

# MUSICIAN

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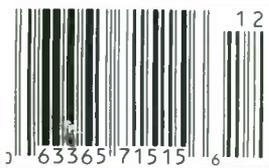
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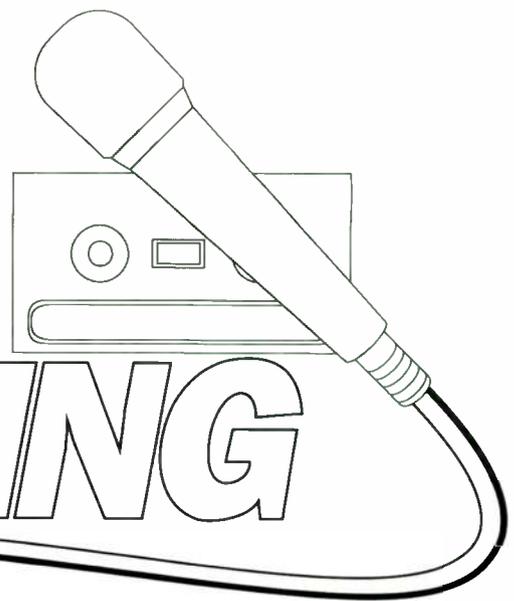
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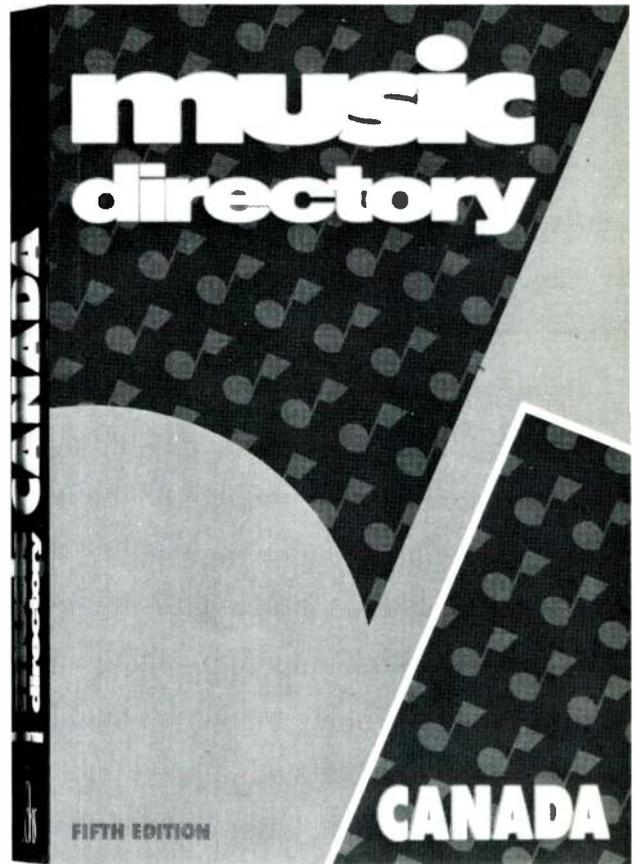
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<b>COVER STORY</b>	<b>THE GRAPES OF WRATH - AGED TO PERFECTION</b> <i>by Frank Schulte</i>	36
	An interview with guitarist/vocalist Kevin Kane	
<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>BRIGHTON ROCK</b> <i>by Richard Chycki</i>	42
	The Art of Self-Management	
	<b>FIRST LADIES OF ROCK -</b> Lee Aaron, Darby Mills, Chrissy Steele <i>by Chris Gudgeon</i>	44
	<b>FOCUS ON PERCUSSION</b>	
	Straight Talk from Canada's Greats <i>by Chris Gudgeon</i>	
	Hot New Products	51
<b>DEPARTMENTS</b>	<b>FEEDBACK</b> More on Roch, Great Case, More extensive regional coverage	10
	<b>FIRST TAKES</b> Band Warz '91, Indie act exposure, New T.A.R.A courses, New tour bus	13
	<b>PRODUCT REPORTS</b> Yamaha FX900, Notator 3.1, Shure LS114, H&K Amp	15
	<b>PRODUCT NEWS</b> Audio Logic Signal Processors, JLCopper Control Station, Sound Source soundware, Jackson Stealth guitar, and more	76
	<b>CLASSIFIED</b>	80
	<b>MARKETPLACE</b>	81
	<b>SHOWCASE</b> Stiletto, Debbie Baker, Love Empire	82
<b>COLUMNS</b>	<b>Guitar</b> Bryan Potvin	28
	<b>Keyboards</b> James Clayton	29
	<b>Bass</b> Mike Farquharson	30
	<b>Percussion</b> Greg Critchley	32
	<b>Brass</b> Dave Dunlop	33
	<b>Woodwinds</b> Mark Promane	34
	<b>Vocals</b> Steven Page	62
	<b>MIDI</b> Chris Chahley	64
	<b>Writing/Arranging</b> Jim Witter	66
	<b>Live Sound</b> Kitty Cross	70
	<b>Recording</b> Brian MacLeod	71
	<b>Business</b> Greg Simpson	72

42



Brighton Rock

44



Lee Aaron



Darby Mills



Chrissy Steele

36



The Grapes of Wrath

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EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Jim Norris

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Lisa Ferguson

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Penny Campbell, Chris Chahley, Richard Chycki, James Clayton, Greg Critchley, Kitty Cross, Dave Dunlop, Mike Farquharson, Chris Gudgeon, Brian MacLeod, Steven Page, Bryan Potvin, Mark Promane, Frank Schulte, Greg Simpson, Clint Ward, Jim Witter

ART DIRECTOR

Robert Jacksie

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Nancy Szostak

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Tom McMeekin

GENERAL MANAGER

Maureen Jack

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

Marc Bertrand

SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

Penny Campbell

MARKETING COORDINATOR

Penny Quelch

OFFICE ASSISTANT

Donna Barber

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Shauna Kennedy

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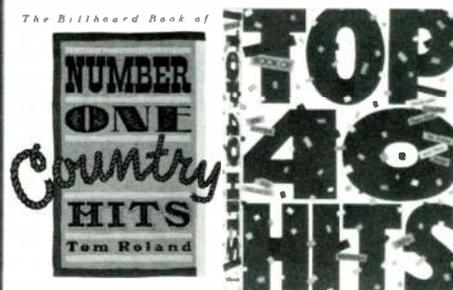
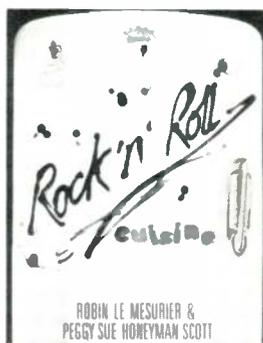
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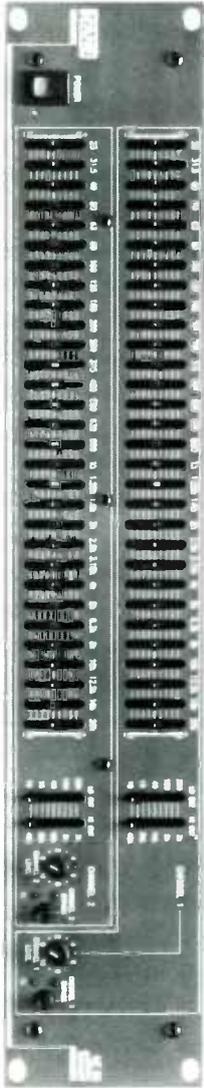
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### Great Case

Many of the Letters to the Editor that you print come from people supporting their favourite Canadian artists. For a change, I'd like to publicly praise a Canadian manufacturer for a world-class product and terrific service.

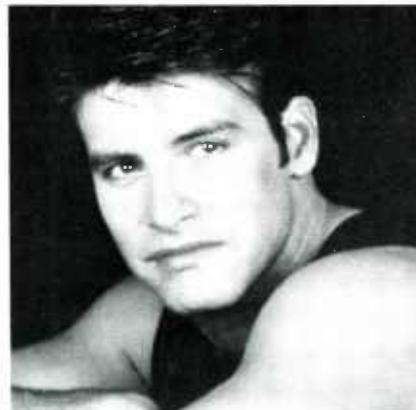
In August of this year I ordered, sight unseen, a Deluxe Guitar Case from Calton Cases of Calgary for my Strat Ultra. Al Williams at Calton Cases told me over the phone that I would have my hand-made case by mid-September. It arrived the second week of September, as promised. This is no small feat, as I have dealt with other manufacturers who promise one thing, but deliver something else.

The case itself is outstanding! If any of your readers have an instrument they cherish, I highly recommend they invest in a Canadian-made Calton. It's built like a bank vault and is gorgeous to look at as well.

*Darran Bogden*  
Kincardine, ON

### More On Roch

Regarding the August issue of your magazine: I did appreciate the interest you have shown in francophone music and artists. But a little thing bothered me — the phrase "But I don't understand why Roch Voisine has to do something in English...." I would like to remind you that he writes all of his lyrics in English first and then works on French adaptations with collaborators. At one time in his life, he refused to speak French because he was ashamed of his accent. So let me tell you that English is far more important to him than French is. He worked at his French success, and I don't find it strange for him to try in English since he can't write songs in French. I see no reason why he should not succeed in English also.



Roch Voisine

I was also bothered by all the mistakes that were made in people's names and album titles. I understand that French is not your tongue, but is it so hard to copy people's names?

*Lise Rivard*  
Montreal, PQ

### Thank You, Thank You!

I've been buying *Canadian Musician* from newsstands for about a year. As a result, I have purchased a number of the resource books offered in your magazine, such as *Music Directory Canada* and others. Thank you for being there; thank you for trying to promote Canadian talent. As a Canadian country singer/songwriter, I appreciate it, as do many others.

*John J. Taylor*  
Orillia, ON

### More Extensive Regional Coverage, Please

As an avid and supportive reader of *Canadian Musician* since the summer of 1979, I have to applaud *CM* for the brilliant job executed in the promotion of Canadian music.

However, this is 1991, and may we, as readers, demand more "extensive" regional coverage? There is more to Canadian music than just Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. How about news from other regions/cities, such as St. John's, Halifax, Moncton, Fredericton, Quebec City, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, and Victoria?

As a producer/engineer based in Victoria, B.C., I would love to report that our beautiful city is definitely up there with the major Canadian music cities.

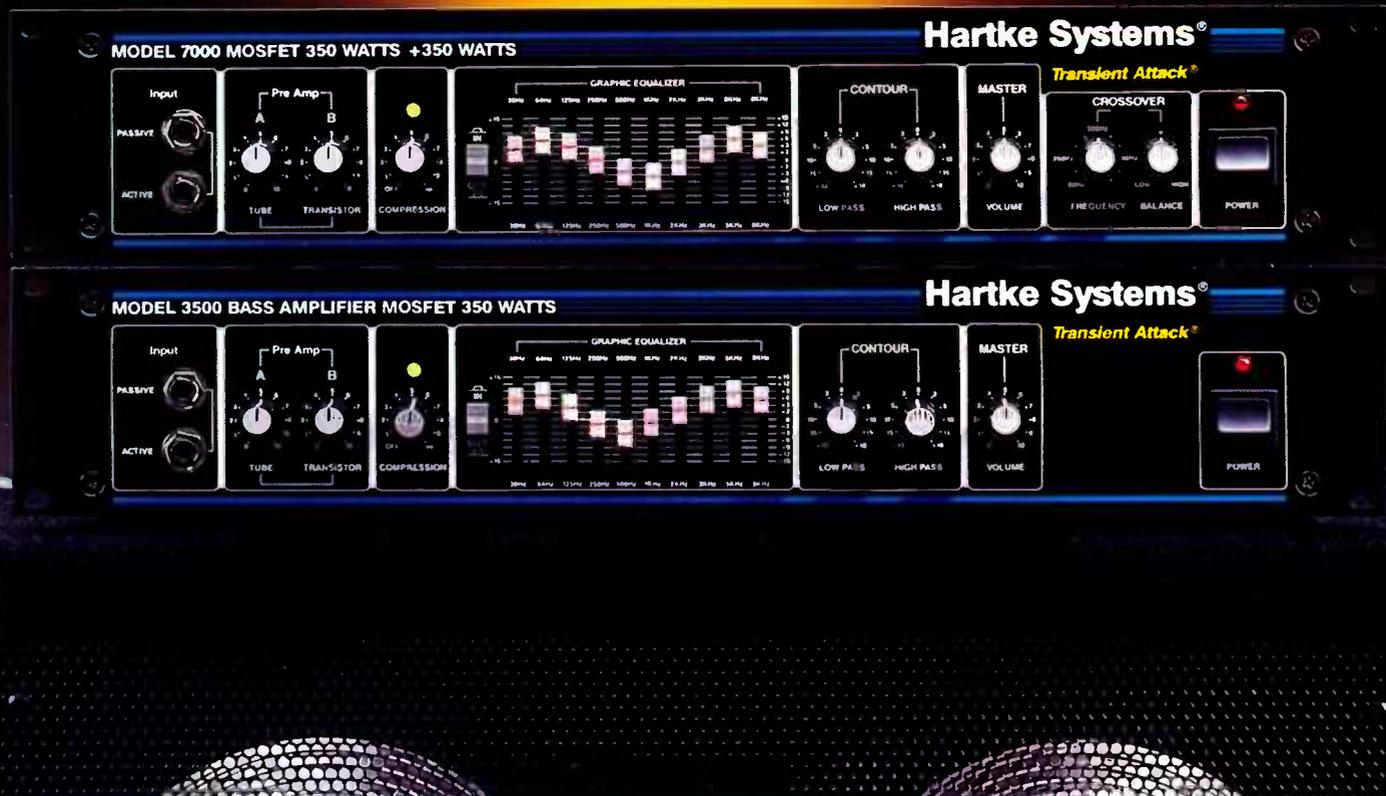
And finally, we have great weather and a beautiful environment to make music in. Now, kindly let us know about other Canadian music cities.

Keep up the good work! Peace.

*Simon A.O. King*  
Victoria, BC

*If you have any comments, criticisms, or questions, please write to: FEEDBACK c/o Canadian Musician, 3284 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4N 3M7 or FAX (416) 485-8924.*

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## Band Warz '91

The search for Canada's best new rock band ended on September 9 at Walker Theatre in Winnipeg as B.C.'s "The Explorers" were voted top honors at the National Final of Band Warz '91, sponsored by Yamaha Canada Music Ltd.

From the original 1500 bands who entered, five regional finalists fought their way through local, club and regional live competitions with over 500 other bands in 30 cities throughout Canada.

The four-piece band from Vancouver takes a winning purse worth over \$75,000 in

prizes including: a record deal with Justin Entertainment MCA Records; \$10,000 tour support from Labatt's Blue; a \$10,000 equipment voucher from Yamaha Canada Music; a 60-hour recording session at Toronto's Winfield Sound; a national publicity campaign; and a trip to Tokyo, Japan to represent Canada in the 1991 Yamaha International Band Explosion in October which was judged by mega-star Jon Bon Jovi and Aerosmith Bon Jovi super-producer Bruce Fairbairn.



## New Courses At T.A.R.A.

The Audio Recording Academy Inc. (T.A.R.A.) announced the establishment of two seven-month certificate courses entitled Applied Audio Recording (Level I) and Advanced Recording Techniques (Level II).

These courses combine over 200 hours of actual recording session time, along with 130 hours of theoretical workshops featuring top session musicians, and industry-active personnel.

T.A.R.A. holds all classes, sessions and lectures in the multi-studio facilities of Ambience Recorders in downtown Ottawa.

These programs have been designed to provide students with a balance of the technical, artistic and human skills required to develop a career within the recording arts/entertainment industries.

The research, development and operation of the Applied Audio Recording (Level I)

and Advanced Recording Techniques (Level II) programs have been undertaken by the principals and management of Ambience Recorders (2 multi-track recording studios in operation since 1978) and its in-house subsidiary companies: The Digital Room (MIDI hard disk recording/editing and CD pre-mastering facility); Sheer Foley (one of Canada's largest Foley Sound Stage facilities, designed by Andy Malcolm); The Jingle Works (jingle, PSA and soundtrack production house); The 3rd Millennium Multimedia Corporation (a CDTV post-production facility); Proxy Music Publishers; and Ambience Records (record/tape/CD manufacturing and related graphic design/production service).

For more information, contact: T.A.R.A., 220 Rideau St., Ottawa, ON K1N 5Y1 (613) 236-5282. FAX (613) 235-5473.

## Norris Publications Appointments

Jim Norris of Norris Publications announced the following appointments:

Penny Quelch has been appointed Marketing Co-ordinator. Penny is a graduate of York University's MBA program, and has a background in marketing, and arts and media administration. She plays classical guitar and taught music for

four years.

Lisa Ferguson has been appointed Editorial Assistant. With an Honours B.A. in English from York University, Lisa's background includes teaching, proofreading/editing, and five years at Long & McQuade Limited Musical Instruments. She is also a singer/songwriter.

## Tour Bus Now Available

Skarratt Promotions Inc. produces concerts across North America, and in their travels have realized that there are few "up to date" tour busses in Canada. Having discussed touring requirements with many entertainers and crews, they have put together the perfect bus for the musician on the road.

Now available, the coach has three separate "cruise air" climate control systems located in the rear lounge, sleeping quarters and front lounge to facilitate various options.

For more information, contact: Skarratt Promotions Inc., 19 Hess St. S., Hamilton, ON L8P 3M7 (416) 527-0552. Toronto: (416) 827-1036. FAX (416) 529-4006.

## Ontario Indie Acts Get Exposure On The University/ College Circuit

Campus Klips is calling for submissions from indie acts who want to have music videos produced or aired. They are looking for all types of music — from rock to jazz, rap-dance to alternative.

Campus Klips is a 2-hour weekly musical video program produced and distributed specifically for the university and college market. The program airs over a closed circuit system in nine major universities and colleges in Ontario.

Campus Klips will profile 40 upcoming musical acts and entertainers. In a joint venture with the Ministry of Culture and Communications, Campus Klips has put together funding to shoot eight music videos over the next six months, under the direction of Tim Troke. In addition, they will give air time to indie acts who already have videos.

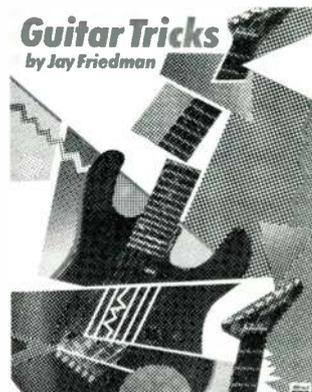
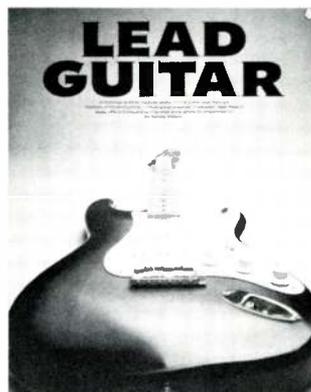
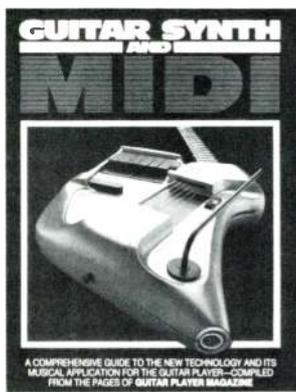
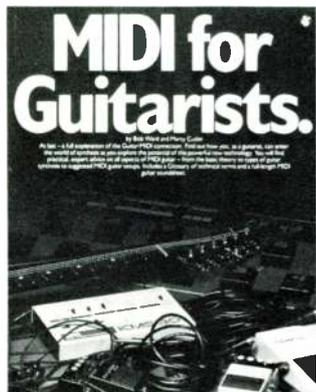
The selection committee consists of noted industry professionals and a host of other experts from all areas of music.

Selection criteria have been set and interested acts should call (416) 333-6759 for an application and eligibility kit.

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# Yamaha FX900 Simul-Effect Processor

by Richard Chycki

Yamaha's FX900 is the next generation of the FX product line. You recall its predecessor, the FX500? It was one of the first successful proponents of the all-digital instrument preamp configuration, a format that has quickly gained popularity in multi-effects units. Offering a barrage of effects — usually for guitar, but useful for other instruments as well — the FX500 boasted simultaneous compression, distortion, EQ, chorusing and reverb/delay crammed into a small half-rack package. The FX900 is a significant expansion of this ideology.

Immediately noticeable on the FX900 is the concentric input level control and dual level meters. Unlike many processors that sum their inputs to mono and generate stereo at the output, this is a true stereo device with the capability to process the two inputs discretely (algorithm dependent). A front panel instrument jack feeds both channel inputs. To optimize noise rejection and accommodate impedance-sensitive instruments like passive guitars, a rear panel high/low impedance switch loads the input with either 10 K-ohms or 1 M-ohm. A data entry knob speeds up value changes appreciably, a welcome addition to the standard pushbuttons also incorporated for "bumping" parameter values. Generously included are 100 factory presets for reference as well as an equal number of user memory allocations.

## Algorithms

### The Math of It All

The sonic heart of any digital processor is its selection of available algorithms. The FX900 offers four simultaneous effects groups, their status clearly shown by illuminated pushbuttons. To those who are particularly effects hungry, fear not! Several groups contain more than one modifier, so the actual number of effects is greater. Especially worthy of note is the ability to change the patching configuration and order of the effects groups. Five basic combinations of various serial/parallel patches allow the user a choice of 11 algorithms in total. The 'Flip' switch will flip-flop the effect throughout the algorithm into its desired position. First impression is that this system is confusing — it's unique; it's unusual, but with a little reading and experimentation, anything is possible here.

Both the Rev1 and Rev2 effects groups are reminiscent of Yamaha's SPX units. Rev1 contains pitch changers, various

delays (some modulated), and reverb/early reflection effects. Several of these algorithms support a discrete stereo input. Dissecting the individual effects goes beyond the scope of this article, but it would suffice to say that signal path control is exemplary. The EQ is limited to either a simple low-pass



or high-pass filter (ER and multi-tap programs excepted; they have both filters).

Rev2 is similar to Rev1 with respect to reverb/early reflection and non-modulating delay effects. A combination echo/reverb algorithm outputs two simultaneous effects, the trade-off here being reduced parameter numbers and delay time.

The Mod effects group carries several of Yamaha's hot "old standards" — symphonic and chorus. Panning, tremolo and flanging programs are also offered. Unfortunately, the flanging program lacks phase manipulation and remains ungratifying.

The Dyn (dynamics) group is by far the most sophisticated of the four. This group contains "dual" programs — effects that are fully stereo and have individual parameters for each channel. This realm sports a dual compressor, enhancer (an aural exciter), and three-band fully parametric EQ (brings Yamaha's DEQ equalizer to mind, doesn't it?).

Bending toward guitar players, the Dyn section is the home of the all important digital distortion algorithms. Certain programs will deliver up to four effects in this group alone: distortion (with noise gate built in); compression; EQ (three-band with mid sweep); and wah. The wah is controllable from a variety of sources: foot controllers, dynamics, LFO, and so on. An interesting multi-band distortion program splits the signal into three bands and distorts each band individually. A low-pass filter in all distortion algorithms helps to limit harmonic content for subtle smoothing or radical speaker simulation curves. Sadly, if you don't happen to enjoy any of these distortion algorithms, you're stuck. There's no external effects loop available to interface with your favourite tube preamp.

## Mind Control via MIDI

Real time parameter control is extensive. The FX900 will allow up to four controllers (any MIDI controller 0-95 plus Channel Pressure, Key Velocity and Note Number) to

modulate selected parameters. The range of control is editable in the Utilities section. For non-MIDIoids, two foot pedals can be connected directly to the rear of the unit and another two if you opt for the optional FC900 foot controller. It is possible to combine both foot pedal controllers and MIDI controllers simultaneously. Four banks of program maps and MIDI channel assignments allow the user to assemble maps for a few different setups if desired.

## Listen!

Individually, all the time-based effects (reverb, echo, chorusing...) were very usable. Besides the luxury of the stereo inputs and several new parameters, nothing was presented that we hadn't seen in previous Yamaha SPX/FX processors. The echo and symphonic programs still smoke and the verbs are still pretty cool. The flanger is still *yeck* and the pitch changers still have some dissonance lurking about. The real grab here though is the ability to arrange effects in various configurations. This capability propels the FX900 into the out-of-the-ordinary, limiting the user only by the imagination, assembling effects that modify others.

Assessing the Dynamics section, especially the distortion, has always been somewhat of a sore spot for many due to the subjective nature of the evaluation. But here goes. When the distortion was maxed, I had no trouble producing convincing simulations of several hot-rodded amps, including my trusty Boogie Mark IV. That's using a tube power amp and an EVM12L as well. Unfortunately, sustaining high lead notes exposed a disappointing amount of aliasing that, although likely acceptable for live work, could prove problematic in sensitive studio situations. The direct sound was passable; it took a great deal of manipulation to get a raunchy direct sound that was viable, and even then it didn't come close to the sound of a power amp and cabinet attached.

Sadly, semi-distorted crunch sounds proved to be a big frustration. Backing down the distortion control revealed an uneven, threshold type of distortion with the guitar obviously remaining voiced for high gain operation — lots of mids, no high end. When the signal passed a certain input level, there was a drastic change in the sound rather than a smooth clipping effect.

*Continued*

## Yamaha FX900 *Continued*

On the other end of the spectrum, clean sounds combined with that legendary Symphonic program were all excellent, both through cabinet and direct. Compression and EQ algorithms all performed flawlessly.

### The Aftermath

The FX900 is not the simplest of machines. You will likely need to do some serious manual page flipping (it's quite well-written) to fully understand all the unit's functions. This is a natural progression as far as multi-effector capability goes and your

benefit will be the mastery of the FX900's exceptional versatility.

Looking at the preset list (with over 60 of the 100 presets guitar-oriented), the FX900 is strongly targeting musicians to use this unit as an all-in-one preamp. However, by not incorporating an external effects loop, Yamaha has effectively pushed those people away from the whole unit, as they may not be satisfied with merely one segment of it. I'm not centring Yamaha out by any means here. I've been lobbying for some time now for several manufacturers to address this issue. Digital distortion is still in its infancy

and has a tough sound to simulate (i.e. a tube amp over-driving). If a programmable effects loop were included here, it would be possible to substitute your preferred over-drive device and still benefit from the rest of the processor's myriad functions.

And there is much to benefit from in the FX900. There are certainly more useful effects in the one unit than most musicians could use — all very versatile, all very controllable. In the proper working situation, the FX900 could prove to be a valuable addition to one's effects arsenal.

