wanted to express Olympic spirit. (The fanfare played by the French horns, echoed by the trumpets, echoed by the piccolo trumpet).

Tension had to be built in the first section. (Violins welded to a high note, with the synth changing the colour of a very low note; drums playing out of time, and accenting movements and actions in the visual; horns reminding us of the pressure of the event by restating the fanfare somewhere off in the midst of DDL; and the guitar playing sixteenth-note dead string as the skier's pulse quickened).

The trip down the hill had to impart the skill needed to make that kind of trip, and express the successful and triumphant result of that trip. (We did that.)

The other three spots were laid out basically the same as the slalom spot (tension and anticipation; execution of the event; and the successful conclusion) although we used different instrumentation for each. The fanfare was the hook we needed to aurally identify the





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spots for the viewer, and the chord changes and melody we used under each provided further continuity.

The instrumentation satisfies both the traditional and contemporary needs of this project.

It was, in all aspects, very much like writing a song; it had an intro, a hook, a middle section, a climax, and an ending, the only differences being that it was written to picture, and that it was only 30 seconds long.

*(Ron Burrows is President of Burrows/Kit-ching, a respected jingle house in Toronto.)*

## SOUND & LIGHTING

ON THE ROAD WITH HELIX OVER 12 YEARS

BY KEN HEAGUE



**D**uring my association with Helix for the past 12 years, I've used just about every type of P.A. system available today - from Traynor columns to the large

concert rigs used by major recording artists. As with most sound men, I have had no formal training in the art of sound engineering, but have gained knowledge through others in the field and through many years of experience.

When I started with Helix, I had only a basic understanding of the operation of a P.A. system, and so, depended on the advice of experienced soundmen. One point repeatedly stressed to me was "Don't be afraid to ask" if you are unsure of something. It is better to swallow your pride than to damage expensive equipment due to ignorance.

During my sound apprenticeship (9½ years of playing bars), I learned a lot about room E.Q.s, volume, and the placement of the P.A. I was using a large Martin P.A. system with B.G.W. power and a 24 channel Soundcraft board. I always strived to get a good sound at an acceptable volume, and I found that a clean sounding P.A. was usually more in line with the bar owner's demands than a P.A. that was over-powering in the mids or too boomy in the low end.

In June of '83 we found ourselves playing showcase bars in the U.S.A. promoting our first Capitol release *No Rest For The Wicked*. We opened for a variety of acts ranging from Motorhead to Quarterflash. During this time, I used a different P.A. system every night, which forced me to rely on the knowledge I had gained in the past. I may have had ten soundchecks in all that time, and with gigs like this, you learn to obtain a decent mix at the end of the first song. With a 30 minute set as an opening act, a one-song soundcheck is very important. I would start on the vocals then concentrate on

the rest of the mix until I achieved the desired sound. I gained more knowledge in those four months than I had in the previous four years.

That fall, Helix supported Kiss on a European tour, and I was able to work for the first time on a large concert P.A. system. We used a Martin rig with Midas mixers, Brooke Siren crossovers, and 44,000 watts of power. Their soundman, Achiem Schultz (Scorpions full-time sound technician) was a tremendous help in showing me how to operate a large P.A. system without blowing people out of the room. Keeping his advice in mind, I still to this day, monitor the crowd response to volume to prevent a hasty exit of the audience.

With the move up to larger halls came larger stages. My immediate problem at this point was the stage monitors. The band simply could not hear themselves. Until last October, we used whatever monitors were supplied by the headliners and it wasn't until our own headline tour that we found a working solution. Half-Nelson (the production company we use), designed a monitor system comprised of 24 mic inputs into 10 monitor mixes. This system enabled us to make just about every part of the stage sound like a small P.A.

Fritz (our drummer) and I have experimented with many mic techniques (drum skin, stick size, type of mics used) for the drum sound. We've found that single head toms with a mic placed approximately 1 - 2" inside the opening just off centre works best. Sometimes, a 2" piece of gaffer tape is put on the drum skin to help with the tuning but usually the heads are left pretty lively. The guitars are miced with 2 different mics along with a Rockman to get a complete sound. I use a D.I. and a mic for the bass. The keyboards are all direct input from our D.I. box which is installed in the keyboard rack.

Mic selection is standard for Helix' needs. My first choice for drums are Sennheiser 441s on the bass drums, floor toms and rack toms and Shure 57s for the snare. On guitars, I use a combination of Shure 57s and Sennheiser 441s. For vocals, I use Shure SM 58s or AKG D-330s. For Brian's vocals, we carry our own Nady wireless mic. In Europe and North America, these mics are a standard issue of most touring companies so therefore, we always know in advance that our production rider is easy to meet.

When we headline, I request a Midas Pro 40 mixer or a Pro 5. If that isn't available then I use a Soundcraft 500 series. We always take our own effects rack with us. In it, we have a Yamaha Rev 7 and two stereo TOA parametric E.Q.s. With the E.Q.s, I can take care of most E.Q. problems and the Rev 7 enables me to duplicate the drum sounds on our albums.

I believe that people as they get older are more concerned about hearing loss these days than in the past. I, myself have taken to wearing earplugs during opening act's soundchecks and performances in order to preserve my hearing for our show.

As Helix progresses as a concert act, I find the duties of a soundman ever-expanding and a constant challenge with the advance of technology and improved performance of sound enclosures.