# Notator 3.1

*by Clint Ward*

A review on Notator? Well I think the jury is in and the verdict clear: this is one slick piece of software. Yeah, there's a lot of great software out there — better for the musician as I see it. Hats off to all the

guys creating powerful programs on all platforms: things just keep getting better. Whatever computer you use or what software you run is personal. In the end, the music is most important, not the program or

the computer. 3.1 is the newest version of C-Lab's flagship sequencer notation program: there's lots to see so I'll get right to it.

*Continued*

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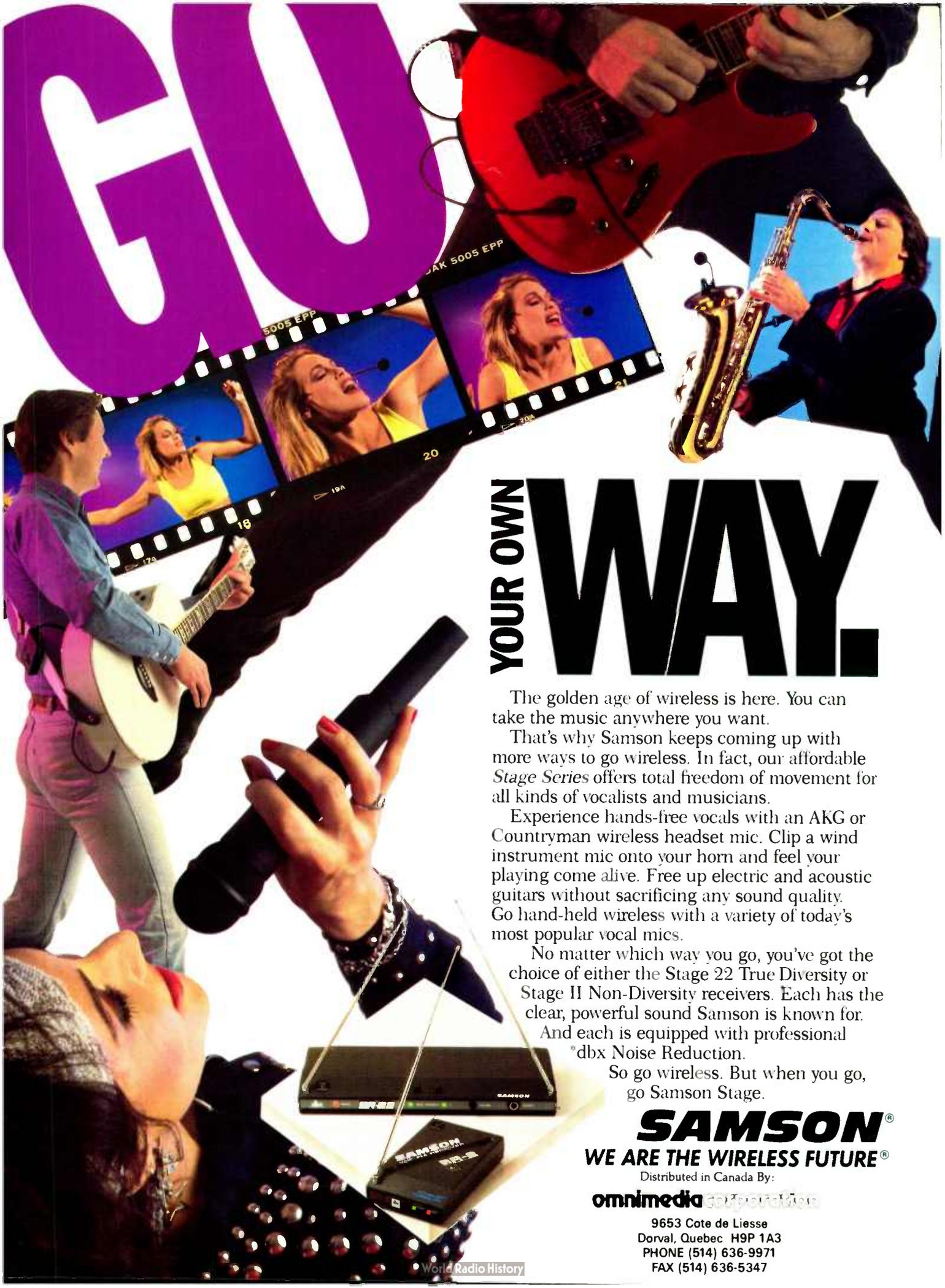
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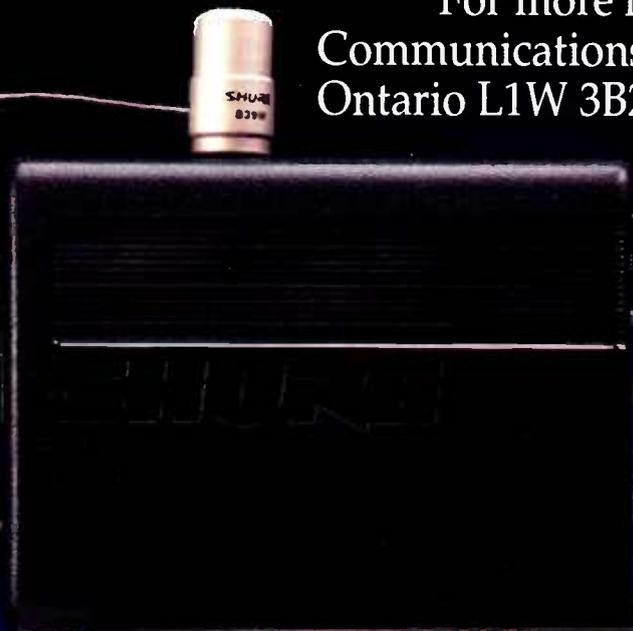
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# Notator 3.1 *Continued*

## Getting on Track

In the last year that I've taught Notator I've noticed some confusion in the areas of how many tracks Notator has and how the arrange mode works. To the novice, Notator appears to be a 16-track sequencer. The arrange mode, to most, can be confusing at first; the concept of four patterns running simultaneously can irk the best of us. Version 3.1 offers two new faces to the sequencer portion of Notator — the Graphic Arrange Mode and a 32-Track Pattern.

32-Track Pattern is two adjacent patterns (pattern 1 and 2) joined together creating what C-Lab calls a double pattern. Decide beforehand what mode you're going to use. When using 32-track pattern, only columns A+C are available in the arrange mode since the total track potential of Notator is still only 64. "Ghost of" is the only track parameter that doesn't operate on all 32 tracks. All MIDI related operations like "Demix all channels" are based on the 16-

track concept. Using "shift" and "alternate" to change track parameters is also based on the 16-track pattern. Beware of the copy functions; most apply to all 32 tracks but some like "multi" don't. Always remember Double Pattern 1 is Pattern 1 and 2 together, so track 17 of Double Pattern 1 is actually track 1 of Pattern 2. Easy, huh?

The GAM (not the leg type) or Graphic Arrange Mode displays your arrange list in the form of vertical beams. To enter this mode toggle "K" or click the word "arrange". In the normal arrange mode, the left hand vertical edge displays your start bars for each pattern; in the GAM this becomes the bar ruler. The whole display can be zoomed in or out of by clicking on the word "zoom" (upper left hand corner). On playback, a horizontal dotted line, called the song position line (SPL), moves down the GAM. Entries to the GAM are created by right clicking in the desired column and start point, then assigning the pattern of choice to

be played. To delete an entry, hold and drag it out of the arrange window or hit shift + alternate and click on the entry. The empty space will be filled by the previous entry. This will make the previous pattern appear longer, but it's for visual purposes only.

Using "delete" moves all the following entries to fill the void left by the deleted pattern. Moving entries is treated like most movements in Notator — click, hold, the white glove, and move. To copy an entry hold "shift". If "ALT" is pressed while changing a pattern's start time, all other entries will move in tandem to ensure the lengths stay the same. Beware — a gap will be created depending on the direction of the movement and what follows or precedes that specific entry. You can change a pattern's length by clicking and holding the bottom right hand corner.

A useful new feature is the scrub mode. This allows you to start and stop the

*Continued*



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# Notator 3.1 *Continued*

sequencer with one mouse movement. Right click and hold in the bar ruler at the desired start point and the sequencer starts; release the mouse button and it stops. Great for finding weird notes fast! The GAM is extremely deep ended. At first I was disappointed it wasn't designed in a linear fashion, yet once the tricks are made familiar you may never go back to that old arrange list.

## The Looks

The score section of Notator got a lot of attention in this update. There's an enhanced version of the "Note Attributes Window", the most important of which is the "Independent Note". Also new is a "Process Note Attributes" window which acts like a customized transform for score data only. Version 3.1 introduces a percussion clef and staff. There is enhanced control over page preview, page number, time signature, key and title for printing only.

The Note Attribute Window (NAW) is a

handy pop-up window accessed by double clicking the desired note, or the first note in a group to be edited. As of version 3.0, this window made computer calligraphy much easier on Notator. There are five new additions to 3.1: Tuplet Direction, where you decide where the tuplet brackets will be placed — up, down or auto; Disable Interpretation lets you bypass the very useful interpretation mode to achieve more control on the notes look and placement; Note Head allows you to easily choose any note head symbol for any specific note; Miniature lets you miniaturize any note (this was available in 3.0, but not this easy); Tie Direction lets you choose the direction of the tie — up, down or auto.

Independent Note, when highlighted, releases that particular note from the rest of the bar's timing criteria, yet the note is still audible over MIDI. This is extremely useful for grace notes, trills, and other performance-orientated recording. When ac-

tivated, the NAW changes slightly to include new parameters concerned only with the independent note: length, show slash and hide ledger lines.

Process Note Attributes (PNA) acts like a small transform window for display purposes only. It can only be accessed when you are in the edit screen via the right hand function column. The top part is to set the criteria of the selected track to be processed, such as limit position, channel, note, velocity and length. A good example would be all notes with the length between 0 0 0 0 and 0 0 0 20 get a staccato. This is done by switching staccato on, selecting the symbol, defining the criteria and clicking "OK". This feature saves a lot of time since it can process a whole track at a time especially if the track was played musically correct.

## Printing By Numbers

Version 3.0 sees the introduction of a single-line percussion staff, accessed via the



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"parameter mode" in the editor, and a percussion clef set to "Display Drum Clef" in the drum map page. The single line is the centre line of the treble clef staff. Any single line rhythm track can be moved quite easily using the display parameter transpose function.

The printer page offers some very needed updates including: Print Single Tracks, First Tracks Header (for printing titles when using "Print Single Tracks"), Page Number Offset and Print Clef/Key, which dictates if the clef and key signature will be printed on all, none, first page or just the first stave. There is one of these handy tools for the time signature as well. You can also suppress any time signature by pressing "ALT" and clicking the signature, reverse this to re-enter the time signature. This will cross out the time signature and suppress it on the print out only. In page preview you may view all pages within a score via the calculator key pad or the "Mouse as a slider" function. Notator will want to scroll through all the pages first, so it's a good idea to hit page 99 and walk away for a bit. Once the scrolling is completed any page can be easily previewed.

**A Little Extra**

Notator 3.1 has broadened its horizons as an "all in one" program by adding a new feature that allows you to export the print output in the form of IMG image files. This allows you to import Notator score data into a desk top publishing program like Calamus. A handy feature for teachers, writers and publishers.

The file system has been changed slightly to include the saving of arrangements from the arrange mode. Great stuff for people using Notator in a live context: you load a song where the patterns are songs themselves, then you have the freedom to choose different set lists in the form of arrangements. Then how about just trying different arrangements of a song without having to save the whole song each time?

**The Coda**

Version 3.1 is a strong step forward with respect to the scoring portion of Notator. The "Note Attribute Window" is a powerful and easy tool to use, yet since this is a sequenced-based notation program, moving and altering the "look" can be tedious and time consuming. The "Process Note Attribute" window definitely adds speed and ease to put-

ting those all-so-important finishing touches to parts to be printed and read by musicians. How about adding dynamic markings to this window or let volume mixes on the RMG page dictate crescendos and decrescendos? More multiple quantizations for the score, like the adaptive groove, would be great for those "heady" parts my piano playing friend loves to see scored. Greedy, aren't we!

The fact is Notator is not just a notation program, but a great sequencer first. On these merits version 3.1 is now a very powerful scoring program also.

Lorenz Rychner's review of 2.0 in *Music Technology's* 1989 February issue quoted Gerhard Lengeling and Chris Adam saying that they saw Notator in the hands of the average rock or MIDI musician. On the contrary guys, this is not an average program. It's extremely deep-ended, blessed with a great feel, riddled with non-destructive real-time editing, and now a very respectable scoring section.

The sequencer updates in 3.1 are very creative, offering even more choices to how and when we make music. The "Graphic Arrange Mode", although not linear, is very powerful; a new interface to launch us out of "pattern"-based recording, 32-track pattern pulls things together on those really big tracks that need room to breathe.

The reality is, as you probably know, not just the average rock musician or MIDIot uses Notator. A lot of heavy, talented composers, writers and arrangers fly the C-Lab flag. So as a parting wish list I would love to see more composing-type tools readily available in the sequencer: modal transpose, inversion, diminution, logarithmic devices, or even "guess the chord I played", just to mention a few. An edit buffer would be useful when exiting the edit mode (keep old or keep new).

Don't get me wrong: I think this program is fantastic and even magical at times. This is an amazing piece of technology — keep up the great work. We're greedy and we always want more. Oh yeah, I almost forgot — version 3.1 will boot up from a floppy disk drive while you play your keyboard. Enjoy!

*Clint Ward is a Toronto-based composer/arranger who teaches Notator and other MIDI-related subjects. He's also involved in freelance MIDI production.*

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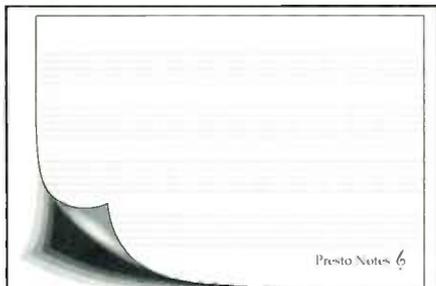
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### The L4

As previously mentioned, the receiver is a diversity system. Two antennae and receiver sections are housed in the one box. An internal circuit evaluates the quality of both signals and selects the superior of the two, minimizing dropouts and increasing performance. Shure calls this technology MAR-CAD (Maximum Ratio Combining Audio Diversity).

Two 1/4 wave antennae supplied with the unit attach to a pair of SO-239 UHF sockets located on either side of the unit's rear. For performance under adverse conditions, Shure recommends using full-size half-wave antennae spread well apart. A squelch control allows the user to set a predetermined threshold under which no signal will pass. This avoids blasting white noise when the receiver loses the transmitter carrier. The L4 also uses one of those nasty external AC adaptors that hog power bar space and always seem to rattle around the bottom of a rack after a few road trips. On the plus side, it does help to avoid ground loops. Both

XLR balanced and 1/4" unbalanced outputs are available for connection to PA systems and instrument amps, respectively.

The front panel is remarkably clean and simple: an output volume control, power switch, diversity indicators, and two-step signal level indicator. The diversity indicators are both on, showing that RF is present, rather than which of the two receivers is in use.

### The L11

The belt pack is an ergonomic treat. A multi-pin connector interfaces the input with the pack. It and its mate are both all-metal with a push-to-unlock system for maximum long-term reliability. The obligatory loose wire antenna hangs freely from the case. A mute switch cancels any audio, but maintains carrier contact with the receiver. RF output is the legal maximum allowed by the FCC — 50 MW. Audio gain is adjustable via a small screwdriver (included) by a 40 dB range, accommodating most inputs.

Another goodie is the unusual door design for the battery. It is not detachable from the case (read: never lost), very secure, yet opens with a simple pressure on the hinge area of the case. Like most wireless units, this machine eats batteries, an alkaline 9V lasting about nine hours. This is the first wireless system I've seen that condones the use of rechargeable Ni-cads (heavy-duty types only) for two to three hours of use. Over a period of time, that would amount to a substantial saving in battery costs, not to mention environmental detriment.

### Testing, Testing

A wireless system is always fun to test because it gives me an excuse to run around the neighbourhood with my amp cranked listening for dead spots, and so on. The LS114 system proved to be silent and dropout free in all but the most adverse conditions, in this case through several brick walls and about 150 or so metres (500 ft).

*Continued*



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## PRODUCT REPORTS

# Shure L-Series *Continued*

As far as transparency and coloration go, my guitar signal was noticeably compressed when I really dug into the strings. The signal was markedly brighter than a wire. This phenomenon was likely due to removing cable capacitance from a long cable run, restoring the high-end to what it normally should be. The compression effect I experienced was pleasing, giving my guitar extra cut. Coloration isn't necessarily bad. Overall operation was

consistent and reliable.

## Final Words

The LS114 wireless system is a gem. It frees a player to perform at his/her physical maximum without a leash, and acts as a silent partner — you usually don't realize it's there, but it is, and doing its job well. Sign me up for one!

# Hughes & Kettner ATS 120 Advanced Tube System Combo

by Richard Chycki

**A**mp manufacturers these days are constantly torn between the use of ever more expensive tubes for pleasing overdrive characteristics, or solid state for reliability, versatility, and cost effectiveness. Hughes & Kettner, makers of popular half rack preamps like the Blues Master and Metal Shredder, have introduced a line of combos and heads that are an "intelligent" hybrid of tube and solid-state technologies. The ATS 120 combo blends a hybrid trimodal preamp, a 100W RMS MOSFET power section, and a Celestion Vintage 30 in a ported cabinet.

## Features

Trimodal preamps are quickly gaining popularity in the eyes of the contemporary player. Beginning at mode one, the ATS 120 has a solid state clean section using what H&K refers to as "soft click" to round off any harsh edges commonly associated with solid state clipping. Controls are pretty standard: passive bass mid treble/bright switch and a single volume control.

The second mode, the crunch channel, introduces the two 12AX7s into the circuitry. Note that the crunch and lead channels share the same active four-band EQ circuitry. Voiced differently from clean, the crunch mode is capable of a moderate amount of gain, useful for chording and some solo work.

Third mode, the obligatory high-gain lead channel, showcases tube overdrive coupled with a healthy amount of gain. Switching to this mode engages another set of gain/master controls that are next to the crunch controls. We'll discuss channel switching features with the footswitch shortly.

Reverb is of the Accutronics 3 spring

variety. The pan is wrapped up in plastic bubble shipping material (the stuff everyone loves to squeeze) to isolate the pan mechanically from the amp housing.

Once preamp-conditioned, the signal travels to a versatile effects loop matrix. A rear panel switch controls signal level matching between 300mv and 1V for rack and pedal interfacing. Three DIP switches allow the user to program automatic loop activation for any or all of the three preamp modes. Neat. Thankfully, the ATS 120 offers a mixable loop. By cranking the FX Mix control clockwise, you can blend in more and more of the wet sound until it's 100 percent effect and no direct when fully clockwise. This feature is indispensable for quickly eradicating "effects overwhelm" at live gigs and maintaining a clean, tight, dry sound unhampered by a half dozen A/D-D/A conversions or some poor analogue electronics. Line out and power amp in jacks offer a conventional interface to other effects, power amps, and so on, as required.

Power amplification is all solid state as well. The 100W RMS power section uses MOSFET technology coupled with current feedback methods to simulate tube behaviour. All this is accompanied by dramatic reductions in heat, weight and deterioration/failure normally associated with a tube amp on the road.

The single 12" Celestion Vintage 30 is housed in a ported enclosure, a rare find on a combo amp. In all honesty, I had previously never used a combo with a ported box and I was surprised by just how big it sounds. With a nominal impedance of 8 ohms, connecting a secondary cabinet is possible (I would even say advisable given the power amp and speaker rating mismatch) as the power amp runs easily down to 4 ohms.

# Hughes & Kettner *Continued*

## Putting the Foot Down

The rear panel of the ATS 120 sports a 9-pin connector — identical with RS232C connectors commonly found on advanced musical equipment and most computers — for the connection of a foot pedal board. It's a five-button stage board that allows remote selection of any of the three preamp modes and effects reverb activation — all in LED colour-coded brilliance. No bogus plastic footswitches here, only rugged steel that you could park a heavy foot on with ease. The three mode footswitches operate in tandem with the momentary pushbutton switches on the front panel. A neat feature is the dual triangular LEDs that point to both the preamp and master control of the mode selected. Great for dark stages. All switching, by the way, was quick and silent.

I did have a few concerns about the foot pedal system. In the comfort of one's home, there would be few problems. But left to survive in the doldrums of club life, I could see the 9-pin connector getting damaged by an unscrupulous boot: the twist-lock screws on either side of the connector body are especially prone to damage, although the whole case is metal. The lack of strain relief where the cable enters the foot pedal could contribute to cable failure over long-term setup teardowns. No anti-skid material on the bottom of the footswitch is problematic in any situation. A little ski wax on the bottom of this baby and you could definitely be Surfer Joe.

## Sound Sounds

In all cases, I found the ATS 120 sounded its best when played loud — very loud. I'm not sure exactly what the reasoning was behind this, but there was a point where the sounds in all three modes began breathing. At this volume level (my neighbours are petitioning my eviction by now, I know it!), the clean sound was bright and articulate. I couldn't get any crunch at all from the clean mode even with the volume cranked.

Modes two and three — the crunch and lead channel, respectively — acted more as a single channel with a boost option due to the routing through the single EQ system. Subtle voicing differences were especially apparent at lower gain settings, but these are not adjustable. The crunch channel carried more beef in the lower end than its high-gain counterpart. Active EQ coupled with the ported cabinet yielded copious amounts of low-end and resonance normally associated with 412 boxes. The rear panel headphone jack, EQ'd for speaker simulation, was quite usable as well.

## Quibbles and Bits

Ergonomically speaking, this amp really shines. It's attractive, rugged and well laid

out, except for one point: service. I've made reference to tube reliability. It's no secret that tubes often fail: power tubes usually, but preamp tubes are not exempt by a longshot. But they sound great and we've always put up with their unreliability to get a great sound. Should a failure occur and field service is necessary (by a competent technician always), it is necessary to use a screwdriver and two Allen keys to get at the tubes! The speaker has to be removed, and the amp shielding is a real bitch to replace. So if a tube goes down before a show, so do you! I'm not condoning a user to rip apart his/her amp should tube woes arise, but it's a pretty common occurrence and I'm surprised that an easy access rear panel door wasn't incorporated, given the circumstances at hand.

## The Bottom Line

Overall, Hughes & Kettner have developed a strong product line here. By coupling old world and modern technologies in a single unit, they have produced a contemporary product competitive with the demands of today's amplifier market.

### Manufacturer's Response:

*Thanks for the thorough review and your high praise of the technology, appearance, and big sound of the ATS120.*

*Regarding the speaker rating, Celestion has certified the Vintage 30 for us to handle 100 watts of MOSFET power. (Celestion tells us that the name is to suggest the sound of the old Vox AC30, while the power rating of this updated remake is higher.)*

*The "Surfer Joe" comment in regard to the slipperiness of the stageboard had us in stitches. A point well made is a point well taken. We'll include rubber feet on future models.*

*The stageboard cable's 9-pin connector has proven to be very reliable on various H & K amps over the last four years — more so than a first glance may suggest.*

*For more low-end in the lead-channel, the "Lead Fat" switch will add a tight, narrow-band bass boost specifically to that one channel.*

*Thanks for the suggestion regarding replacement of the tubes; you're right that it's not easy to open the amp. Fortunately, in our experience the preamp tubes rarely if ever fail suddenly. Since they will begin to fade slowly after a year or so, you should change them when you notice weaker performance. It's like with the tires of your car. You can never prevent a flat, but taking care of the tires and changing them after a certain period of time can help a lot.*

Andreas Mayerl, Product Manager, Hughes & Kettner



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# Technique Vs. Imagination

**W**hen I was first asked to write an article to appear in *Canadian Musician*, specifically the guitar column, I was rather suspect of my qualifications. I decided that if it were a series of observations and thoughts as opposed to "shop-talk", I was qualified.

This article is not going to be about tunings, equipment or finger exercises. In fact, I don't practice. I try to pick up the guitar once a day, but unfortunately I have the attention span of an eight-year-old and if it's not turning me on within a few minutes, it gets set down. Those brief interludes with the instrument are intended to write songs. Hours of scales has never been part of my curriculum so I'll let those who know about tunings, equipment and finger exercises write about that and I'll just give you my biased critique on rock guitar in general.

A contrast that's often charmed me is an equation: Technical Parameters versus Imagination. Because of my personal paranoia about my own technique, I've been forever fascinated by the fact that I seem to admire players who possess an abundance of technique and also those who don't. It's occurred to me as well that what I feel is good music, particularly rock music, is sometimes void of precision performance.

Occasionally, lethal doses of both come

along and create explosive results — Eddie Van Halen being one. I'm not a fan of Van Halen, but it's difficult to ignore his sheer talent. Anyone vaguely versed in rock 'n' roll guitar knew in 1978 that a legend was in the making. Sadly enough though, he is almost single-handedly responsible for one of rock 'n' roll guitar's ugliest trends to emerge in years. The finger board break dancing WWF school of "I don't understand or care what I'm playing, but as long as I can cram as many notes as possible into this solo, I'm a happy camper" club. They say that imitation is the greatest compliment. Unfortunately, there is an entire generation of copy cats who I don't think hear anything they're playing. Ironically, the man who started it all still shines far above those who so desperate-

ly try to emulate that particular style.

Different balances can also invent interesting consequences. The Edge took limited technique, a \$40 analogue delay and some great ideas and etched his sound in stone. He may not have invented it, but it's his now. Subsequently, it's hard today to play some sort of rhythmic-echo guitar pattern without conjuring up images of U2 tunes.

I guess falling into the "imagination" category would be raw energy. Pete Townsend, Steve Jones and the like also took reasonably limited skills and made songs bleed vigour.

I've always been a big fan of the players who appear to let the song tell them what to play. The Beatles made a career out of it. Andy Summers is a genius where this is concerned. A guy who can play circles

mistake. Tune your ears and your mind into trying to differentiate these situations. I'm convinced it's easily as important as pitch or timing.

Ken Greer is another player who, in my opinion, displays shades of brilliance. Aside from that majestic steel stuff, he has a gift for melody which seems to be rare these days. His rhythm parts retain little hidden sub-melodies, and the solos — well, they speak for themselves. I'm a sucker for a beautiful melody so he usually blows me away.

I wonder if technical prowess can be a dangerous thing? I'm talking about *over-refinement*. A friend recently saw Sting live and said the band was really good, but they never really *opened up*; never rocked out. He thought the band was maybe too good. Obviously it all depends on your expectations, or the songs' intentions. Maybe the band was just bored that night.

A guitar player — especially lead — has been blessed with the option of playing in the pocket, or slightly to a mile behind or ahead of the beat. And any of those situations can sound great. Hendrix was a guy who often wasn't "tight", and it's probably the last thing anyone has ever commented on about his execution. The sounds, the note selection, the attitude and reckless-

ness, the *imagination* is what made him a hero.

Don't get me wrong. I don't hate technique. I just think sometimes it clouds some musicians' ideas of what's musically acceptable and what isn't. As for me, I'm just lazy. But if method and skill are what you want out of your playing, then by all means go for it. Dive into it. There's a very lucrative session musician market out there looking for people who can play a variety of styles (convincingly) at the drop of a hat. And that's a pretty admirable ability.

Arguably, taste is opinion and this has been mine. But one rule of thumb will always prevail over anyone's opinion: If ya ain't got a song, it just doesn't matter.



Bryan Potvin is a member of The Northern Pikes.

around most hot guitarists held back so many times, letting the songs breathe and stand on their own. Discipline. Take "Walking On The Moon" by the Police. The bass line is the most identifiable hook of the tune, but remove that suspended chord he slashes through the verse and it's a different song.

A guy in a Top 40 band, as satirical as it sounds, once told me long ago that when you're writing guitar parts for a song, cut what you're doing in half and you'll probably discover you're still playing too much. I took heed of those words. Get to the root of the matter. Find out which notes are actually saying something and which are just tagging along. It's a bit of a double-edged sword, though. Sometimes a song may need some fat and trimming it all off would be a definite

# The Athletics of the Keyboard

**D**onald Tovey once called the physical aspects of performing "the athletic part of music." My most recent classical piano teacher was emphatic in all aspects of playing and practising, and it has paid off dramatically.

It makes a lot of sense to consider the athletics of playing the keyboard. When runner Carl Lewis practises, he does more than just run, although that's what he's preparing for; he stretches and does "warm-ups". Any professional athlete will tell you that performing "cold" can lead to injury.

In the same way, playing through your repertoire is not in itself a complete practice. Although you may not physically hurt yourself by playing without warming up, you are limiting your abilities and perhaps, in the long run, shortening your career.

Here are some thoughts on preparing for practice or performance. Some might seem obvious, but do you really use them regularly or consciously?

## Stretches

Start by spreading your hand as wide as possible for a 10-count, then clenching it into a fist for a moment. Repeat this a few times.

Bending the fingers back and forth will help overall flexibility, but take care not to bend too far. To prevent this, hold all four fingers in the palm of the other hand, and flex all four at once. This keeps you from bending further than the least flexible finger will allow.

With the other fingers together, spread two fingers at a time, in a *Star Trek* "live long and prosper" gesture. Include the space between your thumb and index finger. You can use the other hand to help stretch them, but don't stretch any more than is comfortable.

With all three of these stretches, remember that if you feel even the slightest pain. Stop! Go soak your hands and do something else for a while. This isn't a competition, it's a warm-up.

## Air-Keyboard

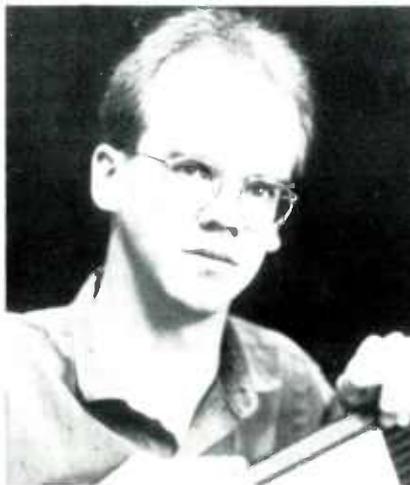
Rehearsing the motions without an instrument is not the sole right of drummers. Why not run through scales or even an entire piece on a table-top? If you can play a keyboard without watching your hands, you can practise away from it, too.

This may look or seem odd, but it can work for you. One classical performer, in his early career, was known to learn an entire piece by reading the music and moving his fingers, then walk onstage and perform it, never once having played it on an actual piano.

Apparently there are silent "practice keyboards" available, the idea being something like practice-pads for drummers. If you're going to go this far, you may as well carry a battery-operated portable board.

## Gadgets

As a rule, don't use outside force on your hands. Sticking to isometric types of warm-ups means the muscles limit their own work-out. There are grips, balls, and putties to strengthen your grip, but don't use these immediately prior to playing as they tire the hand quickly.



James Clayton is a former radio broadcaster who now attends the Jazz Program at Humber College.

## A Pro's Pointers

Sam Reid, keyboardist for Glass Tiger, says he takes a foam ball on the road, and uses this for both warming up and for working on his grip.

"A Nerf ball was too soft — you could just squeeze it into your fist. I took a solid ball and wrapped it with foam that was the right consistency. I'll use it for five minutes with each hand, and I can feel it right up to my forearm."

Reid has used this ball for a number of years, ever since the idea was given to him by a music teacher: "When I was doing my conservatory, I'd take it with me to use before exams." (Another argument for classical training!)

"Our guitarist [Al Connelly] uses a thing called a 'Gripmaster'. You hold it in one hand, and it's got individual springs for each finger. I found it's more for developing finger speed, though."

Reid also gives his hands a thorough shaking-out before performing. This is another simple act that shouldn't be overlooked. In a more formal sense, I've encountered this action in Tai-Chi exercises: it's used for circulation as well as loosening up.

## Getting Warm

If it's cold enough outside to wear gloves, keep them on inside for a while. They'll warm up your hands more quickly than the indoor air.

Soaking your hands in a sink of warm water (as opposed to under running water) is an even faster way to warm up your hands, and great if you're running late. The downside is that it dries out the skin. Don't do this if you've planned sliding B-3 riffs for the first set: it's nearly impossible to do glissandos on plastic keys with dried-out fingers. Reid points out that he only does this if it's very cold and he's pressed for time.

## Precautions

Remember, the body-building phrase "no pain, no gain" is entirely irrelevant here. Body-builders are "building" by tearing and rebuilding the muscles; do you really want to do that to your hands? We're talking about the irreplaceable tools of your trade.

Don't stress any one finger. It's easy to injure a finger if you work on it more than others, or put unusual strain on it. A worst-case scenario is 19th-century composer Robert Schumann. Considering one of his fingers to be weaker than the others, he devised a weight-and-pulley system to pull back on it as he practised. The damage he inflicted on his hand is the main reason he is remembered for his compositions, and not his performances.

Furthermore, take advice on this subject, even from teachers, with a grain of caution: more than one professional athlete has ended his career by taking a coach's advice as gospel. The same applies to this column — if one of the suggestions is painful or even just uncomfortable, pass on it until you can find out why.

## Final Considerations

Don't disregard any type of training or preparation on the sole ground that you won't actually use it in your performance. The late classical pianist Rudolf Serkin told *Clavier* magazine that he practised and trained to excess, deliberately.

"This is one of the things that I think is as important in music as in sport: the training to be able to play everything louder and faster than you will ever need, so you will have a generous reserve."

All of the music and the expression you have comes from inside (the head and the heart), but your hands are your tools and the outlet for these two sources. Keep the athletic aspects of playing in mind, and your sound will be that much better.

# THE CATERPILLAR CRAWLS

It's been my experience during years of teaching that students have been overly concerned with the production of sound as it relates to their equipment. We're all guilty of proclaiming how great this bass sounds, or that amp sounds, or even an effects unit. Granted, this is an important facet, and not one to be overlooked. However, most professional musicians will agree that the sound you create comes from your technical approach to the instrument, and not the electronics you use to amplify it.

In my own case, I sound like myself regardless of the type of bass guitar I play. I own five bass guitars, ranging from a custom-made five-string, to a customized Yamaha BB1200 four-string. These basses feature different electronics, from passive pickups in my fretless to active pickups with enhanced EQ in my five-string. However, the bottom line is that my sound still remains the same on all of these instruments.

It is my feeling that as a student of the bass (which we all are), you should strive for a consistency in sound and approach that could be defined as your own. Certain elements are necessary for all bass players to acquire as a foundation for a smooth and clean sound. Beyond this point, factors like note choice, groove, soloing (if you choose the improvisation route), slapping, and harmonic approaches will all help define your sound. In this first article, I'd like to take a look at the creation of a controlled and confident sound by means of an understanding of how your left-hand on the fingerboard affects your sound.

A main problem I encounter in my teaching is a student whose playing produces excess fret noise. I encourage my students to attain a quality of sound which would make it possible for them to work in the recording studio field, and would be of a calibre acceptable for that type of work.

The main problem that arises, and one which is almost instantly

noticeable, is poor left-hand technique on the fretboard (or vice-versa for left-handed players). By this I mean that the finger place-

ment on the fretboard is very sloppy, quite often falling in between the frets or on top of the frets. This poor technique results in strings that aren't pressed down hard enough to make firm contact with the fret, hence a loose rattling of the strings on the metal frets, or "fret-buzz" as it is commonly referred to. Although we can all certainly recognize this problem, it's surprising the number of players who have it. What a lot of players do is limit the technical difficulty of the parts that they play in order to minimize the noise, hence those bass players that play vertically across the strings in one position. To say that this approach is limiting to both your creativity and the development of your own voice is an understatement.

It is for this purpose that I developed a set of exercises called "Caterpillar Crawls". In analyzing the great bass players such as Jaco Pastorius, Jeff Berlin, Marcus Miller, John Patitucci, and so on, one thing strikes me as very obvious. They all have a firm command of the instrument both vertically and horizontally. What I mean by this is that they are all capable of moving freely, not only across the strings in the same position, but also up and down the neck. Another quality which they all possess is fluidity and confidence on the fingerboard. This, of course, has come through many years of hard practice, and I developed the Caterpillar Crawls as a first step to developing this mastery of the fingerboard.

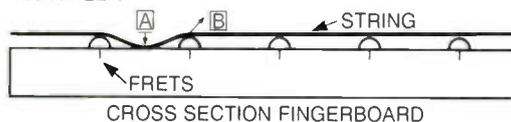
One of the marvellous things about teaching — particularly at the college level — is that it allows you to analyze "under a microscope" the technical nuances of playing the bass guitar, not only from my own weaknesses, but from those of my students. It is also from this standpoint that I developed the Crawls.

As I've mentioned, the placement of your hand on the fretboard has a great deal to do with the sound you create. In *Example 1*, you can



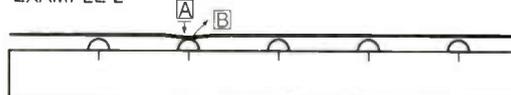
Mike Farquharson has a Master's Degree in Jazz Composition and Theory from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He is a member of the faculty at Humber College, where he has been teaching since 1986, and he has signed a featured artist contract with Jazz Inspiration Records, with his debut album scheduled for release in December 1991.

**EXAMPLE 1**



- A Pressing down large distance requires a lot of unnecessary effort
- B String doesn't make firm contact with fret creating buzzing and lack of sound

**EXAMPLE 2**



- A Almost no effort required to make contact with fret
- B Firm contact with fret creates clean sound

see the problem created by pressing the string down in the middle of the fret. It requires so much more strength than is necessary when you play just over the fret (*Example 2*). The production of a clean sound is therefore due in great part to finger placement on the fretboard. When practising the Caterpillar Crawls, it's crucial that you pay particular attention to your hand position on the fretboard. Be very slow and methodical, and make a point of listening for a consistency in tone. (I'm assuming you're using an instrument that's in good condition and has been set up, because if it isn't, these exercises are even more difficult.)

Space your fingers evenly, one per fret, and stress placing your fingers just slightly before each fret. (It's no secret that these exercises aren't a lot of fun. But just like the trumpet player who plays his/her long tones, or the violinist who does his/her Hanon exercises, we bass players must also pay our dues in the development of great technique.) Make sure that each note has the same length and volume, and all the shifts are

barely discernible. You will memorize these exercises in no more than 10 minutes each, and it's at that point that you can do them while you watch TV.

**Caterpillar Crawls #1 and 2 (of 20)**

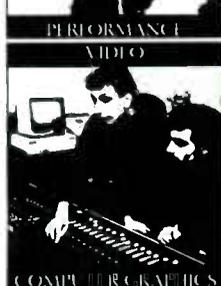
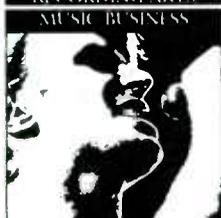
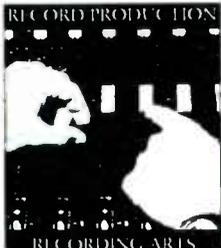
0 = OPEN    1 = INDEX FINGER    2 = MIDDLE FINGER  
 3 = RING FINGER    4 = LITTLE FINGER

Through these few simple exercises, you'll start the development of the independence of your fingers on your left-hand (right-hand for left-handed players), a feel for the spacing of the frets on the fingerboard up and down the neck, the development of a clear and concise sound, and better right-left-hand coordination. For those of you who play the fretless bass (as I do quite often), there is no better exercise for developing good intonation. Just listen carefully as you perform these exercises, and occasionally check with an open string or harmonic to make sure your intonation is dead on.

Another thing I should mention is to use a metronome. Please use one for all of these exercises, starting slowly at first, and then moving to a more rapid pace. The idea is not to play quickly, but smoothly and musically.

I am not promising that these exercises are going to be a great deal of fun, but they make a fantastic first step to the development of your own personal style through technical mastery.

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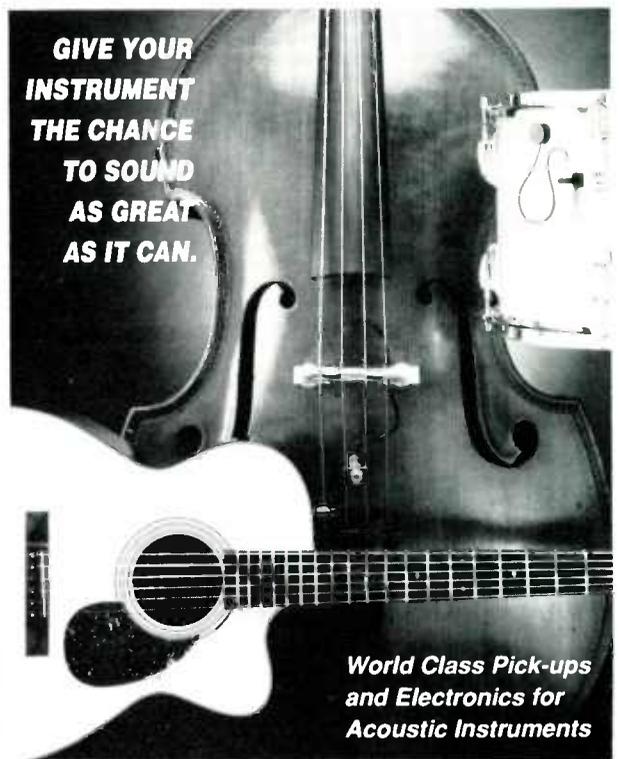
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by Greg Critchley

# KISS

## Keep It Simple, Stupid

### PART THREE • What to Work On

**T**here are an abundance of drum instruction books on the market these days. Subjects ranging from finger/hand exercises to multi-limbed independence can be researched through the endless list of titles available. You can learn, step-by-step, how to make your snare drum crack, your bass drum punch and your toms pound. And, if you're lucky, you can sling your canvas hippie bag over your shoulder (filled to the brim with the latest drum books available), and let your image alone attest to the playing skills that will land you the treasured gigs of your choice.

Unfortunately, many of the skills of drumming lie in the intangible areas of time, groove and feel. Although most instruction books have exercises that must be practised "in time" (with a metronome or click), the concepts of keeping time are often left to self-discovery, usually in stages. In our quest for improvement we are left reaching for these plateaus of advancement: our arrivals signalled by a simple feeling of, "oh, now I've got it." No one can tell you when you've arrived or how long you'll stay. But the more attention you pay to your ability to "sit in a pocket", "groove", "swing" and "rock", the more you and the other players will notice.

But the question always arises: "What do I work on?" I wish the answer were simple. What needs practise is not an exercise per se. It's an awareness or recognition of the stress points that threaten to unlock a tight groove and the ability to act on them and adjust accordingly. It's a development of concentration that becomes second nature with experience, allowing the player to vary nuances in their tone, accents, phrasing and articulation to match and support each other's sense of the groove. It's the ability to instantly auto-correct your own fluctuations before anyone else is even aware of them. In this sense, a group of musicians work like a team, without a word spoken, to support and lead each other along the thread (or rope)

that is the groove. And so, like a basketball player practising his passing techniques, we, as drummers, must discover where one's

own stress points lie. Work on those areas will benefit the whole team or group.

I'll leave you with a few exercises that will enhance your awareness of stress points in the hope that a new road of self-discovery will open up for you. The following ideas merely scratch the surface of what can be worked on, and I encourage you to invent your own exercises based on your personal drumming needs.

It's a good idea to carry a notebook with you to gigs and rehearsals for noting specific grooves that need work, or certain transitions that always seem to rush or drag. Recording yourself is also a good idea, since it allows you to become an outsider and therefore a better judge of your playing. What I've outlined below are common problem areas for all drummers, and should be practised regularly and with some type of click.

**Exercise 1:** This addresses the problems inherent when going from a fast tempo into half-time. Remember to keep the quarter-note click constant and try the exercise at different tempos. Repeat the eight bars until you can make it feel good.

**Exercise 2:** Transitions between straight feels and shuffle feels are often hard on drummers. Once again the quarter note remains constant. Try playing fills into different sections.

**Exercise 3:** A simple and self explanatory exercise. Feel free to ad lib as long as you practise the transition from hi-hat to ride cymbal. Play fills into different sections and keep the tempo steady.

**Exercise 4:** Drummers tend to slow down in quiet sections and speed up in loud ones. Play fills into different sections and notice any fluctuations.

As you can see, I've used basic beats for simplicity, but the principles I've mentioned are etched in stone. Change the beats and tempos to suit yourself, but remember that what appears as simple is often the opposite. Record yourself. Be a harsh critic. Groove on!

**Ex. 1**

HH  
SD  
BD

fill into half time

fill back to full time

**Ex. 2**

HH  
SD  
BD

**Ex. 3** Hi-Hat Ride Cymbal

HH OR  
RIDE  
SD  
BD

**Ex. 4**

HH  
SD  
BD

*fff* (very loud) *ppp* (very soft)



Greg Critchley can be heard on recent recordings by Kim Mitchell, Regatta, Gowon, World On Edge, and Harlem Scarem. He can also be heard on upcoming appearances with Rik Emmett, Gowon, Zappacosta, and the Portland Brothers. Greg endorses Sabian cymbals.

# Double Your Pleasure

by Dave Dunlop

**B**rass players have it pretty good. Buy a horn (case and mouthpiece included) and start playing. We don't need new reeds, strings or sticks. Having the latest keyboard or effect isn't a concern either. There is more to it however. You should be able to double on other horns. Trumpet players can choose between C and Eb trumpets, flugelhorn, cornet and piccolo trumpet. Trombone players have "F" attachments and bass trombone to consider, as well as euphonium (baritone) or valve trombone. (French horn and tuba players have enough to do already without worrying about another instrument!) Doubling should not be taken for granted because each horn is different. Unless they are practised seriously, you won't get good results.

From piccolo trumpet to tuba, the right sound is obviously very important. The physical difference of each instrument is a minor factor: it is the mental approach that leads to good doubling. You should listen to players of the instrument you are learning to play.

Maurice Andre. Fred Mills (piccolo trumpet); Guido Basso. Freddie Hubbard (flugelhorn); Warren Vache. Bobby Hackett (cornet); Wynton Marsalis. Gerard Schwarz (C and Eb trumpets); Ernie Pattison ("Brass Connection", bass trombone); Tommy Johnson (tuba); Rob McConnell (valve trombone). Early Blood, Sweat and Tears had great brass playing as well as the Hannaford St. Silver Band and the Canadian Brass.

It is important to stay as close to your original (main) mouthpiece as possible. Try to keep the diameter the same and go deeper or shallower (with the cup) to get the sound you want. Generally speaking, for piccolo trumpet a slightly shallower cup and bigger throat (because of the resistance) will get the best sound. For flugelhorn, you can find the same mouthpiece you use on trumpet for the flugel. If not, try one that is a little narrower than your trumpet piece (to compensate for the deeper cup). For trombone (tenor) to bass bone or euphonium, a deeper cup is best to get the darker sound needed. Extra practice is required when going from slide to valves, because you usually tongue everything on

trombone and you can slur on euphonium or valve bone.

How you practice is another consideration. Warm-up on your main horn and try alternating back and forth. By doing this you are simulating a real gig situation. Try to make this part of your regular routine and with time you will play your main horn and the double(s) with equal ability. Playing the style of music that each instrument is suited for is also a good idea.

Trumpet and flugelhorn are probably the most common brass double. (I'm not 100 percent certain of this, but it makes for a good segue.) The best-known flugel player in Canada (for good reason) is Guido Basso. Guido and Freddie Stone were among the

first to use the instrument in the early '60s. Since then, Guido's distinctive sound has been recorded many times. In addition to his solo recordings he can be heard on Boss Brass records (check out *Portrait of Jennie*).

Guido offers the following advice: a smaller bore is best

(too big and the sound gets tubby); warm down with the flugelhorn (softly); take both horns to gigs (you may convince the producer that flugel is the right sound); and my personal favourite "you attack the trumpet and make love to the flugelhorn."

Doubling can be fun and rewarding. You shouldn't get into it strictly for financial reasons. Do it to broaden your musical abilities.

I would like to thank Guido, Arnie Chycoski, Sean Moody, John McLeod, Ron Patch, Terry Promane, Earl Seymour and Maurice Wosniak for their help with this column.

(P.S. If you are looking for a way to increase your power, try this! I was having trouble playing for about two weeks last summer so I took my horn to a repairman (naturally the problem wasn't me). Well, he called back to report that he found a clothespin jammed way up inside the bell. You wouldn't believe how good the horn felt once that was out, and how much strength I had built up trying to play with it in there. Maybe practising with a Harmon would be more practical.)



Dave Dunlop is a freelance trumpet player in Toronto. He plays regularly with a group called Men From U.N.C.L.E.

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# What To Practice

I often regret the way I learned to play the saxophone. When I began playing in my early teens, it was impossible to get private instruction because there were no teachers where I lived. As I look back on those days, I wish I'd had someone to show me how and what to practise. I feel I would be even better today if I'd had a direction and goal in mind. I find this to be true of the students I teach today: many of them need a daily practice routine that will cover all the bases and lead them to their own goals.

I'll mention goals right at the beginning because unless you have a sound in your head that you want to attain, you'll never achieve that sound. If you listen to as many good saxophone players as you can, you'll soon find a few that you prefer. Absorb their sounds and style to the point where you can hear it exactly in your mind, even when the recording is turned off. This sound must be kept in mind when you practise because this is your goal.

A good daily practice routine is essential for any musician to achieve their goals. It should cover the important facets of playing: sound; technique; studies/sight reading; learning tunes; improvisation.

## Sound

Most accomplished saxophonists would agree that sound is a priority. Saxophone, probably more than any other wind instrument, can have many different and beautiful tone qualities. (It's a personal matter, depending on your taste and the players you listen to.) A good practice routine begins with some kind of long tone program. Here you can concentrate only on producing your finest tone. Long tones can take many forms including exercises you make up on your own. Here's a good one:



## Things to Feel:

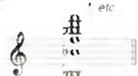
- Breathing technique (start from the diaphragm)
- Relaxed throat (keep it open)
- Embouchure set-up (relaxed, not too tight)

## Things to Hear:

- Consistent tone
- Even rate of crescendo/decrescendo
- Consistent pitch at different dynamics

On paper this study looks boring, but if you concentrate on all of these things, long tones can keep you busy.

Blowing overtones, is also a great way to improve your tone. This involves "overblowing" fundamental low notes,



If you finger low Bb, you can produce these upper notes or overtones in the "harmonic series". Matching the fullness of the overtones to the regular fingerings of each note is a challenging exercise. You may repeat this exercise on other fundamental notes such as low B, C and C# producing these harmonic series:



## Technique

After you feel that your tone is full and focused, it's time to move to the next stage — technique. Now you must concentrate on using your good sound for other exercises. Good technique practice includes using the best sound you can produce.

Playing scales is an excellent way to develop solid technique. Your approach to practising scales is very important, because if an efficient method is not adopted, you may be wasting a lot of time. Each scale should be memorized and played with as many articulation patterns as you can think of. For example, if you put the notes of the scale in groups of four, you end up with a number of articulation patterns:



Many jazz players use this articulation:



All scales should be played full-range (up to high F and down to low Bb), and those students working on the altissimo register (above high F) must continue all of their technique into that range as well.

A daily routine should include these scales in all keys: major, diminished, harmonic minor, whole tone, melodic minor, and chromatic.

Following the scales, practise all your arpeggios, again using the same articulation patterns, full-range in all keys. Include these every day: major, minor, augmented, dominant 7th, and diminished 7th.

Next, practise intervals on these scales. For example, 3rds on a major scale:



Or 4ths:



Then 5ths, 6ths and 7ths, again full-range, all keys and articulations. It's very important that you practise your daily technique with a metronome at a speed where you can do it flawlessly. If you find yourself making mis-

takes, slow the metronome down to a tempo that allows perfect technique.

## Studies/Sight Reading

Musicians who are good readers didn't get that way naturally. It comes with hard work and practice. Practising saxophone studies is an important part of your routine because it enables you to develop your musicality and improve your reading skills. Find studies that are at an appropriate level for you: challenging, yet attainable. Also, play studies that are in classical and jazz styles; they both present unique challenges.

Part of your routine should include sight reading one or two pieces you've never seen before. Concentrate on reading one, two, or more notes ahead of the notes you are actually playing.

## Learning Tunes

Good musicians have a repertoire of tunes they've memorized and "fake" on gigs. This memorization should be part of your daily routine. There are many "fake" books on the market, and while these books are good sources for melody, the melody lines are usually static rhythmically, and many of the chord changes are incorrect. A good teacher will be able to help you with the correct interpretation of these tunes. If you are planning a career in music, a repertoire of tunes is a must.

## Improvisation

Improvisation is an important aspect of modern music. It's a learned skill and therefore must be part of the daily routine. The technique you practise has a direct relationship to your improvising because you draw from those same scales and chords. The Jamey Aebersold play-along recordings are an excellent way to improve your improvisational skills. These albums let you play along with a recorded rhythm section of piano, bass and drums and includes a book with the melodies and chords to help you improve your craft.