## RECORDING

RECIPE FOR MODERN GUITAR RECORDING

BY FRANK MARINO



**I**t is common one hears a guitarist state, upon entering a studio, "Hey man, gimme a warm sound," or "fat" sound, or whatever. Recording electric guitar has changed,

for me anyway, quite drastically over the past eleven albums. In the beginning we would set up walls of amplifiers and dozens of mics and just sort of wing it. The result on many occasions was one of frustration, while looking for "that sound," but as time passed I became more and more familiar with techniques, and the "whys" of guitar recording, and how they related to the "how."

The first thing one must understand, is how a specific guitar will fit into the mix, "relative" (and I use that word expressly) to the other instruments surrounding it. It's not uncommon to hear a great fat guitar sound in the control room when the monitors are loud and the guitar is in "solo", with stereo reverb and all the tinsel dressing, and then suddenly that guitar sounds like a kazoo as soon as the band plays along with it. It's for this reason that I developed many different techniques that I can rely on in any given situation.

But regardless of technique, the first and most important thing is the microphone selection and placement. Now, I know a lot of you out there are saying, "Waitaminit Frank! The most important thing is to make sure that the source of the amp is great to begin with", and while this is certainly true for drums or many other instruments, it isn't as much for electric rock guitar, and I'll tell you why.

Keeping that word "relativity" in mind, I have performed hundreds of tests, both aural and with spectrum analyzers, and have found that what a microphone "sees" when recording a very loud speaker enclosure, is very similar to what a person "sees" when he looks through a keyhole into a large room. As the "eye" (in this case, the mic head) moves around, it takes in certain "partial" sound totals which are at best a micro-representation of only a portion of the actual total audible sound in the room. The idea here is to get that mic in the "right" place so that what it "sees" is that portion of the sound, that when compared "relative" to the other instruments, will sound rich and full.

Quite often, if you were to "solo" the strip of a guitar that has this apperency in a given record, you'd find that it suddenly doesn't sound so good anymore. For this reason, short of having torn speakers and the like, the larger the amp sound in the room is, I personally don't even listen to the amp in the room anymore, because if it happens to sound great, I'll spend fifty years trying to capture it



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and won't, and conversely if it sounds terrible, I'll spend fifty years trying to fix it, and won't.

Now as the years went by, around the time of *Mahogany Rush IV*, *World Anthem*, and so on, I began to experiment with smaller cabinets and lower volumes so that the mic, relative to the enclosure, was physically larger and therefore its keyhole could take in more of the total. The ideal situation would be to have a mic diaphragm three feet in diameter or a speaker enclosure a half an inch wide, but the first way wouldn't work because of the mass that would have to be moved (in this case, a three foot diaphragm), and the second wouldn't work because there isn't enough moving mass (from a half-inch speaker cone) to move air efficiently, and that, in effect, is what creates sound, particularly lows.

All in all, the best compromise that I have found, is what I began using on the *Tales Of The Unexpected* album, on through to *Full Circle*, my most recent record. Basically, the amp head can be Marshall, Fender, Boogie, or whatever. The speaker enclosure is a 4X12" Marshall cabinet, preferably the angled one, (don't ask me why, it just works better) and mic selection is a combination of an EVCS15, a Sony tube mic, and a Sennheiser 441.

As I said, placement and inter-phasing is critical, so don't rush through this step. Basically, you have to listen to the sound of the guitar as someone moves the mic around the front of the enclosure, and movement is halted when the sound heard is relatively unchoked, clear, and close-up sounding. This exercise may possibly have to be repeated a few times during the session as the other instruments are brought into play, due to, as discussed, the apparent relationship of one thing to another.

To illustrate this, consider some of the instruments used in a symphony orchestra recording, like tympani, brass, violin, reeds, etc. and you'll find that the tympani, for example, sounds very bassy when compared to the violins. But anyone who has actually played or heard tympani live knows that the drum itself is actually a very tinny sounding instrument, although low in pitch, and that its apparent bottom within the symphony is enhanced by just how high the higher pitched instruments are. So you hear a heavy tympani swell, and you get the impression of thunderous bass, in relation to the strings and brass, but if you immediately stop that record and compare the actual low-end to, say any hard-rock record, you'll find that upon direct comparison, even the thinnest sounding rock-record sounds boomer. The keyword here is perspective.

So the idea is, when recording for size, or tone, or whatever, keep in mind that the perspective of one instrument can be directly affected by modifying the perspective of another. I guess it becomes clearer when you consider how tall some short people look when they're surrounded by shorter ones.

Now all of this worked just fine until *Full Circle*, my current album, and then, presto!, all the rules changed. Why? Once again, it started with the rhythm tracks. You see, we made the drums and keyboards sound so big, fat and real, that what we had done was literally overcome anything we had done before, so now the guitars that roared, became the guitars that snored.

We began to consider the possibility of purposely making the drums and other instruments smaller, and we even did exactly that to a very small degree, but we felt that to pursue this tactic to its end would only result in a less than perfect final product, and in view of the fact that we had finally achieved a great rhythm track sound to begin with, it would be more to the record's ultimate advantage if we could overcome this new obstacle by other means.

Fortunately, an answer wasn't too far away.

Enter a new technique. Now, before I explain the fix, it's necessary at this point to detail just what happens to that great sound when it crosses into kazoo-land.