By this point in your routine you may find you've run out of time. However, there is one more skill you should work on if you can: "lifting". This involves writing out improvised saxophone solos from the recordings of your favourite players. This is a great ear training exercise and also allows you to really "get inside" someone's playing; their every nuance of tone, vibrato, bends, articulation, phrasing, and melodic/harmonic approach. Once you've lifted the solo, you can play along with the recording.

The order of the routine is quite important as it builds on itself. You start off working on your sound, which you later apply to

technique. Both technique and sound apply to the studies, tunes and improvising.

Many students have difficulty stretching a practice session into one hour. With the routine I've presented, just a half-hour (which is not much) on each segment will add up to about two-and-a-half hours, which I believe is the minimum necessary to become an accomplished saxophonist.

I must emphasize the use of a metronome in every one of these exercises. It helps to keep your technique even, instills an inner time feel, and acts as a gauge by which you can measure your improvement on certain exercises.



Mark Promane has played for the Toronto productions of *Cats* and *Phantom of the Opera*, in addition to backing up artists like Ella Fitzgerald and Natalie Cole. He is currently on the teaching faculty at Humber College and on the faculty of the National Music Camp of Canada.

Not included in this routine is time spent doubling (working on other woodwind instruments, usually flute and clarinet). This is a personal thing, but experience shows that the more versatile you are, the more employable you are. Most theatre productions require that you double on more than one woodwind instrument.

Finally, here are a few books I've found helpful:

For sound/technique: *Daily Studies for All Saxophones*, Trent Kynaston, (Studio P/R).

For studies/sight reading: *Jazz Conception for Saxophone*, Lennie Niehaus, (TRY Publishing).

For improvisation/learning tunes: *Jamey Aebersold Play Along Recordings*, Jerry Coker, (Studio P/R).

General: *The Art of Saxophone Playing*, Larry Teal, (Summy-Birchard).

Enjoy the saxophone and practise hard!

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**It's been a long road for The Grapes of Wrath since 1983, when teenagers Kevin Kane, Tom Hooper and Chris Hooper decided to join forces in their hometown of Kelowna, British Columbia. Today they're a four-piece — having added keyboardist Vincent Jones in early 1989 — with four albums under their collective belt. The latest offering from the band after a full two-year wait is *These Days*, a collage of acoustic/electric songs with vintage Grapes vocal harmonies and a notably hard edge.**

**The Grapes have been said to wear their musical influences on their sleeves, being likened to such '60s-grown bands as Simon & Garfunkel, the Eagles, The Byrds, and, of course, The Beatles. Indeed, the band**

**recorded its Gold status album, *Now and Then*, at Woodstock, New York, and mixed (also Gold) *These Days* at Abbey Road Studios in London (taking time out, so the press release tells us, to “drink beer and play Fab Four songs in the Beatles’ famed Studio Two”). Adding to the heap of past influences is *These Days* producer John Leckie, who has engineered for such rock stalwarts as Pink Floyd, John Lennon, George Harrison, Badfinger and Mott the Hoople.**

**Guitarist and vocalist Kevin Kane spoke with CM from an outdoor market in Victoria, British Columbia in late August.**

**BY FRANK SCHULTE**

**CM:** You recorded your new album in December and January and mixed it in March. How do you feel about it now that it's out?

**KK:** I like it a lot. Each album we've done I've liked the most, and that's a good thing. We haven't reached that stage where we go, "I don't like this one as much as the one we did before," so it's our favourite.

**CM:** All of the members of your band are credited for writing the songs. What's the process you go through from concept to finished product?

**KK:** In the past, songs would come out of jam sessions and what not — that's how the first album and *Treehouse* were done. With the last album and this one Tom and I would bring in ideas and then we'd work on them as a band.

With this album we actually worked on four-track demos which was the first time we'd ever demoed any songs. Then we brought the demos in and gave everybody else copies of the songs we'd written and then we started working on them as a band demoing them together, hammering out the arrangements and all that. But that's usually the process. We share the credit because everybody has input into the final outcome of the songs.

**CM:** So the whole process of writing has changed over the course of the band being together.

**KK:** Well, time constraints change the process quite a bit. It used to be we had nothing to do but jam, because we weren't going on tour. But now we spend so much time on the road or doing other things that we find it the most economical for us to work on songs on our own and then bring them in. Sometimes a song will come in just about finished and it barely changes at all; sometimes it's

type producer and he was a real perfectionist as well regarding the performances and the arrangements. John went more for feel and his approach was more positive. He didn't have to tell you when you did something that wasn't very good and if he did tell you it wouldn't be offensive. He'd say, "Mmmm, could you try something a little different?" instead of, "that was shit, why don't you do something that isn't shit. I don't care how much you guys are paying me, I'm not going to sit here and listen to shit . . ."

You know, it's like "Okay, well, sorry . . ."

John was really great to work with. He didn't even have to push us to try and better ourselves with each performance or play to our best, because when you're working with someone who has worked with various Beatles and Pink Floyd and Badfinger and all these different bands, you better put your best into it.

**CM:** Did you find [working with Leckie] a strain, considering his reputation and the amount of work he's done with other people?

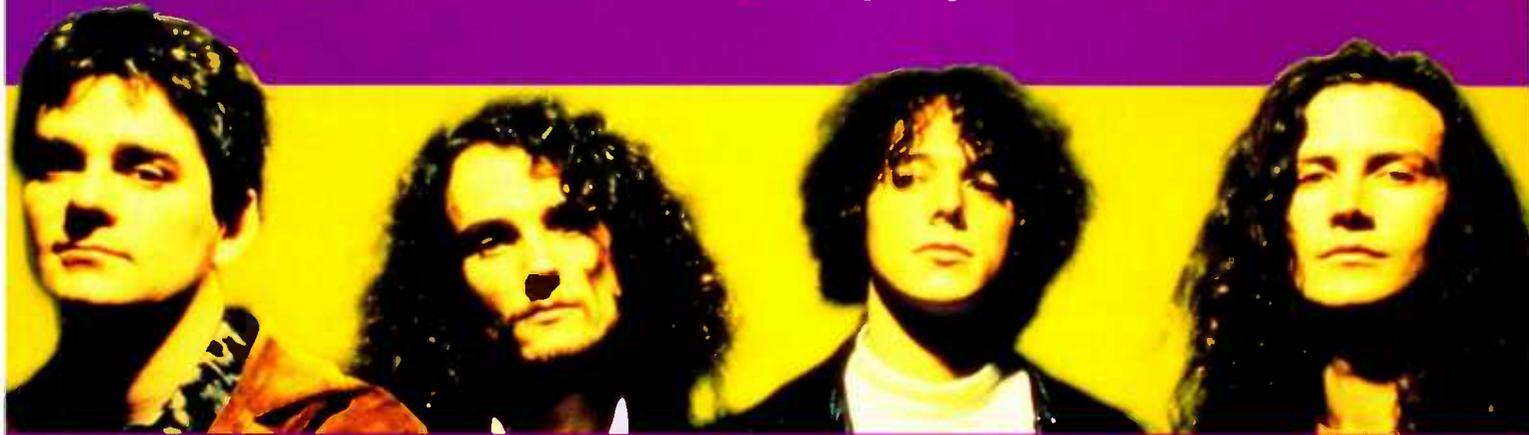
**KK:** Yeah, only for 15 minutes and then after that it was okay. It was just when we first started doing vocals that I was really nervous about it thinking of all the different voices he's recorded in the past. But after that I just thought, "He's recorded singers who are worse than me." He may have recorded better, but I know he's done worse singers, too.

**CM:** How many songs did you go into the studio with for this record?

**KK:** Fourteen.

**CM:** And 12 made it onto the CD? That's not a great overkill.

**KK:** No. We generally don't have that many leftover tracks. We've got enough leftover tracks and B sides now to release an



just a few ideas that are not even strung together and then the whole band kicks it around and it turns into a song.

**CM:** If you listen to the records in sequence one can sense a progression in both the songwriting skills and the quality of the recording. Is that a conscious effort?

**KK:** Oh yeah, definitely. That's the thing we always try to do better, even though we don't believe in the word "better". That's just what happens. We try to go out and do what we do and let it develop as it develops. We've never had to force any kind of development with the band, things have just happened naturally, which is really nice.

**CM:** I suppose that's one of the reasons you're still together, and why most bands break up.

**KK:** Yeah. There's one thing I will say about this band: it's believable. We're not just sitting there with *Billboard* magazine seeing what's selling and then doing that because we haven't sold a lot of records. It's been kind of a slow process for us to establish anything.

**CM:** How much does your producer at any given time influence the sound of your band on tape, or the recorded sound?

**KK:** Well, it would depend on the producer.

**CM:** Okay. For example, what did [Anton] Fier and [John] Leckie contribute and how did their input differ? And can you sense that on the record, do you think?

**KK:** Oh sure, but they're very different people. First of all, the biggest difference is their approach. Anton's more of a taskmaster-

album of just those kinds of songs. With every album we've had maybe one or two leftovers. Not really any more, because we try to work on things to the point where they're worth working on. We don't just do a bunch of stuff and then throw it against the wall and see what sticks.

**CM:** Did your record company, being Capitol, encourage you to go and mix at Abbey Road? Is that a big promotional point for them? Or is that something that you just wanted to do for the hell of it anyway?

**KK:** We didn't even think of it. When we were working out the budget for the album we were going to record it in Vancouver. For the last album we went to Woodstock for two months to record and it wasn't very much fun. So we thought, "Let's just record in town, you know we'd been on the road so much . . ."

John said, "Why don't we mix it in England at Abbey Road?" That's where he got his start as a house engineer in the late '60s through the '70s, and we said "Okay, well, if the record company says we can, let's go to England." And they did. It was good for him because he got to work in a studio he's comfortable with, with engineers he's worked with before and with all the gear that he likes to have.

In terms of mixing the record it was a good thing and a lot of fun for us. We actually got to record there too, which was neat. We did some vocal tracks, some percussion tracks, and a piano track there on the Abbey Road piano!

*Continued*

# GRAPES OF WRATH

## AGED TO PERFECTION

The studio is still all original, and we did go in there and sort of party. [The piano] is this old scratched up thing. The studio we were in was Studio 3, which was all refurbished and modern and shiny and new. That was the studio where a lot of *Wish You Were Here* and *Dark Side Of The Moon* was done. So that was a thrill for me.

**CM:** Vince [Jones] has taken on all the keyboard parts for the *Grapes*. How are you finding that coming together? It sounds good on record, but how does it feel as a band playing live?

**KK:** That's where it came about. He toured with us on *Treehouse* and felt like a real member so he became an official member when we were demoing *Now And Again*. Then he played on *Now And Again*, but it was when we were touring on that album that he really found his space within the arrangements. We made room for each other for the things that the other one does. So I think it's with this album that he's fully integrated.

**CM:** So it's working out well?

**KK:** Yeah, we really like it. We really think that it was the right move. He's definitely the right person.

**CM:** Will you be using samplers and sequencers in your live show?

**KK:** Yeah, [Vince] did buy a sampler so he uses it for the different keyboard sounds like the Mellotron that he used on "Miracle" and some cellos on songs like "You May Be Right" and "Away". I think he uses the sequencer for "I Am Here".

**CM:** So you're not sampling back-up vocals?

**KK:** No, we'd never do that. I know that's the most common thing. We were kind of joking about using a sampler to begin with — we thought the whole thing was just too hilarious, but it's only because we can't bring a Mellotron on the road. A Mellotron has the string sounds and the flute sounds that we'd love to have, but you just can't tour with something like that.

But as far as doing vocals, me and Tom like to find a way to do them ourselves, because I think there's something exciting about people actually singing, even if they aren't singing perfectly.

**CM:** It's the moment, I guess.

**KK:** Yeah, we could sample a lot more — we could sample guitar parts, but what would be the point? We'd rather deal with the songs as musicians than go up and try and reproduce something like we're a bar band covering our own music.

**CM:** I would think that with the guitar overdubs you do, it would be quite difficult to pull off exactly like it is on the record anyway.

**KK:** It isn't exact, no, but it's close enough to know the parts work. It's not exact, but that doesn't bother me.

**CM:** Do you use 6- and 12-string acoustic on the records, or is it basically just 6-string?

**KK:** We used more 6-string than 12-string stuff. We also did some Nashville tuning stuff just because it helped put a zing to things without getting into 12-string — you don't get that same resonance, it's a cleaner sound.

**CM:** Did you use any interesting recording techniques on this last record?

**KK:** On some tracks we recorded drums after we recorded guitars and vocals, which was kind of interesting for us because on most records you record drums and bass first — you start with your rhythm track and work up. On some of the tracks we actually worked backwards. We started with some of the melody tracks and then Chris played along to it. I think it gave him more of a live feel.

**CM:** Is that why you did it?

**KK:** I don't know why. John asked how we did the demos and we said we did them

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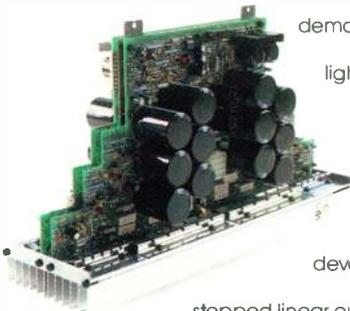
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# GRAPES OF WRATH

## AGED TO PERFECTION

basically starting with guitar and vocal parts — the melody things, and then added some keyboards. The drums were the last things to go down. Chris would figure out his drum parts after everything else. So John said, "Let's try recording it that way."

It really worked well for certain songs; gave it a live feel. That was the best thing about John — he's pretty open-minded. He doesn't have rules or set patterns. For someone who's been doing this for 22 years . . .

**CM:** *He still manages to be creative.*

**KK:** Yeah, very much so.

**CM:** *What about your guitars and amps? Do you use old Vox amps?*

**KK:** Yeah, well they aren't that old — I think they're late '70s. I use a '71 Marshall as well, but mostly Vox. The guitar was pretty simple. I'd use an old Rickenbacker plugged into a Vox. If I wanted a dirty sound, I'd turn it up; if I wanted a clean sound I'd turn it down a little bit. That was basically it.

**CM:** *And is that what you'll be doing for the live shows as well?*

**KK:** Yeah, basically. You know, every time we tour I use different stuff. I don't know why, but I do.

**CM:** *What about the drum kit? Any electronics involved?*

**KK:** No, it's just acoustic drums. Chris has never used any electronic drums or anything like that. On the record there are a couple of parts where he plays along with a drum machine, where it will be playing a pattern and he'll be playing off that pattern. On "I Am Here", there's some neat stuff happening that way.

**CM:** *And who programmed that?*

**KK:** Him and John sat down and worked on ideas and then came up with the programs he'd play off of. He did it on a couple of songs where he gives it a live swing, but you get this neat tension between the drum machine and the actual real drumming.

**CM:** *What about Vince's setup? Does he still use a B-3 in the studio?*

**KK:** He has a C-3 which is the bigger version of a B-3 from the '50s, and a couple of Leslies that he brought in. He uses that for his organ tracks and I think he also used an electric organ just to get a different sound. I think he used a sampled piano on a couple of things. Then he used a Mellotron, and he got an Indian Harmonium. It isn't on the record, it's on our version of "See Emily Play" that we did as a B-side.

**CM:** *I haven't heard it.*

**KK:** Oh, you'll have to hear it. We did the

whole thing in a day, which is the fastest we've recorded since our first EP. And it's the first time we've ever really gotten to produce ourselves. It's pretty fun. It's almost like ZZ Top doing Pink Floyd.

**CM:** *What were you doing before you started The Grapes of Wrath?*

**KK:** Well, we didn't really even start the band. Me and Chris and Tom just sort of cleaned out their dad's garage and started playing together. It wasn't, "let's start a band together", or anything like that. Before that I was going to College in Kelowna studying fine arts.

**CM:** *That's definitely a very auspicious beginning. A lot of great rock 'n' rollers have come from art college.*

**KK:** Well, yeah. It was something to do after high school to avoid getting a full-time job and avoid studying something that I didn't like.

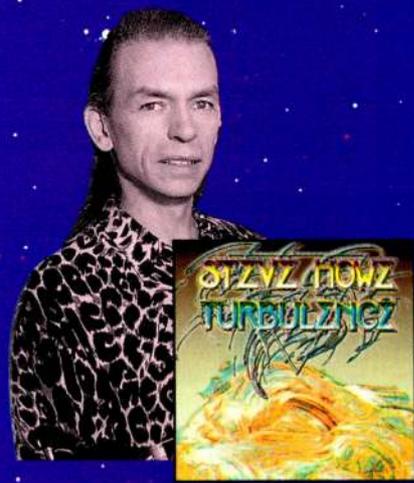
**CM:** *It seems to have worked.*

**KK:** Well, I'm glad I didn't study music, that's for sure.

**CM:** *Why?*

**KK:** Well, ever since I studied art I haven't had any interest in it. So, better I should study art and lose all interest in it, than music. □

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# THE ART OF SELF MANAGEMENT



# BRIGHTON ROCK

BY RICHARD CHYCKI

**O**pening the cassette box of the latest Brighton Rock release, one is greeted by the now four-piece denimized outfit surrounding and admiring a thong-clad lady who is appropriately bent over in a "come take me" position. Add to that a caricature of a woman bent over with her underwear at her knees and the stage is set for Brighton Rock's third album, *Love Machine*. "It was time for a change of scene to really shake up the band and get things on the ball," vocalist Gerry McGhee emphatically states. *Love Machine* has recently hit the Canadian market and has rekindled Brighton Rock's purported primal metal roots, a step commonly looked down upon by most hypercommercial eyes. A full management team and a keyboard player have been sloughed off, leaving guitarist Greg Fraser, bassist Stevie Skreeps, drummer Mark Cavarzan, and vocalist Gerry McGhee, who has taken hold of the management reins.

On the surface, such a copious amount of change may seem like an implosion waiting to happen. Yet McGhee maintains an unabated enthusiasm to the contrary. Brighton Rock's previous two releases both surpassed gold status in Canada (50,000 unit sales). Their frenetic club touring over the past five years is well renowned in Canada. According to Gerry, *Love Machine* has sold 35,000 units to date — with no tour support, and minimal video and radio support for the first single "Hollywood Shuffle." McGhee, unsure of the reasons behind the musical media's lack of enthusiasm, says that the best is yet to come; Brighton Rock generally averages 3-5000 units per week while they're on the road.

Self-management is nothing new to Canadian bands. Both Jeff Healey and Alannah Myles are self-managed outfits that have achieved substantial international success (although Alannah now has U.S. representation). According to McGhee, by managing the band, they've streamlined both the band's internal and financial operations, making them more effective and competitive in the marketplace.

There are pros and cons to this situation, though. Shortly before the outset of their first cross-Canada tour to promote *Love Machine*, we had the opportunity to catch up with Gerry McGhee to discuss his secrets of self-management, the album, and upcoming plans for Brighton Rock.

"The best thing about managing the band ourselves is that we have complete control of our career," Gerry beamed. "What we've done is assembled teams — one in Los Angeles, one in England, and one here in Canada. They all report to us." Gerry uses these teams as sounding boards. He relays the band's intentions to the teams. They answer back with the viability of these strategies and a game plan is born from that combination.

"I guess more than anything else, all money comes through us now. There are no accounts except the ones that we run. We make an awful lot more money than we've ever made before." And money *does* seem to be a key issue. Gerry explains how self-management changed his relationship with the record company: "Nothing against managers and what they do . . . when I was going in to get money for the record and video, I told them *exactly* what it would cost and they knew I would break my balls to make it stay on those costs. We fully understand that, although the money comes from the label, it's totally recoupable. Where we could save, we did save — and hopefully we did not let the product suffer."

Gaining credibility is one of the first hurdles that any band taking the self-managed route must tackle. "At first, companies had some difficulty negotiating with the singer of the band as a manager," says Gerry. "Once we did some business and they found that my word was as good as any manager's word, the walls came down real fast. After all, I'm not going to make a decision that would fuck our career. So we're very open to suggestions from other people. Case in point, when we decided to approach Toby Wright (album producer/engineer), I did the negotiations with him. They went off without a hitch and he has a lot of confidence in what we do and how we do it."

Although Gerry acts as the spokesman for the band, rulings are made in a band capacity. "One of our ploys was the mutual decision to stay off the road 'til this point of the record. That's a hard decision considering live performance is the way this band makes its money. But we felt it would give us the first single under our belt and allow the last record to wind down. Plus it would make the tour more of an event, starting it when the second single and video are about to be released."

Many bands that don't involve themselves in the business side of things often have a minimum of contacts when they are most needed. Not so with Brighton Rock. They hired producer/engineer Toby Wright from their past dealings with him back when they were cutting demos for the record in December 1989. Toby had previously worked with several name producers and acts. According to McGhee, Toby was inducted as an honorary fifth band member and has been instrumental in assembling the band's business network south of the border. It was Toby's recommendation to mix the album at Smoke Tree Ranch in California, where David Lee Roth's *Skyscraper* and Michael Jackson's *Bad* were done.

For video direction, McGhee acquired the talents of Cosimo Zatini, known for his high paced video work for MuchMusic and Q107. Gerry explained: "We had seen his work and it was real fast moving with tons of quick edits. We thought that would be perfect for the rocker. The ballad vid is actually our first artsy video. We've done some crushed colouring so it looks like it's been done with crayons. I guess we're getting brave in our old age!"

"We want to do videos that are of international quality. It's a credit to the people in the video industry here that can make the videos for this album stand up to what's being done in the States. After all, a Canadian band is dealing with \$30,000 and a new American band \$120,000 for a video. So it can be pretty tough."

With all these business dealings in constant progress, does it take away from Gerry's time as a vocalist? An unzealous 'yes' was the response. "I haven't been able to dabble in the 'fluff and fun' side of rock 'n' roll for over a year. I really would like to be just the singer again instead of worrying about which cheques went through and all the other stuff I gotta do for the boys. I'll always keep tabs on stuff like that, though. The days are a lot longer now with a full

seven days work. It's hell on my home life."

With an impending Canadian club tour on the horizon, McGhee stated the band's intentions for the near future: "Canadians have supported us well over the past five years so we love going back out into the clubs. We've had a whole stage set-up made so we can show our appreciation for their support by giving them a fucking show they won't forget."

"We tried our best to get on an opening slot with an American band but most U.S. tours are prepackaged. That means you have American bands touring in Canada, the opening band selling, say, 10,000 units. Or you could have Brighton Rock with two gold albums and 35,000 units under our belt in that opening slot. That status doesn't seem to help in that situation. So we're actively looking at American management. You know — the ol' 'I'll take your band out on tour if you take my new band later' scene!"

"The release of *Love Machine* has been delayed in the U.S. until the beginning of 1992 when we solidify our management. We thought that would be our best choice to help give us an edge — we already have a point against us (in the U.S.) because we're Canadian. We wouldn't attempt to self-manage ourselves down there — we just don't have the connections with respect to labels, independents, agents, and contacts. But we're not discounting signing with a Canadian-based management firm as well."

Time will tell what's in store for Brighton Rock's *Love Machine*. With a renewed lineup, a comprehensive self-management plan, a new musical direction and attitude, Brighton Rock is once again ready to rock.

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### Gerry McGhee

Samson Wireless SR-22-58 mic

# FIRST LADIES OF

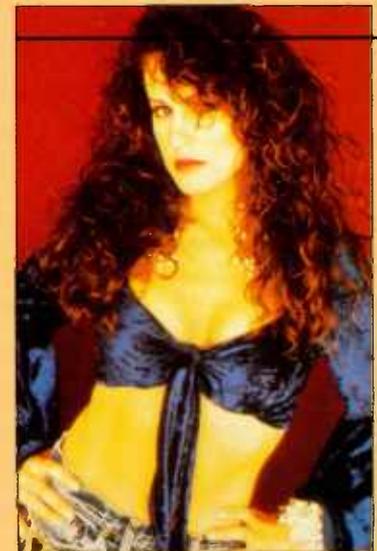
# ROCK

**Lee Aaron, Darby Mills and Chrissy Steele lead Canada's Hard Rock Invasion.**

Somewhere between power pop and heavy metal is the no man's land of hard rock. The crunching guitars and wailing vocals are a Canadian bar staple, but this hard rock has a hard time keeping its place on radio playlists. Three new releases hope to change all that. Lee Aaron, Darby Mills and Chrissy Steele have taken different routes, but arrived almost simultaneously at the same conclusion: there is a place in the music industry for good ol' blues-based rock 'n' roll.

The fact that Aaron, Mills and Steele are female vocalists is not remarkable. Why shouldn't a woman sing rock 'n' roll? Long gone are the days when women in rock were considered a novelty (remember the Runaways? Suzi Quatro?). What is interesting is that these singers are Canadian female vocalists making an impact. The development of hard-rock female vocalists is becoming something of a cottage industry in this country. And with the success of Alannah Myles, record companies on both sides of the border are taking notice.

**BY CHRIS GUDGEON**



# DARBY MILLS

## Past, Present and Future

Darby Mills is the past, present and perhaps future of Canada's hard rock scene. Although *Never Look Back* is technically her debut album. Mills first gained recognition as lead singer for the Headpins. Formed in the early '80s by Chilliwack's Brian "Too Loud" McLeod, the Headpins were one of the most successful Canadian bands around. Their first record, 1982's *Turn It Loud*, was the top selling debut by a domestic act up to that point. A few years later, the Headpins' final album *Head Over Heels* sold more than 400,000 units worldwide.

Since the demise of the Headpins, Mills has been close to launching her solo career a number of times.

"I did a solo album for MCA records in '86, after the Headpins broke up. It never got released. The record company fired their A&R department right in the middle of the project. We were sitting around with half the record cut waiting to finish it up and we just kept waiting. So my manager and I flew down to Los Angeles and said either we finish the album now, or we want off the label. So they let us off the label. We really showed them!"

After the experience with MCA, Mills went down to Nashville with Geffen Records, then worked with a couple of Canadian record companies. But those deals fell through.

"It came down to the fact that no one wanted to take a chance on blues-rock. It's not something that had worked. But as I've said before, the success of Alannah Myles opened up new ground for all of us. By breaking the blues-rock market, and doing so well at it, record companies had second thoughts."

Mills' own label, WEA, isn't having any second thoughts. *Never Look Back* is well on its way to Gold. And, in its first week after release, the album's first single "Cry To Me" was the number one added song to radio playlists in Canada.

"It's a little easier starting my career for the second time. I've got more experience, and more cool. I'm able to handle myself better. You hang around long enough and keep trying. The reason I'm still here is because I don't know any better. I mean, success is not something you can really plan. People will tell you what to do, but no one else knows the answer either."

# LEE AARON

## Taking Care of Business

1989's *Bodyrock* established Lee Aaron as a major Canadian recording star. That album went double platinum in Canada alone, and did well in Europe. "Watcha Do To My Body", a single from that album, was a rock radio staple, and the video of the single got heavy rotation on MuchMusic, and earned a Juno nomination.

"*Bodyrock* marked the first time in my career where I made the kind of record I wanted to make. Before that, I'd always given in to pressure to produce something that somebody else wanted. I'm lucky that Attic Records gave me the freedom to try what I wanted, and I'm thankful the way audiences responded."

Aaron's latest LP *Some Girls Do* continues in the same direction as *Bodyrock*, but adds a new dimension: a band.

"Not a lot of people can tell, but *Bodyrock* was recorded by just John Albani and myself. It was sort of a challenge we set for ourselves. This time around we opted for a full band. Although I am completely

happy with the sound of the last record, I think *Some Girls Do* is my most satisfying project to date."

Aaron has been singing for a living since she was 17, and her recording career spans seven albums in nine years. Her fans witnessed a slow transition from self-proclaimed "Metal Queen" to a somewhat more mainstream rock 'n' roller. Aaron says that she did not make a conscious decision to change her sound; it's all part and parcel of her maturing as an artist and a person.

"You've got to remember that I wasn't even 20 when I started working in the studio. I was just happy to be there, just happy to have a contract and people who wanted to hear my music. Now, it's not so important *just* to sing. I want to be singing things I really believe; things that are important to me. I'm not saying that every song has got to have a big heavy message. I am saying that the songs I am recording now are more a reflection of who I am."

# CHRISSEY STEELE

## New Blood

Chrissy Steele is a newcomer to the recording scene. But she's already captured some heavyweight attention, and her Capitol Canada debut *Magnet To Steel* has been picked up for international distribution by Chrysalis.

Her early attention is in part due to Darby Mills' old cohort, Brian MacLeod. MacLeod produced and engineered *Magnet To Steel*, and co-wrote most of the songs. The basic recordings were done on MacLeod's 40-foot cruiser, Grand Marnier, using Fostex equipment (see *Recording* column, this issue).

The Steele-MacLeod partnership started to gel three years ago, following an all-star jam at Vancouver's legendary rock hangout, Club Soda. That night, Steele and her band shared the stage with the likes of Joe Elliot, Jon Bon Jovi, Richie Sambora, Steve Clark and Paul Dean.

"I first met Brian at Club Soda in Vancouver. He heard us play and was really impressed. I guess it was in part being in the right place at the right time, but I also had been working very hard for a long time."

Steele, in fact, is a classically trained musician. As a child on Vancouver Island, Steele studied piano and classical guitar. She also sang in a choir (that included Sue Medley) and appeared in productions of *The Mikado* and *La Boheme* by the Victoria Operatic Society. But ever since her teenage years, Steele has set her sights on making

it as a rock 'n' roll singer.

"I never really knew I was going to make it — no one knows that — but I did everything I could. I went out on the road and got the experience. I left a lot of people behind, because a lot of people are looking for security and those kinds of things didn't really matter to me. I wanted to make a go in this business, and I knew you had to work hard to get anywhere."

Steele learned quickly that life on the road can be a grind.

"I used to have to carry a refrigerator with me on the road so I could eat fresh vegetables. Most of the truck stops we pulled into never heard of anything green."

Despite having no studio experience before *Magnet To Steel*, Steele found the transition from club band to recording artist fairly smooth. Unlike Aaron and Mills, however, Steele is yet to get in on the songwriting end of things. It's a challenge she hopes to take on, but realizes that the craft of songwriting does not develop overnight.

"You can't all of a sudden be a great writer. It's like wine. It's something that takes a long time to mature. I worked hard to develop as a singer and performer, and it takes just as much effort to develop as a writer. A lot of this stuff is basically new to me, but I'm not complaining. What young singer wouldn't want to be in my position right now?"

*Continued*

# FIRST LADIES

and recording in the U.S. or Britain. What is it about this country that encourages such artists to develop and flourish?

Chrissy Steele thinks that Canadian Content regulations make a difference and that, in part, the smaller market means record companies can afford to be more flexible.

"In the States, the focus is more on what makes money. I'm not saying that Canadian record companies aren't into making money, but it's a little more flexible up here. You can survive as an artist if you can develop the fan base to support you. Also, I think Canadian

audiences are a little more open to hearing things that work, rather than buying into an image. I don't think Canadians fall for the formula rock bands as much as audiences in the States. There's a little more intellect involved in the music up here."

Steve McAuley, Artist Relations Manager with Steele's domestic label, Capitol Records - EMI of Canada, is not so sure that Canadian record companies are more flexible than their US counterparts.

"I don't know if our record companies take more risks. If you talk about Alannah Myles, for instance, that was actually an American deal. She had gone down to make a deal in the States because she was considered too aggressive by a lot of Canadian record companies."

The difference in Canada, McAuley believes, is that things are not as competitive.

"In Los Angeles alone you have ten thousand bands competing for the record companies' attention. It's a little more relaxed up here. We embrace our artists a lot more in Canada. As a public we feel closer to our artists, and as a result it's not as dog-eat-dog as down in the States. The music community is a little more supportive. We all like to see the home town kid do well."

On the other hand, Darby Mills doesn't see a big difference between the plight of the hard-rock female vocalists in Canada and those in the States. The bottom line is the quality of the finished product.

"Only the very rich can afford to put out an album that people might not want to listen to. In reality, you spend the money to make the record in the first place to bring back at least enough revenue to pay for the project. It might sound very calculating, but I've spent 12 years of my life doing this. We're making music that's important to us, but at the same time it's also music we want other people to listen to."

## Women Behind Bars

One thing the three singers have in common is that they began their careers playing bars. It's an experience which strongly influences the style of music they sing. Despite horror stories of life on the bar circuit, these three look on those late nights singing cover tunes as valuable.

Chrissy Steele cut her teeth on the west coast bar circuit. For her, the bar scene has its ups and downs.

"Out west, you can live and work six days a week as a musician and make a living. It's not like that in the States. You play whenever you can. They have pay-to-play, for one thing. You have to pay to perform at a club.

*Continued*

## Content Canadians

You'd be hard-pressed to name three hard-rock female vocalists fronting bands



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# FIRST LADIES

In Vancouver, the circuit's really well-developed. They want bands every night. They want cover tunes most of the time, which is unfortunate. But you've got to give them what they want, and it's a great way to learn your chops."

Darby Mills is also a veteran of the west coast club scene. She believes that bars can be a great learning experience, although they can impede the development of an ambitious artist.

"The club scene is a great place to start and figure out your live chops. But there are lots of players who have fallen into a pattern of making six or seven hundred dollars a week in a three-piece band that's been playing for 10 years. So they have a great club following, but that's where they stay."

Like Vancouver, Toronto also has a well-established bar circuit. A band can spend its entire career playing clubs in

Toronto. So how do you break out from behind the bars?

"For a woman it's simple," says Mills. "You've got to have originals."

Lee Aaron also believes that originals are the ticket.

"There's nothing wrong with playing the clubs if that's what you want to do. But if you want to get a recording contract you have to start writing your own songs. And you have to get aggressive about promoting your own material because no one's going to come banging your door down. It's not just good enough to sound good or look good. If a band wants to break away from the bar scene they have to go knocking on doors and try to get a recording contract or publishing deal."

Chrissy Steele sounds one last word of caution. Regardless of what a band wants to get out of the bar circuit, whether it's a stopover or an end in itself, it's important to stay focussed.

"I didn't get into the music business to party. That may or may not be good for my image. I don't know. But I've always had a purpose in mind. I went out to the bars to get experience, that was it. At first it was fun. It was fun to go out there and be on stage. The adrenaline is pumping, and it's like: 'Oh these people actually like me'. But the bar scene can be pretty crazy,

and I was always aware that I had to take care of myself and my voice."

## Tips and Advice

Aaron, Mills and Steele agree that developing vocalists should try and learn from more experienced artists. "You can save yourself and your voice a lot of abuse if you follow some basic rules," says Aaron. For starters, sing, don't scream.

"Always, always, always sing with a good monitor," Aaron cautions. "Nothing ruins a voice faster than trying to sing at the top of your lungs. The problem is that you can't always afford proper monitors, or you might be stuck in a club that doesn't have them. In that case you have to be assertive. Tell the band that they'll have to turn down their instruments. They might not like it, but it sure beats having a lead vocalist who's wrecked her voice and can't sing."

Darby Mills also cautions developing singers about blowing their vocal chords.

"I took lessons for a short time from a couple different teachers. The key thing I learned was to stay relaxed. You can't force your voice. If you push too hard you'll only wind up doing some damage."

She also has some advice for those singers who want to party on the road.

"You either party all the time, or you can't do it at all. By that I mean you have to be consistent. If you're not consistent, then you don't know what you're doing to your voice, and you won't know how to deal with problems that arise."

Chrissy Steele is the kind that likes to take it easy on the road. Steele, who took singing lessons and studied opera for a time, says that proper training is not a detriment to a rock vocalist.

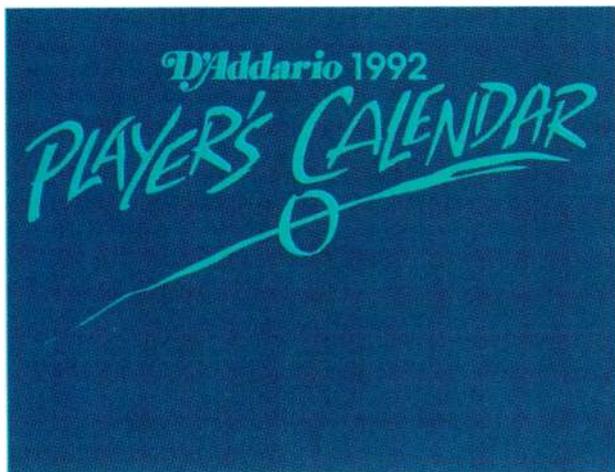
"Classical training was a great learning experience for me. It gave me a strong technical background, and as a result, I've never lost my voice. Some people look down on a rock singer who's actually studied singing, but there is nothing wrong with learning the proper way to use your voice. It's your instrument. Nobody knocks a guitarist for learning proper technique. As a matter of fact, those are the players most in demand."

## Separate But Equal Time

Regardless of how Aaron, Mills and Steele arrived, one thing seems certain: their timing is perfect. Audiences and record companies on both sides of the border are listening to them, which means radio programmers are tuning in as well. The coincidental release of their separate albums has a lot of people grouping them together — even murmurings of a cross-Canada tour featuring Aaron, Mills and Steele. But each artist is unique and deserves consideration on her own. □

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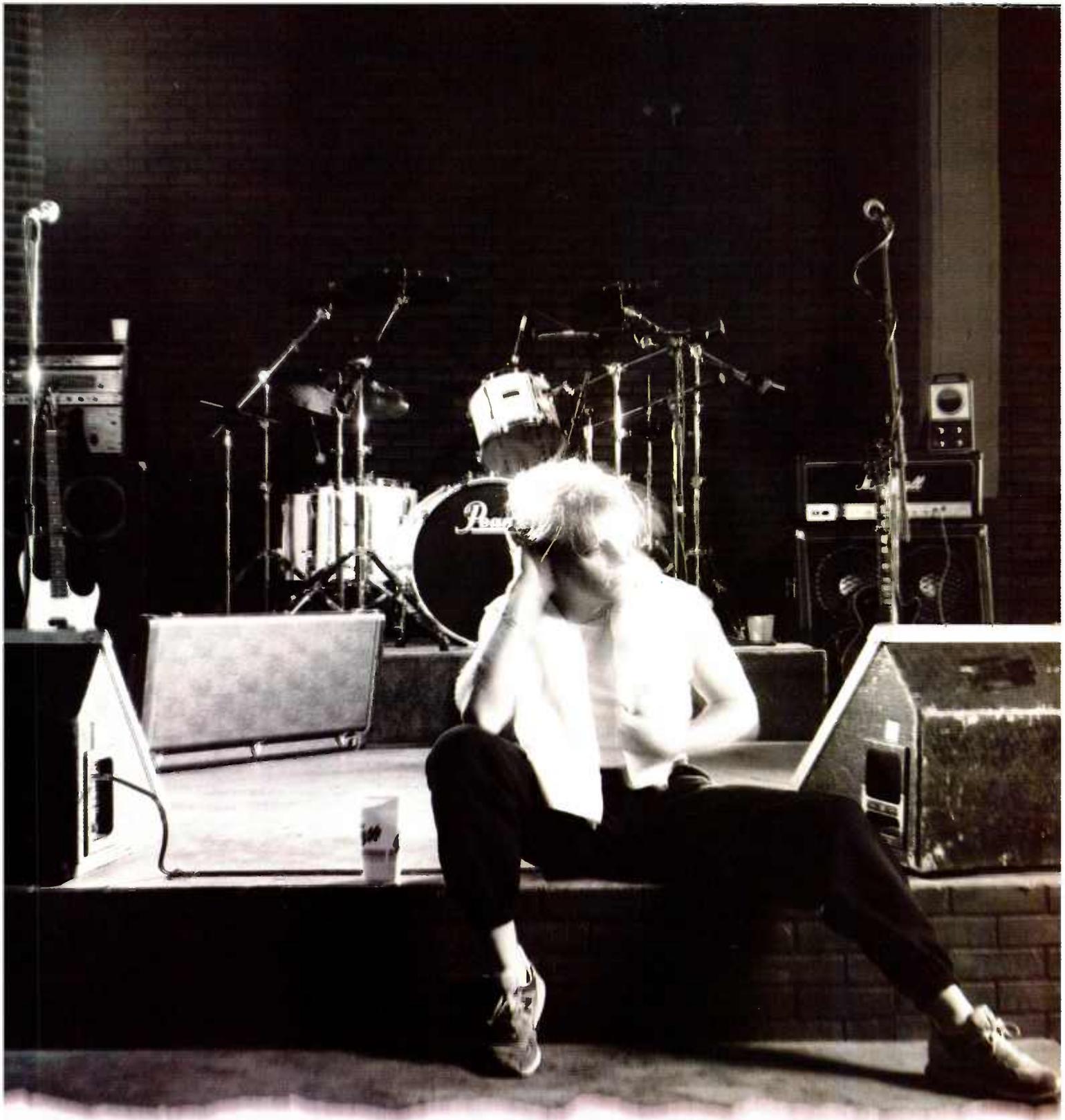


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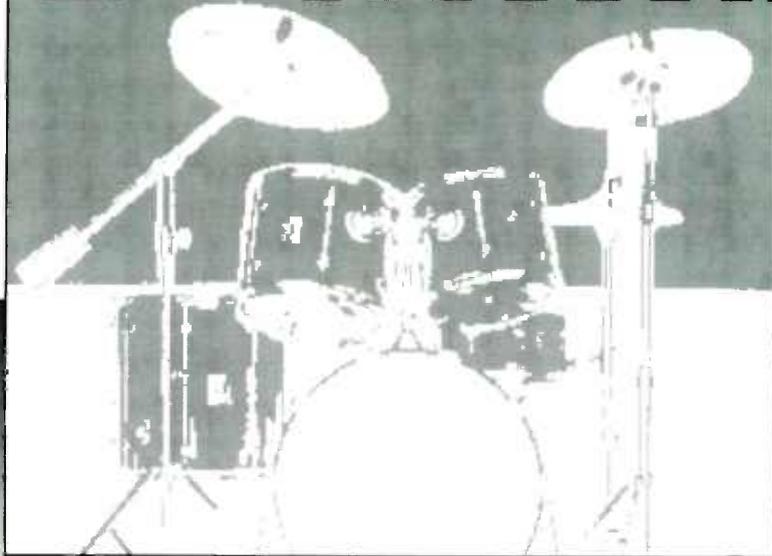


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# FOCUS ON PERCUSSION



## DRUMMERS KEEPING TIME

**M**ost popular music in Western culture is in straight time, four beats to the bar. Rock music is particularly predictable when it comes down to its basic rhythm: four/four time, accentuating the second and fourth beat. It's a structure that helps define the music for player and audience alike. But for drummers, it can be a damn bore.

The problem is that straight time isn't very demanding. In a way, it's equivalent to a guitar player having to play the same four notes over, and over, and over.

Vince Ditrich drums for Vancouver's Spirit Of The West. He says that the predominance of straight time is not hard to understand.

"Four is the most common signature that we're going to hear in North America, anywhere really, because it's divisible by two, and we have two legs and two arms and that's where we get the count from. It has a kind of mathematic simplicity that's attractive. The challenge for any drummer is to learn to work within the limitations; to expand their musical and rhythmical sense of straight time."

**BY CHRIS GUDGEON**

**Getting Time On Your Side**

One way or another, most professional drummers eventually figure out how to get straight time on their side. The first step is to accept the limitations. Graeme Kirkland is one of the top young jazz players in Canada. He's also made a name for himself in pop-rock fields, recording with such acts as the Leslie Spit Treco and Bobby Wiseman. Kirkland says he doesn't have a hard time switching from the more open structure of jazz to the narrower rhythms of rock.

"I don't look at playing four/four as a prison sentence. I think it's very liberating. It's just like a little pen; if you have an advanced rhythmic understanding then you know how to move around in that pen and to have fun with it. But you can't forget where the earth is. Some people get an advanced understanding and they can no longer play simply."

For Kirkland, it's important for drummers to recognize their role within a band.

"When I'm a sideman, either in jazz or rock, I feel a pressure to take care of business. So I may just do that; just lay it down. It's a whole other attitude for me because I spend the majority of my time playing the drums either solo or with my band, The Wolves. In that, I really know how to take charge. It's the most natural thing for me to do. But, when I'm a sideman it's a whole other attitude, sort of subverting your freedom on the drum set. It's a lot more challenging to be a sideman in a way."

Philippe Bernard, who has been with Montreal's The Box for seven years, says there is a real danger with straight time: it allows drummers to be lazy.

"The thing is, the drummer has to be willing to take chances when they come up. One of my favourite Box songs to play is 'Ordinary People', from the third album. It has a lot of space for the drums. If you listen to it, it's not a big arrangement. There are vocals, drums and a bit of bass, and in the chorus some guitar. But in the verse, it's just drums and vocals, so that's kind of neat. I can play a lot of things; there's a lot of room to breathe. It calls for more than just a normal pop beat, although a pop beat would do."

However, Bernard says a drummer should always keep the song in mind. Like Kirkland, he believes a beat must be an integral part of a song.

"Some arrangements don't need anything more than a straight bass drum on one and three, and snare on two and four. I'm not saying that in every song you have to play a complex rhythm. From my experience programming drum tracks for other people, I've learned that there's a really fine line between good taste and bad taste. A drum machine allows you to do anything you have in mind — there are no restrictions and you're not limited by technique or experience. You can just push a button and create the most complex rhythm you've ever heard. But there's a trick attached to it: when you have too many options, it's easy to go overboard."

The thoughtful drummer can establish freedom of expression in even, what would appear, the most restrictive settings. Nova Scotia's Dave Burton has studied jazz, so he's no stranger to complicated rhythms and feels. He also works with Rita MacNeil, a demanding situation since most of her live show is supposed to sound exactly like her recordings.

"There's a very precise sound we want to achieve. Being the drummer, I suppose there is more flexibility than there is for other people in the band. For the keyboard players, there are certain parts, little motifs and counter melodies that have to be there. They may resolve Rita's melody, or complement part of her melody. Whereas, I won't play the same fill every night. If there's a big open hole in a big ballad, it's up to me to fill it. I may try a different high-hat pattern on something, and I know other people aren't hearing it. What I find I change more often is the textural things, and Rita's music really lends itself to that."

**Breaking Up Is Not Hard To Do**

A little action can help a drummer break up the repetitive patterns of straight time. Newfoundland's Alex Macfarlane is one of the most exciting new drummers around. He thinks of

beat as something more than a simple snare-bass pattern.

"When you learn how to play the drums as a kid, a lot of times you learn one bar-long beat at a time, but that's not how you really play. I look at it more like there's a musical phrase, say, eight bars long. However long that phrase is, I approach it as a whole phrase, not bar for bar. I try to get a pattern happening."

Macfarlane says that his bandmates in Young Saints allow him the flexibility to push out of straight time.

"In 'Little Casanova', for example, I'm leaving out snare beats where you normally would expect them. When you hit the snare in different places, and the bass drum in places where you would normally play it, it makes people think that it's actually in a different time signature. I think it creates a different mood. Where you'd normally be just slogging along, it kind of throws you for a musical loop. But it's not something drastic that takes away from the song."

Vince Ditrich, who can also be heard on Glen Stace's debut album *Buddha Hotel*, says that even when working in straight time, the band can create the illusion of a different time signature.

"*Save This House*, Spirit of the West's biggest hit, is straight time. But that's one thing about the band: there are always strange rhythmic implications. Quite often they imply a six feel or a triplet-three over top of the four, and it's great because you get so many different flavours in there with little chops here and there."

He says that Spirit of the West will even move into unusual time signatures, but always with a deliberate effect in mind.

"We do a song called 'Polaroid' on the new album where everybody's playing the melodic portion in six time, and the rhythm section is playing underneath on four. On that track, we thought it would be good to keep the four feel going underneath, and let them switch into six for real tension. It's a song about children being stolen from their parents, and there's a constant mood and tension going on all the time. So we wanted a rhythmic structure that would enhance that tension. We thought it would be nice, rather than switch to six with the rest of the band, to keep the four going through for a common thread and just build the tension on top."

Sometimes bands can shift into different time signatures intuitively. Darrell Mayes, from the Colin James Band, says that the band got a surprise while recording their first album.

"When we were recording 'Why'd You Lie?', our producer Tom Dowd swore that we added an extra beat in the pause right after the chorus line. He took the tape home and analyzed it, and we never even thought of it. It just came naturally. It's really cool when that happens and you don't even notice it. The beauty is that the extra beat, by just being off a little, helped build the tension of the song."

Mayes thinks something like the extra beat illustrates how important the little things in music can be.

"Often, other musicians have a hard time understanding that drummers aren't dealing in notes, they're dealing in rhythms. It's like the heartbeat. The thing that keeps everyone else in time and focussed. So in one sense drummers are very important, although they usually have to stay in the background. Even if you move outside of straight time you have to keep a rhythm going. You're not supposed to be able to figure out when a song is not in straight time. That's the magic of it — it's supposed to flow without drawing attention to itself."

**Great Escapes**

No matter how flexible a band drummers find themselves in, most look for some other kinds of release. Dave Burton is no exception.

"My tastes are fairly widespread when it comes to music: I really love Latin, I love jazz, I love playing funk and soul. I miss playing that kind of music when I'm on the road. So when I'm off, I try to do as much freelance work and writing to satisfy my heart. By the same token, it's a gig I've yet to get bored with. I still find it very challenging."

**DRUMMERS KEEPING TIME**



Vince Ditrich/Spirit of the West



Alex Macfarlane Young Saints



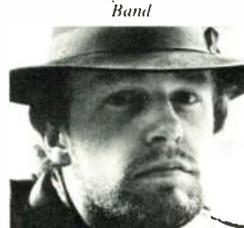
Dave Burton Rita MacNeil



Philippe Bernard The Box



Darrell Mayes/Colin James Band



Graeme Kirkland Leslie Spit Treco & The Wolves

Likewise, Philippe Bernard seeks out extra-band relationships when he's feeling boxed in.

"In Montreal, I do a lot of drum programming, so I deal with a lot of people and a lot of different kinds of music. To me, that's really a breath of fresh air. I think that's why I'm still in The Box after seven years."

Ironically, Graeme Kirkland also has his escapes. While most drummers dream of leading a jazz combo like Kirkland's band The Wolves, Kirkland looks for his release playing more straight ahead gigs.

"When I did the Leslie Spit Treeo, all they wanted was someone to lay it down; I could do one fill for the whole recording session. And I really loved it. I got to play with a click track. I got to play really hard and strong; it's straight ahead. It was really meaningful for me to do that straight ahead pop album."

For his part, Alex Macfarlane has a much more rudimentary cure for the drumming doldrums.

"Paradiddles, reverse paradiddles and inverted paradiddles. You can be playing in four/four, but when you play those things over top of two different surfaces you can do a zillion things that keep your mind occupied. There's something fun about a paradiddle: once you get it down, you don't have to think about it anymore. When your hands just do it, there's so much you can do. Right now we're working on this song with a samba bass drum, and just a straight paradiddle with my right hand on the high-hat and my left hand on the snare. And then I move my right hand to the bell of the ride cymbal, and my left hand around on the toms and the snare. That can keep me occupied for ages."

### Hot Tips

What can emerging drummers do to build their sense of rhythm? Graeme Kirkland advocates that drummers take time with straight time.

"Practise slow. If you practise slow it's like hearing everything under a magnifying glass, and also feeling everything a lot more with your body. You're not too used to doing all these slow motions so you really feel it with your body. It can be an intense experience, just sitting at your kit and playing a simple rock beat for an hour, and concentrating on it. Technically, it's very simple, but spiritually, it can be uplifting."

Dave Burton also encourages drummers to take their time.

"Don't hurry so much into technique, and understand important time and feel. It's a matter of playing a lot with other musicians, and a lot of listening to different styles of music. Listen to good drummers for their time and feel. And as rudimentary as it sounds, work with a metronome."

Philippe Bernard believes that one of the best things young drummers can do is to spend more time with their favourite pros.

"I used to listen to *Moving Pictures* by Rush and copy the drum parts beat for beat. I would listen over and over and over with headphones and play at the same time. Now, all the playing I'm doing more or less comes from the rehearsing I was doing at that time."

Darrell Mayes is also one for a little vicarious learning. He shares a common complaint with many working drummers — lack of practice time. But he does not see this as a detriment to his development.

"I don't really have that much time to practise any more. I mean, I usually do have a kit set up somewhere that I have access to. But I do most of my practising before sound checks. I go up there and drive the roadies crazy. But when you play every day you don't really need a lot of practice. You're doing a half-an-hour to 45 minute sound check, then you're doing your show; that's enough of a workout for any drummer. But just because I'm not practising every day, that doesn't mean I'm not learning. Learning, more than anything else, comes from listening to the players you really get off on."

Regardless of the approach a drummer takes, Alex Macfarlane says it's important that they don't lose sight of the most important element of playing.

"It's interesting that some of the most enjoyable experiences when you're playing aren't so much that it's really complicated and you're showing off or whatever, it's when the whole band comes together. To me, that's much more enjoyable than pulling off some five-in-the-space-of-four fill or something. When you're just grooving along, you know you're in the pocket, you know that everyone else is just feeling good — those are the moments you work for."