So, my fix? One electronic, three, four, or five way crossover. I take the guitar off the play-back head and feed it to the crossover. I then send the crossover outputs back to the mix via three strips (three way in this case). Now, I have the ability to boost or cut EQ in the low-end strip only, or mids, or highs, without affecting the other registers. What I do, is tend to set the overall volume and tone quality with the crossover points and EQ between the low and mid strips, and then just squeak in the high-end strip until the right amount of sizzle and pick-attack is heard. Works like a charm, and if you're careful with the crossover points you'll find you don't even have to use the EQ. You just blend the strips properly, and can manipulate the guitar tone. Add a dash of Yamaha REV-7 digital stereo reverb, garnish with a few sprigs of Korg digital delay echo, stir in a generous amount of mixing feel, and you have "Guitar A La King", or at least, a King Sized Guitar. Don't let it simmer....serve it HOT! Serves all. Enjoy!

## BUSINESS

ONLY THE BEST SURVIVE ON CLUB CIRCUIT

BY DAVID BYRNE



With the market as tight as it is, competition as fierce as it is, only the best and the strongest survive. With offices in Quebec and Ontario we have a fairly good overall perspective on what a band should do in order to play all the major markets and do well.

We are of course operating under the assumption that the group in question (any group) has the talent, intelligence, and energy to be successful. Given that, it is important for the group to understand that the agent is a businessman and as such is motivated mostly by the need and desire to make money. The more impressive a package the agent has to sell, the more money the group will make and hence the more he will make.

I would advise any group wanting to enter the club scene in a serious way, i.e. full time touring, to do some market research. Go out to clubs, talk to other bands and see what it is they are doing that makes them successful. So often we are approached by groups who have talent, but all the wrong ideas about the material they should do, how they should look, etc. Then begins the painful process of re-educating them about the real world and correcting mistakes which have already been made. For instance, a group which has learnt a whole repertoire discovers that it is too old or too obscure. Obviously they are reluctant to learn all new songs, but in many instances this is the only way any agent can find them consistent work. Often a group will walk into our office with dreadful, amateurish promotional material which they think will be adequate for the first few months, not realizing that it will do more harm than good in the long run.

A club owner's first impression is the most important and although it is hard for the bands to believe, if the club owner trusts his agent, he will judge the acts he is offered solely on the quality of their promotion and their repertoire. Any professional agent would rather guide a band along and help them to avoid these pitfalls and the discouragement inherent in them.

Another major reality to confront for a band entering the marketplace is that even when making good money, most of it goes anywhere else but in the musician's pocket. The cost of sound and lighting equipment, trucks, technicians, gas, and the agent will quickly reduce a respectable gross to minimum wage or lower. If you're in it for the money, forget it! But if you want to learn your craft and develop stage smarts for a future in the big time, then this is the tried and true way. But I'm digressing... Just as it is important to have good promotion, it is even more important to have the technical side of your operation under control. Your soundman is the most important member of the band at this stage of the game. He can and will make or break you. Since the group won't make much money anyway at the beginning, go for the best sound and lighting gear available. Check with other bands, call sound companies, talk to experienced sound men and don't get sold or rent inferior equipment. The greatest band in the world can be sabotaged by bad sound.

When it comes to lights, my advice is the more the better. Find me the club owner who doesn't like to see his stage filled with lights and I'll show you the one with the white cane. With advances in lighting technology, a lot of groups are getting by with one technician who does both sound and lights, which is okay but nothing beats a good lightman if you can find and afford one.

Another thing a band must consider when starting out is the necessity of having one person act as spokesman both with their agent and with the club owner. Most new groups try to retain the illusion of democracy in their business dealings, a practice which usually results in chaos. By the time the band leader "calls all the guys" and they make a decision, the job you offered them two days before is long gone.

(David Byrne works with Brian Pombiere Productions Inc. in Montreal.)



# Bach: the best-selling professional brasswind in Japan and every other major nation.

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# Product News

## ALESIS EXPANDS LINE WITH THE MIDIFEX

The Midifex is a digital multiple effects processor that offers 63 different settings ranging from stereo generation to multitap delays.

A 19" rack mount receptacle will also be made available to accommodate both the Midiverb and the Midifex.

Top recording engineers are known for the effects they create and often provide the spark that can put a record onto the charts. The most innovative of these effects advance the art of sound engineering and are widely duplicated in modern recordings. MIDIFEX offers 63 of these polished sounds at the touch of a button or through MIDI control. Many of these effects would require a high quality digital reverb, several multitap digital delays, a number of parametric equalizers, and multiple channels on a mixing board.

Among the sounds in MIDIFEX are single, double, and triple-tap delays.

Classic echo effects are achieved with regeneration programs and are very effective for spacey lead guitar and synth solos.



Stereo synthesis programs provide superb spatial imaging of any mono track to open up the center of a mix for dominant sounds.

Multiple high-pass, band-pass, and low-pass filters are added to some programs to create colorations in the sound. This can range from fattening for rhythm guitar tracks to ethereal effects for string pads.

In addition, there are a supply of reverbs with highly animated panning and unique envelopes.

Ambient effects range from the small and intimate to extra large and wide.

For more information, contact Tartini Musical Imports, 2530 Davies Ave., P.O. Box 279, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 3V7.