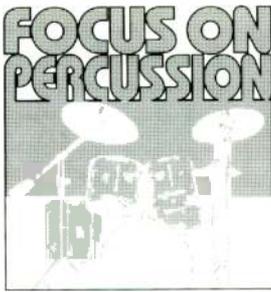
Vince Ditrich concurs: "Drumming is just not hitting things. It's music. It's not melodic, but it's just as important to the music as melody. Technical-sounding drummers who haven't developed their sense of time may hit the right beats, but miss all the emotion." □

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# FAVOURITE WARM-UP EXERCISES

## VINCE DITRICH

**I**n addition to these I do ratamacues, and any other rudiment that comes to mind, for about 30 minutes before a show. I also try super-imposing these rudiments in different times over a "4" pulse (i.e. I'll play paradiddles with a 6/8 triplet feel over a steady 4 on the bass drum, or just with my foot on the dressing room floor).

I also do plenty of stretching exercises, since I'm prone to tendonitis if I don't. This is easily as important as the rudiments for a warm-up.

Interspersed throughout the warm-up I spin the sticks in several different ways for finger and hand dexterity. I very seldom spin during a performance — I'd feel like a show-boating ass, especially if I dropped a stick! All my friends would call me a rock star and I'd never live it down.

I'm unsure what the proper notation for swinging from the light fixtures would be, but before a big show, there is always a good amount of that!

The fellows in *Spirit of the West* told me that I should jokingly transcribe "Wipe Out" as my warm-up, but I hate that bloody thing so much that I even leave when some other poor bastard has to play it, never mind me!



Paradiddles: Plenty of these old favourites!



5 stroke rapid alternations over time



This and/or variations to loosen up with a "6" bounce



Double paradiddle as well as single - 'till you're sick of 'em



I couldn't tell you what this one is called, but it's confusing enough to be interesting (espec. over 4/4)



Short rapid bursts of single stroke



A nice way to work on a hand that's weaker. My left is a little weak, so I do single strokes on my left more than my right



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Pearl has announced the reissue of the classic Forum drum kit.

Forum is available in black and white in a 5-piece configuration. Features include: heavy-duty drum spurs; a heavy-duty, basket-type snare drum stand; Pearl Popular Classic lugs; Pearl white-dot



drum heads; rugged 9-ply mahogany shells; and newly designed 600 series hardware.

For more information, contact: Erikson Music Reg'd., 378 Isabay, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1W1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069.

## Sonor's Elite Signature Series

Sonor Drums has introduced the Signature Series Special Edition drum set.

Features include: drum-mounts isolated from the drum shell by the Sonor Hilite insulation system for improved sound projection; select maple drum shells; all tom toms and floor toms equipped with seamless 'Megahoops';

Bubinga wood exterior finished with high-gloss lacquer.

The 5-piece kit comes with Protec hardware made from special lightweight alloy.

For more information, contact: Hohner/HSS, Inc., Lakeridge Park, 101 Sycamore Dr., Ashland, VA 23005 (804) 550-2700.



# New Gibraltar Hardware

Gibraltar Hardware has introduced a conga stand, road rack system and cymbal filter.

The conga stands are available in 3 sizes ranging from 10" to 13". They are fully adjustable, allowing for any make or style of drum to fit at the desired height. Each stand comes with 3 heavy-duty locking casters and can be clamped to each other, making a double, triple, or quad setup.

The Road Series Rack Systems are designed for the pro drummer and

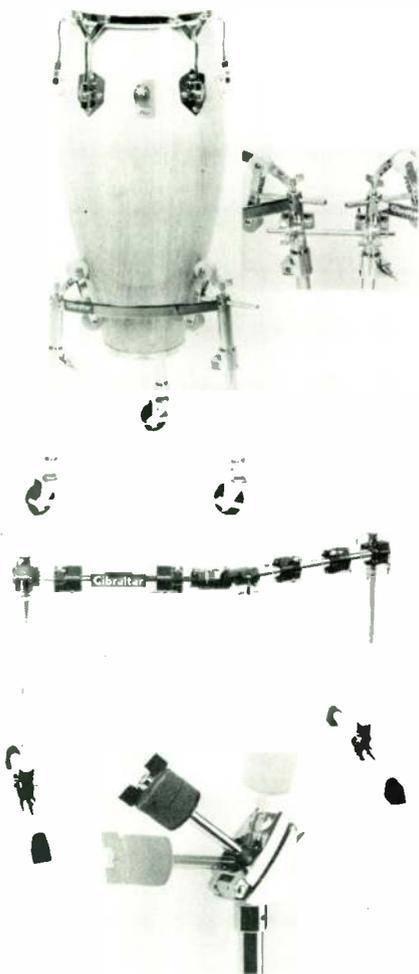
All racks come with a T-leg design and Road Series clamps, which include: hinged memory locks, stackable right angle clamps, and adjustable angle clamps.

The 360 Cymbal Tilter is a mounting system with a 360° nylon ball assembly that replaces the traditional single-direction filter mechanism.

The ball mechanism allows minute cymbal adjustments left, right, up, or down. The assembly has a one-

touch adjustment point to move cymbal position without having to make other adjustments. The filter can be positioned for traditional mounting or for use with suspended cymbals. The nylon ball is replaceable in case it is scared from over-tightening.

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can stand the rigours of frequent setup and teardown.

The systems come in 5 configurations: GRS-400, a basic over-the-bass-drum rack with horizontal angle adjustment; GRS-400C, an over-the-bass-drum rack with a 46" curved bar; GRS-100, a side extension with a horizontal angle adjustment; GRS-100C, a side extension with a 46" curved bar; and GRS-1000C, a single-tier double bass system, which uses 2 30" curved bars up front and 2 straight 43.5" side extensions.

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# Toca Mini Conga Sets

Coast Music has introduced the Toca fibreglass miniature conga set.

These 8" and 9" diameter mini congas are made from moulded fibreglass. They are proportional in all measurements to full-size congas, giving each drum a full tonal range that is not possible with standard mini congas, according to Kaman.

The congas come with hand-selected natural skin heads, heavy-duty chrome-plated counter hoops, and heavy-duty double-braced adjustable stand. They are available in gloss white, red or black.

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# Sabian HH Power Bell Ride

Sabian has introduced the 22" HH Power Bell Ride in response to today's need for increased versatility in ride cymbals.

Designed to meet the request of leading UK drummer Mel Gaynor (Simple Minds) for a big bell cymbal capable of positive ride qualities in both high and low level volumes, the HH Power Bell Ride offers the best of both worlds: a powerful bell and a musical cymbal all in one. Says HH specialist Mark Love: "With its huge 8" bell — capable of cutting through the absolute loudest music, and clearly articulating even the busiest sticking — coupled with

tonally tight and very direct ride qualities, the HH Power Bell Ride offers a degree of versatility not normally found in similar cymbals." He adds: "The bell, unlathed and buffed to a brilliant finish, emits a sound that is highly focused, with a brightness that is extremely cutting. Yet, the rest of the cymbal, which is fully lathed, delivers the tonally dark ride characteristics normally associated with our hand hammered HH series."

Like all Sabian HH and AA cymbals, the 22" HH Power Bell Ride is available in Regular Finish or the popular no charge option, 'Brilliant'



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## PureCussion's Piccolo Snare

Expanding on unique uses for PureCussion's ADDA drums (single headed RIMS mounted instruments) has prompted development of a PureCussion Snare Drum. Tests have shown virtually no sympathetic snare rattle when toms are struck, making it an ideal recording instrument. The 12" NE Series ADDA drum with an adjustable snare mechanism has a unique dry and crisp piccolo snare sound that really cuts through. Its size, weight, and mounting capabilities give players an optional voice to compliment their kit.

"Initial response from working drummers during the prototype develop-

ment has been exciting," stated Tom Williams, PureCussion company spokesperson. Participating in the in-



itial testing of the snare, Vinnie Coliuta found it "... very, very crisp; very responsive ... a real clean

sounding snare ... definitely has its own niche as an auxiliary snare ... if I was going to go for a real clean, tight sound I would use it as a primary snare. ... they sound more to me like a piccolo than a piccolo does!"

Four prototype drums were tested, each with a different weight Evans head. "Each has its own tonal characteristics," stated Vinnie. "It's so obvious that by changing the head you have a different drum. They all have excellent response."

For more information, contact: Calato Mfg. (Canada) Ltd., 8407 Stanley Ave., #1, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6X8 (416) 357-2680, FAX (416) 374-3981.

## Slingerland's New Artist Custom Series Drums

Slingerland has introduced its new, competitively priced Artist Custom Series, in response to increased demand for a professional-level maple drum set in standard size configurations.

The shell configuration of maple interior/exterior plies combined with a mahogany core of 3 plies contributes significantly to the warm, resonant sound of this series. Equipped with original Slingerland style lugs, hoops, T-rods and claws,

the Artist Custom Series has a traditional look with the same extremely functional spur and tom mounting system as used on the popular Spirit Series.

All drums are fitted from the factory with traditional white-coated medium weight batter heads. Two standard Jazz configurations are available (SA-3008C and SA-3000C) as well as a pop configuration (SA-3002C). Limited quantities of these configurations will be available in

four lacquer finishes including Natural Maple, Graphite Metallic, White Gloss and Wine Red Maple. However, custom setups may be special ordered in a wide variety of sizes: toms from 8" to 18", bass drums from 18" to 22" and snare drums from 4" to 6.5".

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## Sabian Debuts 14" HH EQ Hats

In constant pursuit of unique new cymbal concepts, Sabian Ltd. has created HH EQ Hats, a powerful cross-matched pairing consisting of a heavy HH Flat top and a special AA Rock bottom. This bottom cymbal features air vents in its bell and outer edge which facilitate the total elimination of air lock. EQ Hats — whether played by stick or pedal, angled or flat — project crisp, clean, clear and cutting sounds in the

loudest surroundings.

Cited by Sabian cymbal specialist Nort Hargrove as "...one of the most effective hi-hat designs I have experienced," the sound

of HH EQ Hats is medium/high pitched with the flat top also providing increased sticking area ... great for sound and dynamic variations. Says Hargrove, who created the EQ Hat pairing to meet a sound request for top UK drummer Mel Gaynor (Simple Minds), "The power of these cymbals is in their design. They're extremely fast, user friendly and, unlike many hi-hats designed for cutting power, very musical." An ideal consideration for studio and stage applications, HH EQ Hats, like all Sabian AA and HH cymbals, are available in Regular Finish or the popular no charge option, 'Brilliant' Finish.

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## New From JOPA Hand Percussion

JOPA's hottest new product is the JOPA "Rock Cans" — a pair of tambores mounted on a bracket that attaches easily to a cymbal stand tilter. They have the sound of timbales, but take up only 1/3 of the space — perfect for the drum set player who wants a different sound.

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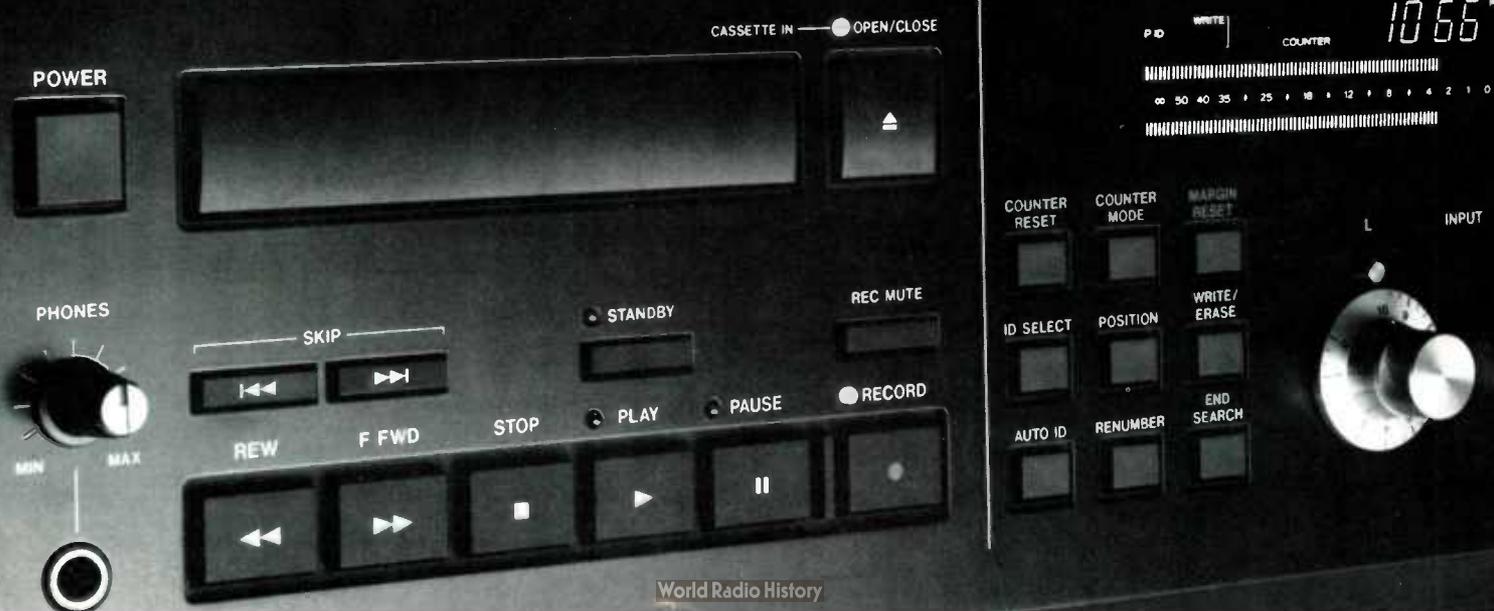
African boat bells, cuicas, pandoretas and tamborims. JOPA's premier product is their cowbell line, available in 12 models. The JOPA "Rock Bell" is made of heavier gauge metal than the other models, is available in two sizes with distinctive different pitches capable of cutting through the loudest amplification. The JOPA Cowbell Clamp, the thickest

and strongest available, will hold any cowbell securely to any holder or cymbal stand. The JOPA Rock Bells and Rock Cans are true percussion innovations.

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## Bass Drum High-Performance

Skyline Musical Products has introduced Drum Baffle™ — an accessory for all bass drums and all drummers. This innovative new product allows drummers to achieve a tighter bass drum sound without sacrificing low-frequency punch. Drum Baffle™ actually extends low-frequency response of bass drums by tuning the beater drumhead membrane to the natural resonant frequency of the entire drum body enclosure. The port-hole of the Drum Baffle™ acts in a similar manner as the port-hole of a bass reflex speaker cabinet which tunes the speaker enclosure to the natural resonant frequency of the driver. This controls

the excursion of the driver at resonance and thereby extends the low-frequency response of the speaker.

Drum Baffle™ is a hard, rigid disk which traps the energy inside the bass drum and then releases it at just the right moment through the port-hole when the bass drum is at its maximum peak amplitude at resonance, much like reaching maximum compression in an engine cylinder at top dead center and then sparking combustion to achieve the most power. That power is released through the port-hole in the form of low-frequency energy and supercharges the sound of bass

drums. For a very heavy metal bass drum sound, placing a microphone a few inches from the port-hole results in a bass drum sound that kicks away. The acoustic engine produced through the port-hole of Drum Baffle™ is powerful enough to be heard without amplification for every type of music with the improved sonic depth of the live acoustic bass drum sound.

Drum Baffle™ comes in four bass drum sizes: 18", 20", 22" and 24", black or white.

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# Finding Your Voice and Using It

I remember as a kid having an opera singer come to my grade school for a concert. A couple of hundred kids sat, cramped and cross-legged, squirming on the gym floor. Then, a woman began to sing. Looking around the room, I realized I wasn't the only one who was trying not to laugh. Something about this big voice made us very uncomfortable. We squirmed, we snickered, and we blushed. It was embarrassing to see this woman singing so loudly and so unashamedly right there in front of us: it was almost as if she was naked. I'm sure that if she'd been a pianist, we wouldn't have thought twice about her performance, but here she was, singing, instead.

Singing — it's so natural to everyone that it really is almost like seeing someone without their clothes (mind you, singing definitely sits high above being naked on my list of things to do onstage). So, for your singing to be convincing and pleasing to others, it's a matter of getting comfortable with your own natural voice, and then being able to control it at will.

I first started singing seriously as a young teen, doing choral work, and then taking classical vocal lessons at university. Much of the technique I learned in that classical experience has probably seeped into my subconscious, but I try to let as much as possible come naturally. A classical-style voice would sound a little out of place in contemporary pop and rock music, and besides, it's the real, natural sound of your voice that we all want to hear anyway! Perhaps the most useful things I learned in classical study were the importance of breathing correctly, and warming up, both of which I will deal with later on.

## Finding Your Voice

The most important thing for a vocalist to think about is finding his/her own voice. Think for a second about your speaking voice: it really doesn't sound exactly like anyone else's, therefore, there's no need to adopt any strange affectations (a wide vibrato, or a fake accent, for instance), unless it's absolutely necessary to the feel of the particular song.

I was a voracious music listener while growing up, and I still think it's really important to listen to other singers to hear how they approach their own voices. I have a soft spot for singers who sing like they only have three-and-a-half minutes to live, and those

three-and-a-half minutes are the song they're singing right then. Most of these are soul and R&B singers. Although my band, Barenaked Ladies, is hardly an R&B band, and I don't consider myself a soul singer (at least not in the traditional blues-based sense), I find that many R&B vocalists really have a sense of how to express *themselves* through the confines of a song.

Take a listen to Levi Stubbs of the Four Tops; he bellows with such convincing pain and, well, *soul*, that each song becomes its own little nugget of emotion. Other vocalists I can think of in this same "no tomorrow" vein are Little Richard and Van Morrison.



Steven Page is lead singer of the acoustic quintet, Barenaked Ladies.

Van Morrison is actually a bit of an anomaly, because he seems to bark his songs instead of sing them. However, he's a fascinating singer to listen to because he walks a tightrope between high emotion and just plain indifference. His voice is so gruff, and his delivery so clipped, that it almost sounds as if he doesn't care; but then, underneath all that is a sense of true soul and passion. That is true human communication: saying one thing and meaning another, and being able to communicate both in a single phrase of notes. Then there are lyrics to mix things up even further!

Aaron Neville (an increasingly admired vocalist), on the other hand, is someone I simply can't dig — he doesn't communicate to me. His zany vibrato seems so obtrusive that I just can't get around it. However, he is an amazing *technical* singer: he can run down an incredibly ornate string of notes with a precision that would make Bach blush, and that's a point worth noting. Although virtuosity is not a prerequisite, nor even a desired trait most of the time, it is important to be able to understand the distance between intervals, and to be able to hit each one consistently, and in tune. Singing

scales is tedious, but it helps.

Sometimes you'll come across a singer who really affects you, although their voice may be unremarkable, plain, or even downright homely. But that's what singing's all about. Take, for instance, Elvis Costello. His isn't a name one usually throws around in the same breath as Van Morrison or Levi Stubbs, but he really knows how to use his voice to communicate the emotion of a song. Rather than always hollering his lyrics, he varies his vocal tone to complement, rather than upstage, the song. Costello can move from a clear, innocent tone, to one that sounds hoarse and abrasive — he can move convincingly from a whisper to a scream depending on what the song requires. That, to me, is the essence of a true "soul" singer: someone who can convey the meaning of a song through the manipulation of his/her voice.

## Vocal Technique

Now that you've found your own voice, it's time to start using it. First of all, it's extremely important to warm up before you sing, both physically and mentally. Start with some chromatic scales or move up and down some triads. Start on a hum, and move to each vowel sound, using both hard and soft consonants (for example: "mm mm mm" to "so so so" to "kee kee kee") just to relax your voice and to get your breathing regular. Start low in your range so you don't strain, and move gradually upward. You will soon find that your range has expanded, too!

Before our shows, after warming up, our band always sits in the dressing room and sings. We sing something fun, and we sing it together. It just seems to relax us, and music takes over where dinner and business and appointments left off.

Finally, you must be sure to breathe properly. Breath comes from your lungs, not your throat, so be sure to sing from your chest. Actually, you should try to visualise your breath coming from as far down as possible. Sure, it's okay to colour your tone with throaty singing now and again, but you'll get a much truer tone, more volume control, and much more air if you sing from your chest.

How do you know if you're breathing properly? When you breathe in, your gut should go out, not in. Remember, when your lungs fill with air, they push down on your diaphragm, the ridge of muscle under your

lungs. Use the diaphragm as your air control meter. Release the tension to release the air. After exhaling, your stomach should be flat again. Doing this while singing might seem a little artificial at first, but hopefully, it'll work its way into your unconscious.

**Microphone Technique**

Microphones are wondrous things, and with them, you can control much of your own sound. On stage, the most important thing for you to get is a monitor mix that you're comfortable with. With a mix between the monitors and the live sound off the stage, you should be able to hear everything that's going on. In our band, everybody sings, not necessarily all at once, so I feel most comfortable when I have all five vocals coming through my monitor.

Much of what Barenaked Ladies' sound depends upon is vocal harmonies, and there are a lot of four-part and even five-part harmonies in our music. Some singers like to have just their own voice in their monitor, and if you can tune better, or concentrate better that way, that's fine. For me however, it's really important to have all the vocals set in the monitors at the same volume ratio that they are in the house.

Think of it this way: do you *really* need your voice blaringly loud? If you do, make sure that the other voices are, too. That way, you can hear where your vocals sit in the blend. And remember that blend is all-important; there is no need to upstage the other musicians with your singing, and that means keeping it simple where vocal blend is important. When four people are all singing a chord, the last thing anybody needs is one voice wailing some little solo over the top of it. If you're too loud, pull back — subtlety and restraint are just as important as passion and power. But remember the magic of pulling back from the mic: you can keep the force and strength of your voice happening, while controlling how much volume actually makes it into the speakers. Also think about the song you're singing. Is there a particularly low, quiet part coming up? Pull back now, so you can get really close during the lower bit. It takes some practice, but you'll be amazed what you can do.

So remember, breathe properly, warm up, and find that voice! Listen to other singers, but make your voice unique, and have fun with it — don't feel restricted by your voice. Rather, find out all the different tones and colours you can get from it. And finally, be natural. Tony Bennett is one of the best singers around, but even on those brilliant high notes you can imagine what his speaking voice sounds like. And I don't (thank goodness) feel like I'm seeing him naked either!



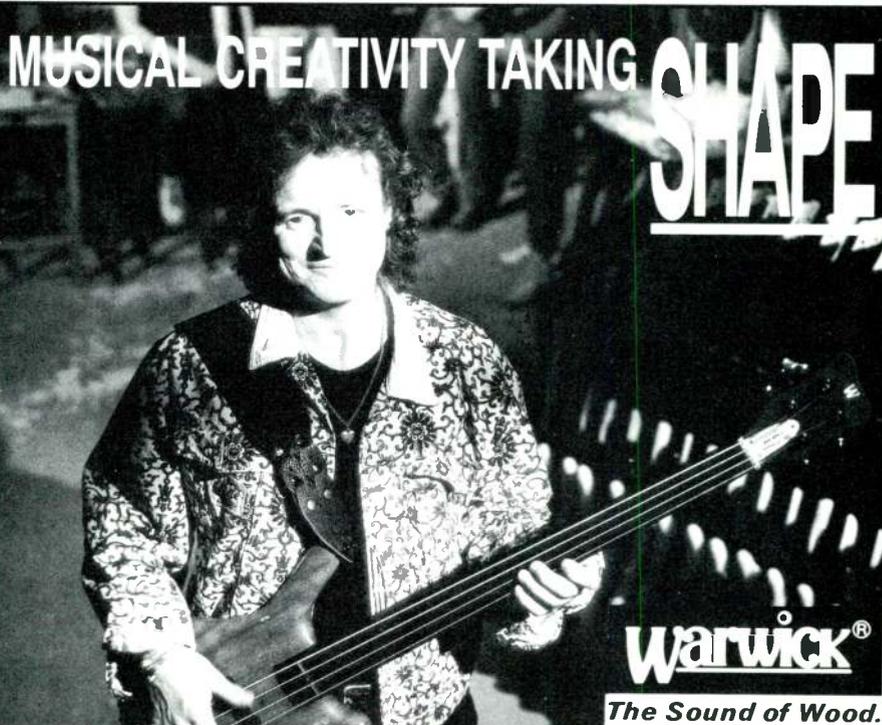
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# PC Digital Turtles

This month's column is devoted to a look at the 56K digital recording system, an IBM PC-based digital recording system from Turtle Beach Systems.

"Personal digital system" is how Turtle Beach refers to its entry in the land of digital audio workstations. One of more than 25 hard disk recording systems displayed at last fall's AES, the 56K delivers the goods for US\$1,995. No stranger to digital audio, the firm has maintained a steady presence in the field of sample editing and digital audio technology for the past five years. Turtle Beach's application Sample Vision is the most successful sample editor for the PC.

A self-confessed Macintosh aficionado, I remember the humbling feeling as I watched a 386 PC scream through a Sample Vision Fast Fourier transform at the 1989 Winter NAMM show. The graphic Fourier representation of a waveform requires extensive mathematical calculations and this amazing 386 was ripping through it faster than anything I had ever seen. "Better brush up on those DOS commands," I thought, trying not to look too impressed.

As it turns out, 56K is an easy study. And the learning curve is even shorter if you watch the instructional video that comes with the system. Tasteful, informative and entertaining, *56K Digital Recording System - The Video* will have even a novice user slicing and dicing digital sound files in no time. Both the video and manual for the 56K provide a good overview of the system, mixed with a dash of Pennsylvanian humour. The 56K System runs under GEM, a mouse-driven graphic operating environment from Digital Research that also provides the user interface for the Atari ST.

Introduced at the end of 1990, the 56K System consists of an external digital interface box, an internal card for the IBM PC or compatible and a software application called SoundStage. The "engine" on the internal card that handles the digital signal processing functions is the same Motorola 56001 DSP chip found on the Digidesign Sound Accelerator and AudioMedia cards for the Macintosh. The external interface box provides AES EBU and S/PDIF digital in/out, MIDI and Audio I/Os for MTC and SMPTE synchronization, and a selector switch to choose a sample rate of 32-, 44.1- or 48K.

The minimum hardware necessary to complete a functional 56K Digital Record-

ing System is a 12 MHz 286 IBM PC (or compatible), 640K of RAM, a 100 MB hard drive and a mouse. I first tried the 56K with a monochrome 12 MHz 286 machine. Noticeably slower than our 25 MHz 386, it could still handle the job. And the playlist functions made tape edits look like the dark ages. I did have some trouble with the 286 at first because of the cheesy, 8-bit hard drive controller that came with the PC system. The addition of a 16-bit controller took care of all hard drive I/O problems. A colour monitor is highly recommended and well worth the expense. SoundStage includes an extensive range of user-defined colour preferences.

In addition to a PC, you need to furnish the analogue-to-digital converters for the

provides either AES EBU (balanced) or S/PDIF (coaxial RCA) digital I/O connections. These will be necessary to address the 56K. The DAT machine also provides an excellent solution to archiving and backing up the 10 MB/minute stereo sound files that the 56K produces.

In a nutshell, the 56K is a system that records digital audio to a PC hard drive, allows you to specify "markers" and then use the markers to define "zones". The zones may then be assembled and edited in a "playlist" that can draw its material from any of four different stereo soundfiles. Playlist regions may be triggered by external MIDI events, or SMPTE times. Soundfiles may be mixed (three files to one), merged with crossfade, equalized (realtime playback or destructive file equalization) and gain adjusted.

Applications of this type of system would include two-track digital audio recording, auditioning, editing and assembly of songs, sound effects assembly and playback (with real SMPTE synchronization, not just MTC), Foley and dialogue editing and replacement.

## PC or Mac?

A comparison of PC-based and Macintosh hard disk recording systems is inevitable. And you can't really argue about specs, especially if your DAT machine has a set of top-notch A-D-D-A converters. If the Mac and PC systems used the same converters, they'd sound virtually identical. The ease-of-use and functionality of the systems are the real issues. And for most of us, cost ranks right up there too!

The Mac's reputation was founded on its friendly operation, but I really found the 56K a breeze to manoeuvre.

There were a few things that weren't quite as obvious as I thought they might be, but this is often the case in Mac programs. Turtle Beach has provided a powerful interface for editing. As stated by Turtle Beach President Roy Smith in the 56K video, they wanted to create a system that the "experienced user can really whip around on." They've done that.

So why does a complete 56K Digital Recording Systems PC system cost about 40 percent less than a comparable system on the Mac? After working with the 56K for a while, I jotted down a wish list of features, but as a two-track recording and editing system, I found that 56K was quite complete.



*Chris Chahley, president of Musicware Distributors, is involved in the distribution and development of music software and retail sales of various computer products.*

system. In most cases this would be a DAT machine. Haven't got one yet? The 56K is a great reason to take the plunge. When choosing a DAT machine to use with a digital system, it's important to understand that the quality of the A-D-D-A conversions of the hard disk recording system are only as good as the converters in your DAT. I acquired a Tascam DA-30 for the 56K tests and am very happy with the unit. After doing some comparisons, I was surprised to find that our new Denon CD Player sounded noticeably better when run through the DA-30's converters. Especially since the Denon sounds better than our old Sony player. This stuff is getting ridiculously good!

Be sure that the DAT machine you choose

One feature I found lacking in SoundStage 1.01 was in the playlist. It currently displays the length of each event, but doesn't provide a cumulative running time of the entire list. That makes for a lot of extra SMPTE calculations. This feature has already been implemented in SoundStage 1.2, presently in late beta testing.

Also, I would like to see the ability to record the performance of a mix, and later edit that performance. To be fair, this is more useful in a multitrack setup, and Mac systems that feature mix recording and editing include additional programs to achieve that functionality. The 56K is a system that is destined to undergo major changes in the years to come. There is no doubt that Turtle Beach has the technical chops to continue to respond to their users' needs and suggestions. Plans for a Turtle Beach multitrack digital recording system are currently under development.

Other PC digital editing operations that were different than the Mac had to do with the cut, copy, paste and delete functions. The first two times I tried the delete function in 56K, the computer hung in an endless read loop. I talked with Turtle Beach and received some excellent technical support. The problem was that our 210 MB Quantum hard drive had somehow developed a bad case of misallocated blocks. After resolving that issue, I went back to work and found that all the destructive editing functions worked fine — but still took quite a while. Deleting five seconds of audio takes several seconds on the Mac and several minutes on my PC. However, if you approach editing from within the playlist as suggested by Turtle Beach, one would rarely need to use the destructive edit functions.

Audio and post production companies will find it hard to ignore the Digital Turtles, especially since 56K can be synchronized to SMPTE and slaved to a sequencer on another computer (with none of the frustrations that many Mac II users experience when recording MIDI and Digital audio on one computer). For example, an Atari owner could use Notator to control two tracks of digital audio on the PC; or a MacPlus user running Pro4, or Amiga buff using KCS. If the idea of purchasing a second computer for your studio seems a bit extravagant, remember that the PC with 56K can also function alone as a self-contained workstation for sound FX, dialogue replacement and Foley — without tying up the MIDI gear in the main studio.

What impressed me most about the 56K was the unpretentious manner with which it

completed its tasks — without crashing or processing delays. It was able to truly reproduce the playlist without overtaxing either the hard drive or CPU of the PC. Solid performance with 1/48,000-of-a-second digital soundfile editing is nothing to be

taken lightly. And you don't have to be a NASA technician to get it happening! If you have eyes for a personal digital system in the near future, definitely check out the latest version of the 56K Digital Recording System. You won't regret it.



Photo by Martin Cohen

## Making An Impact By Taking An Impact

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# Back to the Inverted Basics

**E**ight years ago, I made my first major purchase of a musical instrument — a Yamaha CP-70 electric grand piano. I worked very, very hard (seven nights a week in a schmaltzy piano bar) to save up for the piano that I could take anywhere because it was so “portable”. My hands shook terribly as I wrote out a cheque for \$4,274. But that piano was the only thing I’d wanted for years and years.

When I carted it home (in two pieces), the fact that it weighed close to 300 lbs. didn’t bother me at all. Within a year, however, my new “high-tech” portable piano was obsolete. Replaced by a little piece of rubber wound wire called a “MIDI cable”. My heart was broken (so was my bank book) as I laid my electric grand to rest and replaced it with a better sounding, 24 lb. electric piano. Now I’ve learned that *not* selling that piano for \$800 was the best thing I ever did.

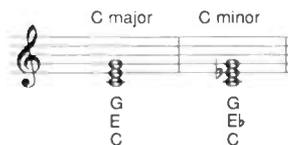
As a songwriter I’ve found that getting away from my sequencer, master keyboard, sound modules and all those MIDI cables and sitting down at my old, trusty (and a little rusty) Yamaha is truly an inspiration — just me, my piano, and a pencil and paper. I’m sure that most pop writers nowadays are surrounded by the same jumble of high-tech gizmos that I am. My “writing room” looks not unlike the cockpit of a 747. So, as Franky would say, “Let’s get away from it all”, grab our acoustic guitar or piano, and do some writing.

In my last article I discussed lyric writing, so this time I’ll touch on something musical. I’m what you call an “ear trained” musician. That’s right, I can’t read my way out of a paper bag (or a Lyla Thompson book, for that matter). But if, like me, you can’t read a note of music, it doesn’t mean that you can’t write. Maybe you won’t get it down on paper, but heck, if you can get it down on tape, somebody else can transcribe it. And just because someone is an incredible player doesn’t mean they are necessarily a great writer. Writing is a totally separate art form, and takes years to become really good at. But if you’re like me, and play by ear, your chord vocabulary might be limited to mostly majors and minors, so let’s work on expanding our chord horizons.

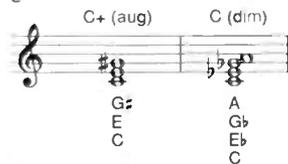
As far as I’m concerned, when we’re writing we’re using chords that we’re extremely comfortable with. Chords that we don’t have to think about; our hands play them naturally. Let’s become familiar with some alternate chords and progressions, so we can add a few new twists to our writing. I speak in

keyboard, but this applies to guitarists as well. For guitarists, I suggest picking up one of those little pocket chord books (if you don’t already have one). These books have every chord we will discuss here, in every key.

I’m going to assume that some of you are starting from the ground up, and don’t even know what a major or minor chord is. You may laugh, but I know a few guitar and keyboard players who can get through an entire song, but have no idea what it was they just played. A major chord (or triad) comprises the first, third and fifth note of the major scale. To make a minor chord, simply flatten the third note of the scale. Here’s a very basic example of these two chords in C:



Now, by simply raising the fifth note of the major scale by a semi-tone on the major chord, we have ourselves an augmented chord. Take the minor chord, flatten the fifth of the scale, add a sixth, and “Ta-Da!”... you have a diminished chord. Again, my examples are in C, but these rules apply to any key signature:



A C<sup>7</sup> and Cmin<sup>7</sup> can be achieved by simply adding the flattened 7th of the major scale to either chord (in this case, B<sup>b</sup> is added; in the key of D, a C natural would be used). A C<sup>7</sup> (major seventh chord) is made by adding the B natural on top instead of the B<sup>b</sup>. The B natural is not usually added to the Cmin chord because of its harsh quality.

However, a flattened seventh can be added to a minor chord to give it a fuller sound. Adding the B<sup>b</sup> to a Cmin chord gives you a Cmin<sup>7</sup>. Playing the notes C, D and G together gives you a Csus<sup>2</sup>. To get a Csus<sup>4</sup>, play C, F and G.

The key to using some more unusual chords in your writing is to become really close to them. They must be able to roll off your fingertips without even thinking. The best way to do this is to sit down and play chord progressions. Maybe write a few out on staff paper before you do. You don’t have to write the notes, just the chord symbols.

Something like this:



Make sure you include plenty of diminished, augmented, sevenths and major sevenths so that you become familiar with their unique sounds. Obviously, certain chords move to others more naturally, and some don’t work together at all. This is where your ear comes into play.

You can spend years studying the rules of harmony and theory, but what it all boils down to is this: if it sounds good, it’s allowed. I’m definitely no expert on theory, but I know if something sounds wrong. Trust your ear! But also remember that your ears can take years to train, especially if you’ve never really used them before.

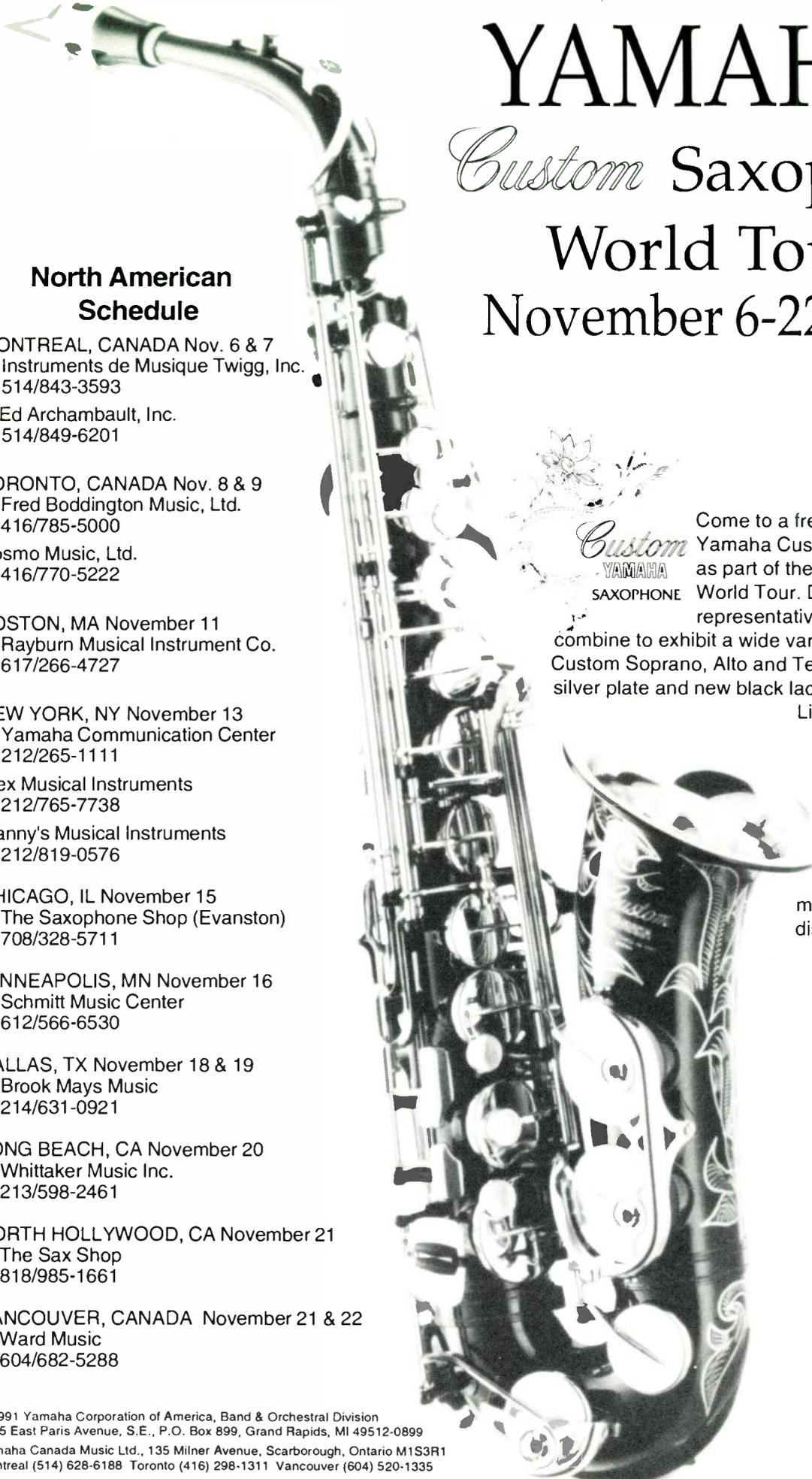
Try to learn new songs that sound as if they have difficult or strange-sounding chord progressions in them. Take the challenge! Struggle a bit and I promise you’ll be rewarded. Songs that used to take me hours to learn, now take me five to 10 minutes. Chords that I never used to be able to recognize are now as obvious as can be. And most of all, I’m consciously and unconsciously using these chords in my writing. So take the time to build a chord “bank” in your brain. Soon you’ll be plucking new and interesting chord progressions out of thin air.

Okay, now that the pep talk is over, let’s discuss a few more variations on the old major and minor. The sixth of a major scale can be added to the major and minor chords to give you, for example, C<sup>6</sup> and Cmin<sup>6</sup>. Try flattening the fifth on a minor seventh chord for a Cmin<sup>7</sup>b<sup>5</sup>. Ninth chords are very common and can be obtained by adding the ninth note of the scale (the second note up one octave) to a C<sup>7</sup> and a Cmaj<sup>9</sup>, respectively.

Take the C<sup>9</sup> and add an F on top and you have a C<sup>11</sup>. Take the C<sup>11</sup> and add an A at the top and you have a C<sup>13</sup>. Pretty soon you’ll run out of fingers. It may sound confusing, but I’ve only scratched the surface of what is available to you musically as a writer.

As I mentioned before, there are books at your local music store that are dedicated to the different chords and their inversions (different ways of playing the same chord) for both keyboard players and guitarists. Most of them have diagrams as well as photographs to show where to place your fingers, and so on.

*Continued...*



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Another way to expand your chord library is to pick up a jazz fake book (available at most music stores and a few libraries) and play through some of the tunes. Jazz fake books usually have a number of standard tunes with alternate chords from what you would normally expect. Some of them are absolutely beautiful and can be used in your own writing without sounding too jazzy.

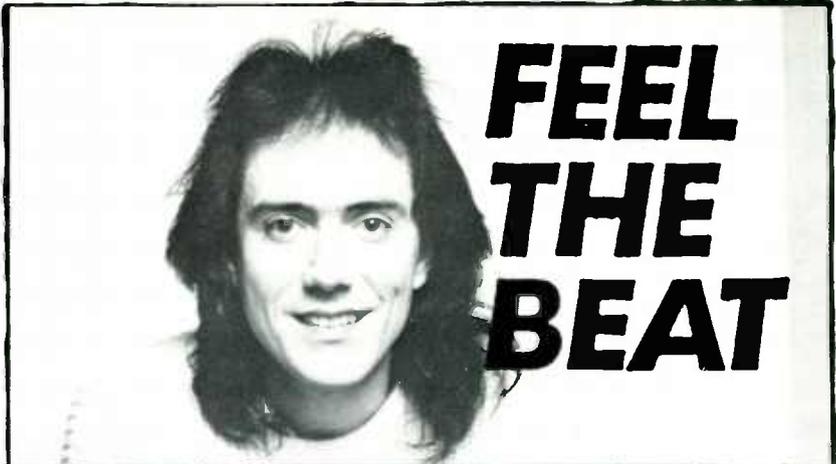
So pull out that old acoustic guitar, dust off the piano in the basement, and get back



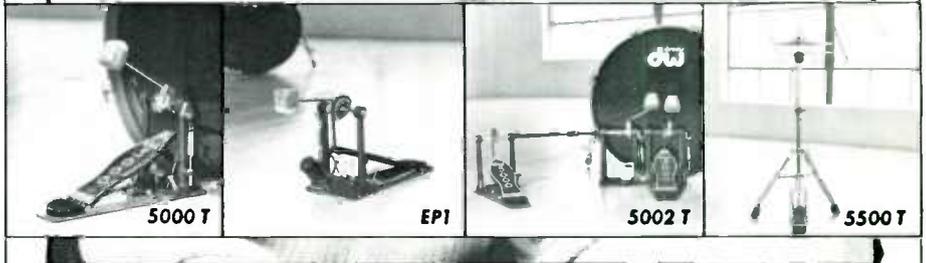
*Jim Witter has been writing songs for BMG Music Publishing as well as writing and singing jingles. He won the CFNY Great Ontario Talent Search in 1987 and has opened for such acts as Rox Orbison and The Nylons.*

to some pure writing — writing without the ominous loom of studio gear. Just you, your instrument and your imagination. Don't forget some paper and a pencil or a small, unassuming tape recorder to get your ideas down.

Try to expand your collection of chords to use in your own writing. You'll be inspired when you use something other than the same old, dull major and minor chords. Your melodies will take a new shape, too — but that's another story. Get yourself alone and play chord progressions until your fingers fall off. Just stroll from one chord to the next, and soon you'll stumble on a progression that makes you say, "Hey, that's really different; that's really good; that sounds really cool; and *I wrote it!*"



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# A Sound Attitude

**T**hree months ago, when I was initially asked to write this article, I was on my way to Nepal, India, and points beyond. I had just about taken all the attitude I could from an assortment of musicians, engineers, would-be engineers, friends and my two dogs. Dogs? What's wrong with this picture?

One of the issues that tends to get ignored in our business is attitude. The success or failure of any gig is directly dependent on the attitude of the participants. Last week I had the pleasure of working with Henry Lee Summer in London, Ontario. It was a delight. The mutual respect between the band and crew extended to outside contractors (me) and ensured survival during an eight-month tour in a submarine (tour bus). They have to. Murder is illegal here.

With that in mind, I have designed a little quiz, much like the ones in *Cosmo* on "How's your sex life?" or "How to tell if you have bad breath." Ours is a little more industry-relevant and if you have problems with your sex life, then you're reading the wrong mag.

Please note: The situations described below are completely real. Any similarity to persons living or dead is intentional. Trust me. I don't need to make this stuff up. It happens a lot.

Answer A-10 pts, B-20 pts, C-30 pts, D-1000 pts

1. You're a freelance engineer for a local sound company doing a big band jazz festival. The conductor of the headlining act is full of ideas about how his band should be miked and mixed. His instructions are contrary to what you know to be right, but he is adamant that it's his way or the highway. If it sounds bad, your company is going to wear it. To top it off, this guy is writing the pay cheque. How can you resolve this and get paid?

A. Tell him to piss off — you know what you're doing.

B. Grin smugly and tell him you'll get right on it (and ignore him).

C. Shrug and do it his way. After all, he is the client and you'll be able

to explain a bad review in the local paper that way.

D. Listen to the guy. Maybe he knows what he's talking about and just can't articulate it. Who's copping the attitude here anyway?

You all picked D, right? Cheaters. Often musicians use terms like 'glass' or 'woolly' to describe what engineers recognize in electronic terms. It stands to reason, though, that a guy who has been with the same band for 30 years has a pretty good understanding of what his band should sound like. Was it your Metallica T-shirt that scared him? I'd try a wardrobe change while I was at it.

## Threaten to punch the guy out ...

Now let's put the shoe on the other foot. Attitude is a two-way street.

2. You're in a band playing a bunch of downtown clubs. The last few years have seen system upgrades so that the term "production supplied" isn't the nightmare it once was. That's good for you, because you save the expenses of another band member.

The problem is the attitude you've been getting off the house techs. You show up at 8:00 for a 9:00 show, set up your stuff and immediately pick up attitude off the house tech. He/she doesn't seem to be interested in getting a monitor sound, the six DIs you need have shrunk to two, and, at the break your girlfriend tells you it doesn't sound right. What can you do?

A. Threaten to punch the guy out if he doesn't get his act together.

B. Talk to the club and have the tech fired.

C. Do nothing and put up with it.

D. Do the pre-production on the gig and think about having a sound tech travel with the band.

Pre-production is a four-syllable word that means calling the house tech, explaining your needs, and arranging for a soundcheck. Don't assume that managers or agents will have the time to do this for you.

Whether or not to hire your own engineer is another question. Most clubs have competent sound techs, but as a 'sometimes' house engineer, I know how difficult it is to mix a band that I have never seen, will see for only one night, and who didn't have a soundcheck. A trick that works for me is to listen to a tape of the style of music, if not the band, ahead of the gig. Since the technique for mixing jazz is a bit different from mixing heavy metal, this reference puts me in the right headspace at least.

While the house engineer is probably more than capable, having your own person ensures the sound will be consistent.

So far, most of you will have scored 2000 points. Anyone who has been around for awhile will recognize these solutions as common sense and basic communication skills. Did we forget this is supposed to be fun?

One final note. It took me awhile to clue in. First the attitude was coming from musicians, then fellow crewtons, then friends. When my two dogs started copping attitude, I got the message. Take my advice. If your dog starts to cop attitude, then it's probably not them — it's you! Go to Nepal.



*Kitty Cross is a freelance sound engineer based in Toronto. As well as catching calls with Westbury National (most recently The Jeff Healey Band), she teaches a number of industry related topics at Humber College and Harris Institute for the Arts.*

# Who Says You Can't Record Masters on a 16-Track?

So there I was, taking another tune that I recorded on my boat in my 16-track studio to play for my manager, Sam Feldman. After listening to the song, Sam said, (as he had said many times before), "Brian, you have to record an album on that boat!" I would always say, "Yeah, someday", knowing well enough that I could never get master quality from a 16-track Fostex tape recorder. Or could I?

It was over the next few weeks that I began realizing that while the average home studio, mine included, has most of the basic equipment, (tape machine, board, effects and so on), they lack a couple of quintessential pieces of equipment. With another few thousand dollars, they too could have a studio capable of producing masters.

So what was I missing? My studio at that time consisted of a Fostex E16 tape recorder, a 24-channel Fostex board, a Roland MC 500, a Korg DDD1 drum machine, a Pioneer stereo amp, Sony monitors, one dbx 166 stereo compressor and a couple of SPX 90s. Adequate, certainly, but not good enough for masters.

I needed a good drum machine, one that would sample with good quality and have enough memory. I chose the Akai Lynn MPC60 which would take care of both sequencer and drum machine and has a 24 second sampling time with 12 second update. It cost me about \$5,500 at the time, but you can pick one up much cheaper these days. I also needed a sampler and looked at the Akai 900, 950 and 1000. Well, the 900 was too noisy; the 1000, too expensive. The 950, perfect at about \$2,800 back then. Next, I needed a couple of good mics. This seems to be what every home studio lacks. If you're only going to have a couple of good mics, a Shure SM57 is a must (for miking guitar amps). They average about \$150. Next, and most importantly, a good vocal mic. I would love to own a Urei 87, but \$3,000 is out of the question, so I settled for a Fostex ribbon mic, the M44RP. (Jeez, the way that Fostex name keeps popping up, you'd think they sponsored me!)

Monitors: The Sonys had to go. I wanted monitors with a little more dynamic range than Yamaha NS-10Ms so I checked out JBL's 4000 series. I bought the 4006s for about \$700. Boy, do they ever kick ass!

Well, I was quickly running out of money, so for power I bought a used Yamaha P2000 stereo amp which was clean and more than enough power for those end-of-the-day blasters. I found it for \$300 in the *Buy and Sell*, where lots of great buys on older power amps can be found.

Now to end this buying spree, I needed some more compression. I had a stereo dbx 166 but needed another, as well as a mono compressor. I managed to pick up an old used Urei LA4 mono compressor for lead vocals, and another 166. I use one for bass and snare, the other for overall compression during the mix-down stage.

Finally, I needed a good stereo 1/4" tape machine for mix-down. None of this 7 1/2 speed bullshit. Something that at least recorded at 15 IPS.

It was back to the *Buy and Sell*, and you would be surprised at the selection. I was

very lucky to pick up an Otari MX 50-50 studio model with a raised meter bridge.

I now had all the parts and, quite unbelievably, they all fit in the crew room of my 40-foot boat, where my studio resides.

Now a quick note to let you know my format for recording a song: drums and bass are run from SMPTE on track 16, simply because bottom-end information like kick drum, floor toms and bass guitar is just not tight enough when recorded on 1/2" tape. But for everything else (guitars, keyboards, vocals) the E16 handles them beautifully, and quieter with Dolby C than most 2" machines, I might add.

I use my 950 for everything: sampled guitar sounds, brass, sound effects, and especially bass. I usually record a working track of bass so I can free up the machine to record other samples on tape, but I always use it again for bass in the mix-down stage.

To record backgrounds, I go to fresh 16-track tape with a monitor mix on tracks 1 and 2, which leaves me 14 tracks for vocals. I then mix them down in stereo to the 2 track, and fly them back into the 16-track master.

By the way, here's a good first time, everytime fly-in method. Mark the tape at the record head with a grease pencil before you record. Then press record about one bar before the backgrounds, on beat 2. You now are ready to fly those backgrounds into the master. Move the grease pencil mark up to the playback head, thus eliminating the start up time of the machine. By pressing play on the same second beat, you should always achieve success the first time, provided your timing is fairly accurate.

Anyway... best of luck. You can hear some of my 16-track efforts on the new Chrissy Steele album, recorded right here on my boat.

The only thing I've added to my studio since that album was recorded is the new G 24 Fostex 24-track tape recorder, (1" tape, Dolby S). Now that's a nice piece of machinery!

Now, do as Arsenio says and "Get Busy"!