## NEW SOUNDTRACS FROM OMNIMEDIA

The new MC Series Monitor desk is available in 32-10, 2 formats, and caters for all monitoring applications. Soundtracs has also released an entire range of 19" rack mounting mixers modular in construction with a variety of specifications for a number of uses including: 4 and 8 track recording, broadcast, stage monitoring, sound reinforcement and club installations, keyboard mixing and video post production.

The CP6800 is a new 24 track console fully equipped with an on-board computer system automating the routing and patching of the desk against SMPTE timecode. It also features an Events Controller for external effects.

For more information: Omnimedia Corp Ltd., 9653 Cote de Liesse, Dorval, PQ H9P 1A3, (514) 636-9971.

## STAGECREW COLOUR SYNTHESIZER BY ROCTRONICS

The Stagecrew allows the light artist to mix the three primary colours: red, blue, and green, either manually or automatically, to synthesize any colour in complement to the mood of the music.

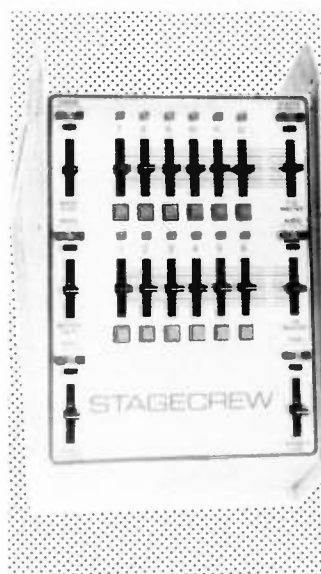
The Stagecrew composer can also synchronize colour-change rates to the tempo of the music. The light artist composes in both colour and tempo in harmony with music: wild flashing reds and oranges might be appropriate for hard rock, while a slow undulation from lavender to magenta would enhance a gentle ballad.

In addition to creating the appropriate visual mood, the Stagecrew controller is also designed to provide adjustable emphasis for each of the stage performers. A soloist could be brightly lit in flesh tones, while the backup instrumentalists could be illuminated in cool subdued

shadows. In this way the light artist directs the audience's visual attention in the same way that the audio mixer contours the sounds of each performance.

The dual capabilities of regulating both mood-setting and emphasis-determining lights is unique to the Roctronics invented Stagecrew controller. Its safe low-voltage command signals can regulate unlimited stage lights through remotely controlled electronic Roctronics Dimmer Packs. This allows the composing light artist to observe his own performance as viewed from the audience's perspective.

For 100 page catalog or four hour video write: Roctronics Lighting, 100 Roctronics Park, Pembroke, MA 02359



## TWO-WAY BEATER FROM DRUM WORKSHOP

Drum Workshop's NEW 101 TWO-WAY BEATER makes it possible to get a different sound from the bass drum without changing beaters. DW's two-way design offers the choice of using the hard solid side of the beater or the softer felt side. Both the felt and the solid side of the beater hit a larger area of the bass drum than conventional round beaters for a more powerful attack and a bigger, fatter sound. Use the solid side for rock, heavy metal or fusion. You get a wood sounding attack with a beater that is the same weight as felt. Turn the beater around and use the felt side for anything from light jazz to heavy rock. The 101 two-way beater is made with a stress-proof shaft that is standard on all D.W. pedals. It also comes with a bent shaft for double bass drum pedals or for special effects on a single pedal.

For more information: Drum Workshop Inc., 2697 Lavery Ct., Unit #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320, (805) 499-6863.



## CARLETON UNVEILS NEW HOME KEYBOARD BY KURZWEIL



An advanced digital keyboard synthesizer packaged in a piano-like cabinet with a built-in sound system has been introduced by Kurzweil. The new keyboard, called the Kurzweil Ensemble Grande, is designed for home musicians and features push-button access to 33 instrument voices and combinations, plus a full complement of pre-set rhythms for accompanying players.

The new instrument makes use of a proprietary technique known as "contoured sound modeling" to re-create electronically the nuances of the grand piano as well as other popular acoustic instruments, including vibes, guitar and acoustic bass.

"Contoured Sound Models are a type of digital shorthand that uses computer code to represent the structure of a particular instrument's sound, including the way it varies as the player moves through the instrument's range, or as he strikes the keyboard in different ways," said synthesizer pioneer Robert Moog, Kurzweil Music's vice president of new product research.

The Kurzweil Ensemble Grand was designed to be as easy as possible to play, especially for keyboard players untrained in the complexities of computers - or electronic instruments. The instrument features the conventional acoustic piano's 88 black and white wooden keys, weighted to approximate the piano touch. Each key is equipped with a proprietary design sensor that measures the key's impact velocity when it is struck. The sensors are precisely shaped to capture the key's true impact velocity over the instrument's entire dynamic range. Signals from the sensor travel to the "sound engine,"

where they determine pitch, dynamic, and timbral inflections appropriate to the way the player articulates the notes on the keyboard.

One of the few physical features that distinguishes the Ensemble Grand from the conventional piano is its control panel, situated immediately above its keyboard. The performer uses the Ensemble Grande's controls to choose among the instrument's sounds, and to activate and manipulate complementary rhythms and keyboard split options. (The Ensemble Grande's keyboard can be split, with a choice of bass instruments in the left hand, and melody instruments in the right.)

The control panel also gives the performer access to the Ensemble Grande's four-track digital recorder, which allows him to store in the computer memory up to 4000 notes.

A variety of other features complete the Ensemble Grande's control panel. They include a transpose function, which allows the performer to transpose the keyboard up or down by semitone increments.

The instrument also has standard MIDI connections that permit it to interface with most computers and digital instruments. Kurzweil Music Systems has designed a unique built-in "spatial perspective" sound system for the Ensemble Grande. Through the use of a 3-channel sound amplification system and optimally placed speakers, this system re-creates the overall spatial acoustic perspective of the piano and other instruments it simulates.

For more information, contact Carleton Keyboard Group Ltd., 600 Hood Road, Markham, ON L3R 3K9.

## 'STEINBERGER SHOWS NEW TRANSTREM ON GP2T GUITAR'

Steinberger has introduced a new model TransTrem (tm) transposing tremolo mounted on its mid-priced GP2T guitar. The TransTrem holds all six strings in tune with each other during normal tremolo action, and features a unique 6-step locking system so the instrument can be played in three lowered and two higher tunings.

With the new TransTrem system, strings can be changed instantly without the need for any special adjustments. Although Steinberger does recommend using strings with properly

calibrated lengths for maximum performance of the TransTrem, all double ball strings (or even single ball strings with a simple string adaptor) may now be used.

The GP2T guitar is designed specifically for players who want the strength and sustain advantages of the Steinberger headless composite neck combined with the more traditional feel and tone of a wood body and high impedance pickups.

For more information, contact Louis Musical, 529 Deslauriers St., Ville St-Laurent, PQ H4N 1WZ.



## MIDIMAC SEQUENCER, VERSION 2, RELEASED BY OPCODE

Opcode Systems announced recently the release of MIDIMAC Sequencer Version 2, the next in a series of music software modules for Apple's Macintosh computer.

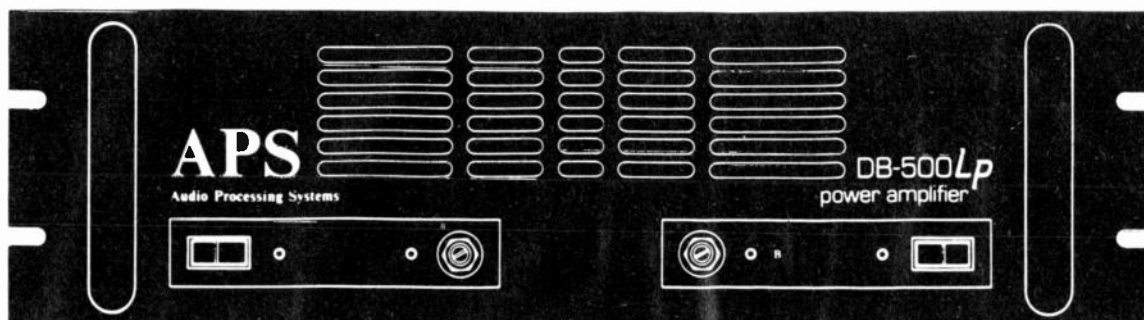
Opcode first introduced the MIDIMAC Interface, Sequencer, Patch Librarian Series, and DX/TX Patch Editor last year. With the MIDIMAC products, the Macintosh becomes a powerful tool for creating, editing, storing, and performing music made with MIDI synthesizers, drum machines, and other MIDI devices.

"Opcode's 'integrated components' approach to music programs has proved to be superior," said Gary Briber of Opcode. "Musicians on a budget need only purchase what they can afford, and do not have to pay for features or capabilities they don't need;

sequencing, editing, storing, and music printing programs can be purchased separately. Yet, the programs can all be run simultaneously, giving the user instant access to all functions."

Opcode's new sequencer provides for up to 26 sequences of 16 tracks each, with the ability to play up to 16 sequences or 32 tracks at once. Composing complex music is simplified by being able to cut, copy, paste, and merge tracks and sequences together. Precise auto punch-in/punch-out editing, in addition to step entry of notes at any speed, makes the Sequencer powerful recording system with numerous special features.

For more information, contact Gary Briber, Opcode Systems, 707 Urban Lane, Palo Alto CA 94301.



# APS PURE CANADIAN POWER

## DUAL MONO POWER AMPLIFIER

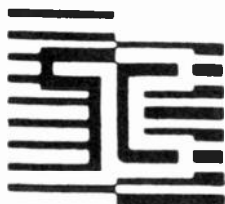
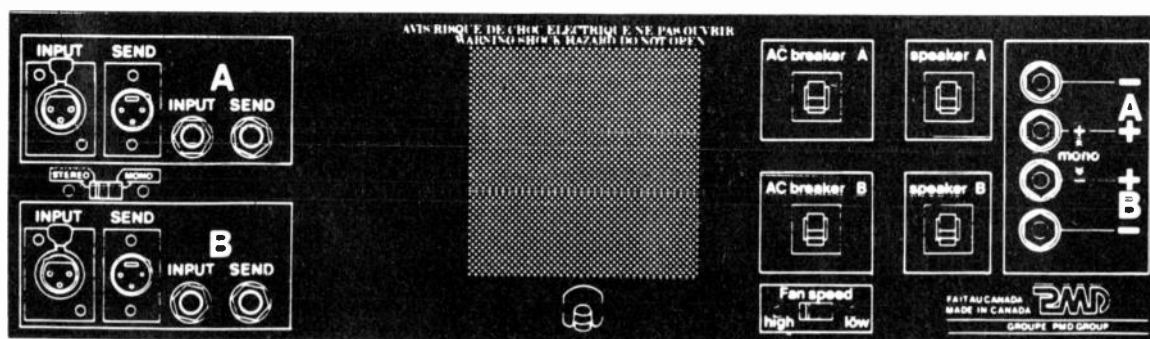
Although the APS DB-500LP appears to be a stereo amplifier, it is actually hiding two powerful monophonic amplifiers. The two "500 V.A." power supplies allow the DB-500LP to deliver an impressive 450 watts per channel (rated 400 watts per channel) into 4 ohms.

## GREAT SONIC QUALITY

A group delay compensation circuit practically eliminates phase shifting at low frequencies resulting in a very tight low end while the 70 V./ $\mu$ S slew rate creates an extremely defined high end.

## STANDARD FEATURES

- Front to rear fan cooled (two speed fan)
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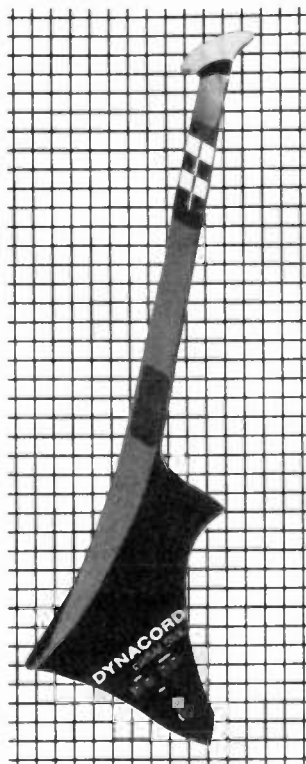
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(416) 673-7788

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(514) 683-7161



## DYNACORD RHYTHM STICK



The Dynacord Company, of Straubing, West Germany, has introduced a novel concept in percussion instruments. The Rhythm Stick is a remote MIDI controller which enables the drummer/percussionist to play any MIDI instrument (rhythm machines, drum processors, keyboards) from the front of the stage.

Although the Rhythm Stick has the familiar guitar-type shape, that is where the similarities end. The controller features eight trigger selectors to specify the "instruments" and two slap sensors with which the selected sounds can be played. All eight sounds can be triggered simultaneously.

The Rhythm Stick remembers all programs entered in its user programmable memory. A three-digit LED display shows the program or preset number. A "peak" LED indicates the maximum value for velocity MIDI data so that it is possible to adapt to different playing techniques without sacrificing dynamics.

For more information, contact Lillo's Music, 10848-82nd Ave. Edmonton, AB T6E 2B3

## RAMSA RECORDING MIXERS

Two new RAMSA eight- and sixteen-track mixers have been introduced: models WR-T812 and WR-T820. They replace the need to repatch with the ability to switch between the two functions.

Model WR-T812, with 12 inputs, is specifically tailored for eight-track recording. The WR-T820 mixer features 20 inputs for eight- and sixteen-track capability. Both boards can simultaneously mix incoming signals with tape playback signals during overdubbing, without the need to repatch.

Each input on both the RAMSA WR-T812 and WR-T820 offers pushbutton selection of TAPE signals and electronically balanced MIC and LINE. Phantom 48V MIC power is individually switchable for each channel and a phase reversal switch has been incorporated on each channel input for LINE and MIC inputs. Each input channel has its own direct output and insertion point for external signal processors.

A trim control with a 40-db range is offered for MIC and LINE inputs, with a second trim control exclusively for TAPE inputs. A sweepable three-band equalizer with an ON/OFF switch is on every input channel for individual sound tailoring.



Stereo send circuits are switchable between TAPE, program monitor (pre-fader) or effect (post-fader) for optimum signal adjustment. In addition, there are two separate effects circuits with level control. 100-mm long-stroke faders are used on all inputs for precise level adjustment. Stereo solo switches on all input channels follow pan controls left and right when in operation.

Group outputs are also key features of the WR-T812 and WR-T820. A solo switch on each group output enables solo monitoring of each output signal. Peak indicators on each function at the summing point for group outputs one through eight and

nine through sixteen on the WR-T820.

These two RAMSA recording mixers feature extensive metering. The metering configuration for both mixers is in the form of a "meter bridge." The WR-T812 meter bridge houses eight 12-point LED bar graphs for input channels one through eight (for eight-track mixdown) and ten VU meters for the output group signals, master L/R, auxiliary sends and stereo solo. The WR-T820 bridge features sixteen LED graphs and ten VU meters.

For more information: Matsushita of Canada, 5770 Ambler Dr., Mississauga, ON L4W 2T3, (416)624-5010.

## UNIPOINT CONDENSER MICROPHONE FROM AUDIO-TECHNICA

Audio-Technica's new AT-853 microphone is a wide range electret condenser microphone with a unidirectional (cardioid) polar pattern. It was designed for use in high quality sound reinforcement, professional recording, television and other demanding sound pickup situations.

The AT-853 mic is furnished with a steel hanger adaptor that allows it to be suspended over a choir, orchestra, etc., and a pencil-thin stand adaptor for a very low profile situation. It features a 25' (7.5m) permanently attached miniature cable with a 3 pin TA3F output connector which mates with a 3 pin TB3M connector on the AT-8505 battery phantom power module provided. Output of the AT-8505 is balanced low impedance via 3 pin XLRM connector. The output of the AT-853 is also balanced low impedance.

A built-in 3 position switch on the power module allows selection of battery to the off position,

the on flat frequency response position, and the battery on low frequency roll off position. The 1.5 volt battery need not be in place for the unit to function in the phantom power mode.

Audio-Technica has been able to create a tiny yet excellent multi-purpose microphone. Its new design helps to reduce distortion and alleviate the need for a high voltage power supply demanded

by some early condenser configurations. The microphone is able to take a maximum input level of 130dB SPL (1kHz at 1% THD) which basically means that it will take a jet engine to overload the microphone.

For more information, contact AudioVideo Specialists Inc., 2134 Trans Canada Highway South, Montreal, PQ H9P 2N4.

## DIGITECH PDS 20/20 DELAY PEDAL

DigiTech announces the introduction of a new digital delay in pedal form, the DigiTech PDS 20/20. The PDS 20/20 is a full-bandwidth digital delay pedal offering an infinite repeat with sound on sound capability, and full-bandwidth delay from 1.2 milliseconds up to 2 seconds. Two foot switch pads, (infinite repeat and in/out) let the musician select the infinite repeat mode, or place the PDS 20/20 in or out of the signal path. Two LED indicators

show the operating mode of the unit. Six controls: a time range switch, a speed control, a width control, a delay time control, a versatility for the professional musician. The new unit has a stereo outputs for stereo applications. A single 9 volt battery powers the unit or a DigiTech PS-3 A.C. adaptor may be used.

For more information: Heint Electronics, 16 Mary St., Aurora, ON L4G 3W8, (416)727-1951.

## TRIPLE TIER KEYBOARD STAND

Invisible Products, manufacturer of a wide variety of keyboard, amp and rack stands, has an-



nounced the availability of a new Triple Tier Keyboard Stand. The new stand, available in black epoxy or nickel finish, is a companion product to the company's single and double keyboard stands.

The new design, like all other Invisible Stands, is a lightweight steel tension structure similar in concept to a suspension bridge. The Triple Tier stand weighs 14 lbs, is capable of supporting up to 20 times its own weight, and is height adjustable from 28" to 49".

Invisible Products' stands have proven popular with musicians who are interested in trading up from more cumbersome, tubular support equipment to a new streamlined look through a series of modular, expandable systems that are easy to set up, break down, and transport.

For more information, contact Exclusive Musical Products, 2100 Ellesmere Rd., Suite 211, Scarborough, ON M1H 3B7.

## TWO NEW MODELS BY MIRAFONE

The new model 180 Mirafone F Tuba is the result of five years extensive research and development. It has a large bore preferred by professionals and a full, open low register. Standard features include traditional Mirafone mechanical excellence, direct valve stroke linkage, vented valves and nickel silver slides. Two interchangeable leadpipes are supplied in medium and large bores to provide the player with additional flexibility. Also featured in the new F model are two 5th valve options: major 2nd or major 3rd. Specifications: bore .77"-.83", bell 16½", height 38½", weight 17¾ pounds.

The new model 1255A compensating euphonium is tailored to the demands of the United States soloist. It is a large bore piston instrument with the important compensating 4th valve mechanism. This system provides for a rich natural extension of the lower register with the advantage of secure intonation. The larger bore produces added sound projection. Specifications for the 1255A: bore .606"-.638", bell 11.42", height 26.58", weight

10.14 pounds. Both models are available in lacquered brass or bright silver plated finishes. For more information write Mirafone Corporation, 25570 Rye Canyon Road, Valencia, CA 91355.

## MODERNIZING GUITARS AND BASSES

In this day and age, with guitarists and bassists playing through increasingly sophisticated rigs of effect boxes, cordless systems and solid state amplifiers, very little has happened in the area of guitar and bass electronics.

The tonal characteristic of a guitar (as determined by the perfect combination of pickups, wood and strings) is unavoidably changed by the pickup loading properties of all things connected to it.

That is, unless the guitar is fitted with a "buffer".

The Jackson JE-1000 and JE-2000 Low Impedance Electronics give guitarists and bassists the "buffering" needed to preserve the integral sound of their instruments. Rather than letting effect boxes, amplifiers and chord length determine pickup loading (and resulting resonant

## NEW DRUM PADS AND STANDS FROM DRUMFIRE

The Music People, Inc. have introduced additions to their Drumfire product line which now is a complete electronic drum system. Two sizes of electronic pads are now available to be used with the popular DF 500 synthesizer/mixer. (A company spokesman also stressed the fact that the new pads can also be used to trigger any other electronic "brain"). The round pads (available in 10 inch and 12 inch sizes) utilize the same sensors as

the original Drumfire, and are tunable like acoustic drums. In addition these new pads feature an exclusive surface material that gives the drummer the response and feel of acoustic drums. The exclusive ball joint on the pad, rim, and shell is high gloss black.

Also available are heavy duty, chrome plated, deluxe tripod stands and a boom attachment.

For more information, contact Kief Music, 3735 East 1st Ave., Burnaby BC V5C 5T6.

## PERSONAL MULTITRACK RECORDER

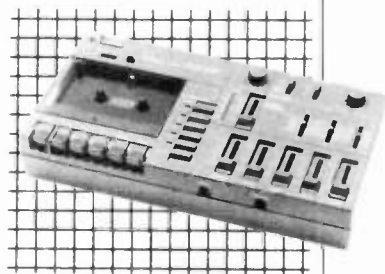
Vesta Fire U.S.A., Inc. has introduced the new MR-30 personal multitrack recorder for the entry level market. The MR-30 is a 4-track, 4-channel multitrack cassette recorder (with mixer). Standard 1 7/8" tape speed makes the MR-30 compatible with home audio equipment.

The MR-30 incorporates Dolby B noise reduction and three band graphic equalizer. Overdubbing with the MR-30 enables the user to lay down tracks while listening to previously recorded tracks.

According to Todd Richardson, president, "The MR-30 will open-up home recording into a broader market by making quality personal recording more affordable than ever before."

The MR-30 is one of over forty Vesta Fire products which also include signal processing equipment, power amplifiers, guitar effects, and related products.

For more information, contact Exclusive Musical Products, 2100 Ellesmere Rd., Suite 211, Scarborough ON M1H 3B7.



tional Tone Control; the JE-1000 G which includes a Gain Boost Switch and; the JE-1000 TG which includes both the Tone Control and the Gain Boost Switch.

The JE-2000 is the rough equivalent of the JE-1000 Low Impedance Electronics designed for basses.

The JE-2000 features incredible sonic control afforded by center detent Bass and Treble Controls. These Controls give the player 12 dB of boost and cut at 40 Hz (bass) and 2,500 Hz (treble).

In addition, the JE-2000's low impedance output allows bass players to plug directly into mixer boards without having to deal with direct boxes.

For more information, contact B & J MUSIC LTD, 469 King Street, West, Toronto M5V 1K4.



# BRYSTON



## BRYSTON POWER AMPLIFIERS CONTINUE TO DEFINE THE STATE-OF-THE-ART IN MUSICAL ACCURACY, LONG TERM RELIABILITY AND PRODUCT INTEGRITY.

**B**ryston design philosophy incorporates three general concepts.

1. Musical accuracy
2. Long term reliability
3. Product integrity

### MUSICAL ACCURACY

Musical accuracy is reflected throughout all Bryston power amplifiers and includes the necessity for wide-band transient accuracy, open loop linearity ahead of closed loop specifications, and power supply design as an integral part of the overall sonic and electrical performance of a power amplifier.

We have found that a simple carbon film resistor can contribute more static distortion to a signal than the entire remainder of the amplifiers circuitry combined.

We discovered that some parameters of transistors must be controlled as much as 1000 times more closely before their contribution to audible distortion is rendered negligible.

We discovered that under certain actual conditions of speaker loading amplifiers were incapable of yielding high-power transients without distortion.

Each of the various steps or stages in every Bryston amplifier, from

the input section to the output section, without exception, are designed to optimize the musical experience.

### STANDARDS OF RELIABILITY

**W**e consider this criterion to be exceedingly important. We have applied techniques and materials in our everyday construction of electronic equipment more typically utilized in the military and aerospace industries.

All components used in Bryston power amplifiers are specified for continuous duty at maximum power, with typical safety margins of 250%.

The power transistors used in all Bryston amplifiers are 100% tested for safe operating area, both before and after installation in the circuit. They are then taken to a "burn-in" table when they are given a capacitor load, a square-wave input signal, and set at slightly under clipping for a period of 100 hours. During this time, the input signal is cycled three hours on to one hour off, to exert additional thermal stress.

Following the burn-in period, the amplifiers are monitored for DC bias stability for approximately

another full day. At this point, they are returned to the test bench for another complete checkout of all operating parameters and functions, at which time a test sheet is made, and included in the packing with the unit.

As may be seen, Bryston takes very seriously the correct functioning and long term reliability of its products.

### INTEGRITY

**B**ryston contends that the term 'best' should apply to the honesty, pride and courage with which we conduct our business, as well as to the performance of our products.

For this reason, you will not find Bryston's products being cosmetically "updated" on a regular basis merely in order to keep the customer's interest, in something 'new'. If we make a change in the circuitry, it will be because, and only because, it yields a worthwhile performance or reliability improvement.

We feel that regular sweeping revisions to basic circuit design (accompanied by revised jargon) to be cynical marketing on the part of the manufacturer and insulting to the discerning customer.

In the United States:

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RFD #4, Berlin, Montpelier, Vermont 05602  
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In Canada:

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**INTERNATIONAL MIDI ASSOCIATION.** The central source for MIDI information. Membership includes a monthly newsletter, access to a technical hotline with hardware and software support as well as the MIDI Specifications. We are the sole distributors of the MIDI 1.0 Detailed Specifications document. Write to IMA, 11857 Hartsook St., North Hollywood, CA 91607 USA or call (818)505-8964.

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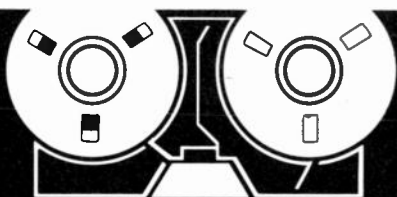
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