Brian MacLeod is a Juno Award-winning record producer. He is also a hit-song writer and multi-instrumentalist whose projects include work with Chilliwick, Headpins, Doug and the Slugs, Good Brothers and Long John Baldry. His latest project is writing and producing the debut Chrissy Steele album *Magnet to Steel*.

**PART 3 Promoting Yourself to Radio**

*In the third and final part of this series, Greg Simpson examines the dynamics between a radio station's music director and a record company promotion specialist, and offers advice on how to promote your own project.*

**E**ach record label employs promotion specialists, the best of whom know the stations they're working inside and out. They therefore know what the odds are of any particular track finding its way on to any of the major stations in this country.

Very little time is wasted by the best of the specialists browbeating an important station on a particular record unless they are absolutely convinced the station is wrong by ignoring it. There are exceptions in the industry to this rule of thumb, but, you will notice, I did say the *best* of the promotion specialists.

Weekly marketing meetings at a record company determine what the picture is like for each of the records the company has in release. These meetings are generally held in private, as it would do a label little good (one assumes) to have an artist or manager hear first-hand what the label's employees may think a certain record's chances really are. From this meeting a priority list emerges, and their promotional representatives are instructed as to what they are expected to have achieved by the following week. In some cases, the label is looking for Top Add in *The Record*. An example of that might be the recent release of *Animal Heart* by Glass Tiger.

The Newmarket quartet is easily the most successful of a very impressive list of domestic acts coming out of Capitol Canada, and anything less than Top Add at both CHR (Top 40), and CAR would be interpreted as a major failure of the promotion department. Both goals were achieved, and not to anyone's great surprise either, as radio likes acts that have proved themselves in the past.

However, labels might also look at a lesser act that they believe in and are anxious to see show up in the top five adds as well. A recent example might be a song called "Raw" by The Alarm, also promoted on a national basis by Capitol. The Welsh act has another ace-in-the-hole in the person of Paul Orescan, the president of IRS Records Canada, and one of the best promotion men in this country. IRS has been trying to turn The Alarm into superstars for over five years.

Orescan, an executive who believes in the personal approach, still spends a large part of his workweek on the phone doing part of the job he pays Capitol Records for. The result? The Alarm, a much less bankable act than Glass Tiger, achieved the #1 Add in its first week of release despite the reluctance

of some stations to add it out of the box.

A record promoter with a winning personality and a good understanding of what makes his or her radio stations tick can have a very successful career. As examples we cite Peter Diemer, Vice-President of Promotion for Capitol Records, and Kevin Shea, the National Promotion Director for MCA. Both came out of the broadcasting business and learned, from being on the radio side, that no one responds well to a bully. As a matter of fact, the least successful promotion people have generally not worked in radio, although there are exceptions there, too.

Certainly there are successful promotion workers with retail and wholesale backgrounds, and there have been terrible bullies who have spent some time in radio. What it comes down to, naturally, is the same thing that life itself comes down to. Respect the people you work with, and, likely, they'll respect you.

The tools promoters use don't stop at strong personal skills, however. Many records that (rightly or wrongly) need additional help are given it in more ways than one can imagine. Sometimes extreme attention-getting devices are used as well.

Diemer, while the BC promotion rep for MCA, was frustrated by the fact that Island Records' act Frankie Goes to Hollywood had a song called "Two Tribes" that was being played at every CAR reporter in the country except CFOX in Vancouver. This embarrassed Diemer, so he took the theme of the song to heart and declared war on the station. He approached the Vancouver

militia and rented a full-sized tank and driver. They then drove to CFOX's offices and parked outside, refusing to leave until the record was added to the playlist. The stunt had a triple-whammy effect: CFOX added the record, the stunt generated national attention to the record through TV newscasts and press coverage, and it marked Diemer as a future superstar of promotion.

Labels also use many other forms of attention-getting devices, ranging from t-shirts and coffee mugs to (a true sign of the times) condoms, which most music directors fill with water and throw off the top of tall buildings, as it takes them away from their jobs for less time than their true purpose would.

One executive states that a commitment of under \$10,000 to break a new act is like no commitment at all. In fact, in this country the cost usually runs closer to \$30,000 just to be on an even footing with everyone else. For an act like Alias, which was a major commitment for the label and has since gone to #1 in the States, a hell-of-a lot more is put on the table.

Where does this leave the independent still looking for a deal? There are many options, not all as good as the other. One way is to try and break through college radio, where commercial concerns generally don't exist and where success can lead to eventual major label attention. Another is by hiring an independent promotion person to work the product to radio.

However, the independent route is becoming less viable as time goes by. There is an unfortunate mindset in Canada that finds many programmers assuming that if you were any good you'd already be on a major label. This indicates a lack of understanding of two things. First, it assumes that the smartest people in the country work for major record companies, which isn't always true. Second, it assumes that labels can afford to sign whomever they please as soon as they hear them. If the scene in your town is as good as it is in London, you already know that every city has at least two or three acts that probably could have some success on the radio right now if they could beat radio's attitude.

If you do want to attract attention to yourself, borrow a page from the promotion man's book. Make sure the radio people in each city you're playing know you're there, and do your best to convince them to come

*Continued*



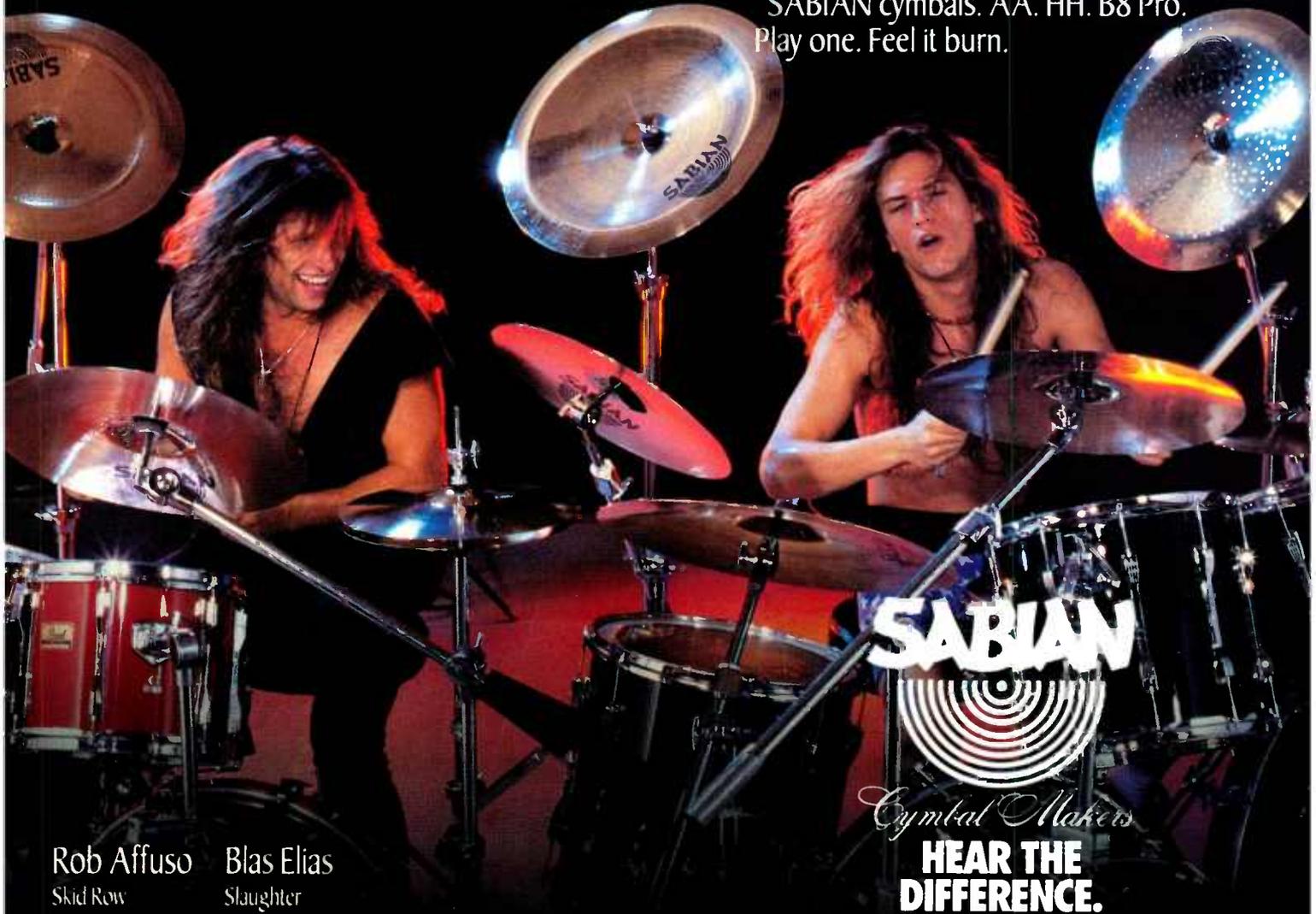
*Greg Simpson has been the Music Director of FM 96.1 London for over 10 years.*

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# Promoting Yourself to Radio

out and see you. If it hadn't been for Jake Gold giving me a call and asking me to come out one night to see a new act he was managing, I would've had to wait considerably longer to discover the band I think is the best in the world right now, The Tragically Hip.

Use your personal skills to the limit, and when you're talking to successful acts who are already on radio, ask for their help in preparing you for the sometimes daunting task of approaching radio people in the towns on your tour. Some of the players you approach might not know the answers, preferring to leave all that up to the promo pros, but others, like Triumph's Mike Levine, Colin James, and the members of the Hip, count broadcasters among their closest professional friends, and in some cases you can drop the second adjective.

Just as you hustle the A&R people to come and see you when you're looking for a deal, hustle the radio people when you get a record out. It doesn't matter whether you're an independent or a major label signee, you're still the best representation of where you're coming from and you've got to get the message across.

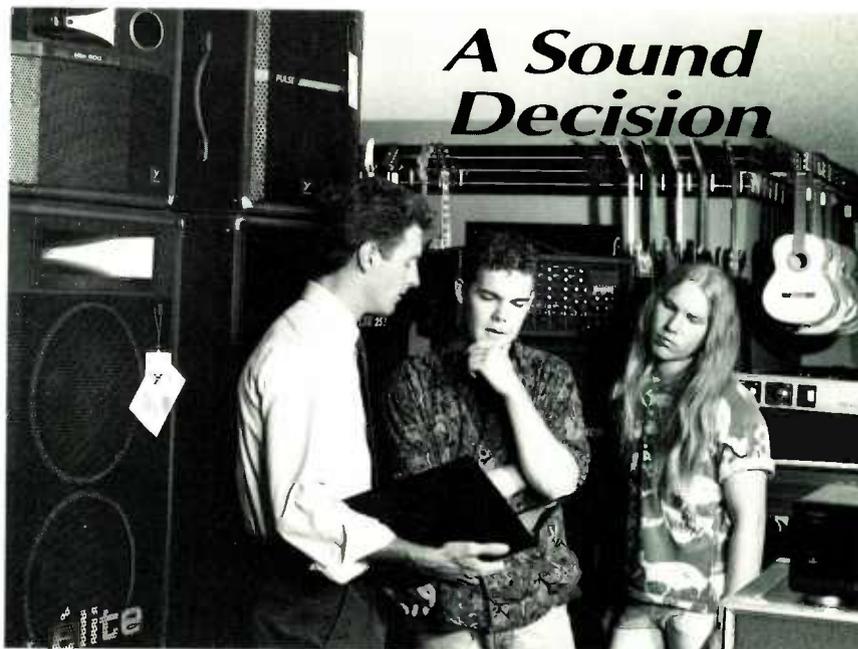
Such things as personal telephone calls to thank programmers for adding your records go a long way to solidifying a relationship that will last a long time. A phone call to my home from Sue Medley while I was recuperating from an illness last year not only made me feel better, it also marked her in my mind as a performer willing to go the extra mile. A cynic might say that a smart promo person made sure she had the information she needed and she was only doing her job, but the fact that she did it, ulterior motive or not (and, naturally, I prefer to think there was no ulterior motive), put her miles ahead of all the others who could have done it but didn't.

The guidance of experienced people can be very helpful at any time in an artist's career. The important thing regarding radio is to learn from professionals who the influential people are. That isn't necessarily the same as the influential radio stations, but they usually do go hand-in-hand. Then, after you've found out who can help you the most with your career, do the professional thing and enlist their aid. I, personally, offer every musician reading this column to do what I can to give an objective point of view on their projects, time permitting.

There is unfortunately one more thing you'll have to learn if you do become your own promotion person — you must listen to criticism or negative comments in the most magnanimous way possible. Most of us in the business of programming think we know it all,

and there are those who, not having formed an opinion one way or another, will definitely come up with one when asked. Take it all with a grain of salt and go with the majority opinion. After all, if the masses are what you seek, then the people who have the masses tuned into their radio stations would be fools to ignore your record if it really does have it all going for it.

Thanks to all of you for taking the time to read these words of, if not wisdom, then, at least experience. I look forward to meeting you in the months and years to come. It may be true that without radio it's hard for you to become successful musicians, but it is even truer that without good records, music radio has no reason to exist.



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# Syntaur EPS-16 Effects Library

Syntaur Productions has introduced a sound effects library for the Ensoniq EPS-16 Plus and EPS digital samplers.

The 8 floppy disks were designed for use in audio/video post production, with sounds sampled at 44.6 KHz (16-bit) from digitally recorded source tapes. All of the samples on a particular disk fall into a single category and sub-category of sounds, plainly marked on the upper edge of the disk.

For maximum utility in post situations, every disk is set up in a similar format. The sampler's mod wheel controls volume (for control both manually and via a MIDI

sequencer), patch selects offer mono, right channel only, left channel only, and stereo versions of the sound. All sounds are set up with no effects processing.

The disks, covering Harley Davidson kick starts to cricket chirps, are the first of an expanding collection: a large number of additional sounds are already near completion. The collection will also soon be available on Syquest 45 MB removable hard drive cartridges.

For more information, contact: Syntaur Productions, 11116 Aqua Vista, #2, North Hollywood, CA 91602 (818) 769-4395.

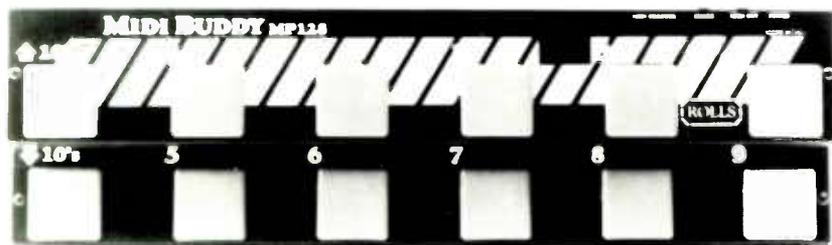
# Rolls' Midi Buddy

Rolls Corp. has introduced the MIDI Buddy, a footpedal controller for MIDI-based devices.

The MP128 is a MIDI controller that offers random access to up to 128 programmes. It will send MIDI programme change information on any of the 16 MIDI channels provided.

Features include a MIDI share jack that requires no patch box to prevent signal loss when it's used in a chain, and the potential for phantom powering.

For more information, contact: Rolls Corp., 6995 South 400 W., Midvale, UT 84047 (801) 562-5628, FAX (801) 562-5655.



# Sound Source Soundware

Sound Source Unlimited has announced 7 soundbanks for the Roland JD-800, and new soundware products for the Yamaha SY99 synthesizers.

Sound Source JD-800 collections include: Urban Pop; New Age; Film Textures; Stage & Studio; Progressive Artist; Jupiter Textures; and Hybrid Textures.

The firm is also releasing 10 PCM sample 5-disk sets, 4 voice banks, and 2 multiple-disk editions of their individual SY77 banks, which the firm claims to have been optimized to take full advantage of the SY99's advanced features.

For more information, contact: Sound Source Unlimited, Inc., 5320 Derry Ave., Unit O, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 (818) 879-0093, FAX (818) 879-0727.

# BSS Graphic EQ

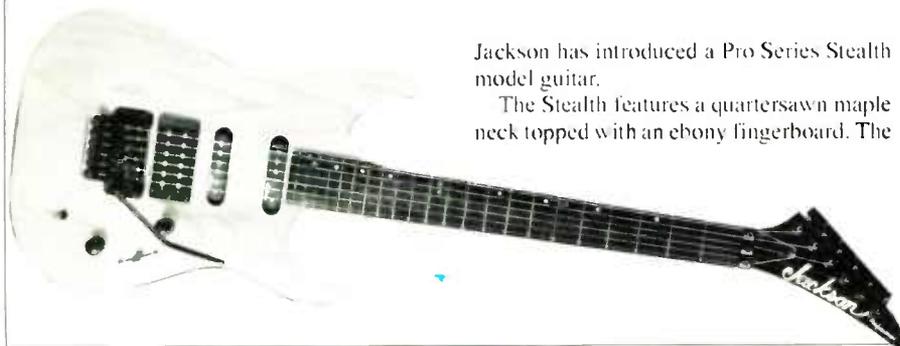
BSS has introduced a dual mode graphic equalizer.

The FCS960 offers either smooth or fine control of the frequency bands: smooth (wide) mode for sweetening, or fine (narrow) mode for room tuning.

The unit uses advanced filter topologies for sonic transparency and control of adjacent band interaction. Features include: 2 channels in a 3u package, each with 45mm sliders on 1/3 octave ISO frequency centres; a fully variable 18dB/oct switchable high-pass filter; +/-10dB of level control; peak indicator; mode switch; and by-pass switch. The unit is electronically balanced, and I/O transformers are available as options.

For more information, contact: Contact Distribution, 60 Venture Dr., #6, Scarborough, ON M1B 3S4 (416) 287-1144, FAX (416) 287-1204.

# Jackson Stealth Guitar



Jackson has introduced a Pro Series Stealth model guitar.

The Stealth features a quartersawn maple neck topped with an ebony fingerboard. The

low-profile basswood body offers guitarists an instrument that is comfortable to play. For those players desiring an instrument with more weight, it is also available with a 2-piece ash body.

The guitar is available in several solid finishes, as well as two sunbursts which are applied over maple tops.

For more information, contact: B&J Music, 469 King St. W., Toronto, ON M5V 1K4 (416) 596-8361, FAX (416) 596-8822.

# Digidesign Pro Tools Digital Audio Production System

Digidesign has introduced the Pro Tools multitrack digital audio production system.

Pro Tools combines multitrack digital audio recording and editing, digital signal processing, MIDI sequencing and automated digital mixing into an integrated digital audio workstation based on the Macintosh II platform.

The system offers 4 to 16 channels of digital audio recording & playback, with balanced, oversampling analogue inputs and support for both AES EBU and S/PDIF digital formats. In addition to multiple channels of recording/playback, Pro Tools offers unlimited virtual tracks.

Using multiple high-speed DSP chips (Motorola 56001), the system provides simultaneous real-time digital effects and multi-band parametric EQ on each virtual track. It includes the ability to record, edit and playback MIDI sequences as a standard feature, thereby integrating MIDI and digital

audio.

Pro Tools also includes a digital mixer, featuring both state-based and high-resolution dynamic automation, with automatic session updates. Event level editing of automation movements is also available.

Each 4-channel system includes 2 software applications: ProDECK for recording & mixing, and ProEDIT for graphic editing of both digital audio & MIDI. Two hardware components, the Audio Interface for analogue & digital I/O and the Audio Card, provide DSP capabilities and are installed inside the Macintosh II.

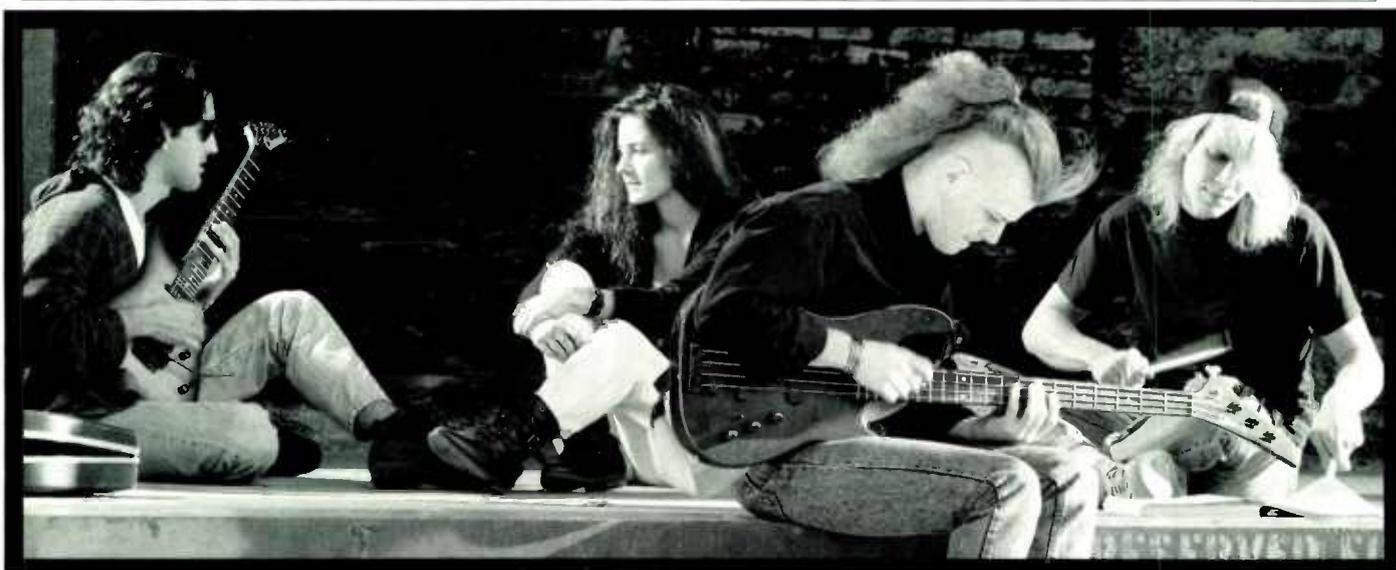
Pro Tools can be expanded to 16 channels by adding one System Accelerator Card, Audio Card and audio interface for each group of 4 channels. Each 4-channel system requires 1 hard disk drive.

Pro Tools will also be supported by a number of third party products, including Opcode's Studio Vision, Mark of the

Unicorn's Digital Performer, both MIDI sequencing programs that integrate digital audio recording & editing; and J.L. Cooper's CS-10 and CS-1 Control Stations for external control over Pro Tools' faders and transports.

The system is compatible with any Macintosh-compatible back-up system. In addition, the company will provide their DATA software free-of-charge to registered users. DATA allows the user to back-up audio and file parameter information to a standard audio DAT cassette. Using the System Accelerator card, users may also add an optional 3 or 5 GB Exabyte tape drive that will upload and back-up audio files in the background while Pro Tools is in use.

For more information, contact: Digidesign Inc., 1360 Willow Rd., #101, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (415) 688-0600, FAX (415) 327-0777.



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## Audio Logic Signal Processors

Audio Logic has introduced 6 signal processors. All units feature electronically balanced inputs and servo-balanced outputs plus toroidal transformers for minimum noise and hum.

The 266 Dual Gate + Compressor + Limiter features 2 independent channels or linked stereo operation, of simultaneous gating, soft knee compressing, and limiting. The 440 Quad Noise Gate has 4 independent channels of gating with full control over threshold, attenuation, attack, and release parameters, while key inputs allow external control over gating.

The X23 stereo 2-way mono 3-way, and X34 stereo 3-way mono 4-way crossovers offer 24 dB per octave Linkwitz-Riley filter topology, continuously variable crossover

points, independent level, mute and polarity controls, and 4th order, 15 Hz Butterworth high-pass filters on each input. Low inputs may be summed to mono for improved low-end response.

The X22 stereo 2-way, and X32 stereo 3-way precision crossovers feature crossover frequencies accurate to 2% as well as 24 dB per octave Linkwitz-Riley filters, continuously variable crossover points, independent level, mute and polarity controls and 4th order, 15 Hz Butterworth high-pass filters on each input. Low inputs may be summed to mono for improved low-end response.

For more information, contact: Erikson Pro Audio, 378 Isabey, St. Laurent, PQ H4T 1W1 (514) 738-3000, FAX (514) 737-5069.



## Playboy Belt-Pack Amplifier

Rolls Corp. has released a full-function belt-pack amplifier.

Housed in a hardened steel case, the Playboy HA32 features easy-access effects switches mounted on top of the unit, 2 channels, chorus with regeneration, level and tone controls, auxiliary input, and stereo headphone output. Powered by 9V batteries or AC adaptor, the belt-pack amplifier can be injected directly into a mixing console or monitored via a built-in speaker simulator.

For more information, contact: Rolls Corp., 6995 South 400 W., Midvale, UT 84047 (801) 562-5628, FAX (801) 562-5655.



# JLCooper Control Station

JLCooper Electronics has introduced the CS-10 Control Station.

The unit has been designed to work as an integrated component with Digidesign's new Pro Tools, and features conventional controls that look and feel like a tape recorder transport, with buttons for record, play, stop, fast forward and rewind.

A footswitch input permits hands-free operation, and the optically encoded jog shuttle wheel provides precise positioning and "scrub" editing. The user can initiate complex com-

mands with a single button using the CS-10's function keys and footswitch input.

The CS-10 also features 8 100mm faders to control automation functions within Pro Tools. Six rotary potentiometers provide access to DSP functions. These can be programmed for effects send, pan left and right, boost cut, frequency and bandwidth.

For more information, contact: JLCooper Electronics, 12500 Beatrice St., Los Angeles, CA 90066 (213) 306-4131, FAX (213) 822-2252.



# Radian Speaker System

Radian has introduced a compact speaker system.

With a frequency response of 40 Hz-22 KHz, the "point 12" is capable of delivering 119 dB SPL with a 200W input. The trapezoidal cabinet uses the 5122 coax driver, offering power, clarity, and coverage previously unavailable in a package this compact, lightweight, and low cost, according to Radian. A proprietary crossover offers protection from over-powering, making the system practical for live sound, D.J. use, lectures and location film sound.

The system comes with metal grill, recessed handle, stand mount, and T-nuts for flying. A floor monitor, the MW-12, is also available.

For more information, contact: Contact Distribution, 60 Venture Dr., #6, Scarborough, ON M1B 3S4 (416) 287-1144, FAX (416) 287-1204.

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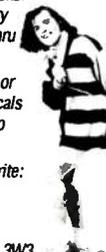
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by Penny Campbell

## STILETTO

It would be easy, on first hearing Stiletto, to try and make comparisons with a number of female rock artists in describing their sound. But what is quickly apparent is that lead vocalist Carole Couture has a unique style and delivery that defies comparison. **Walk**, the four-song EP demo currently in independent release is a very professional piece of work by the five-piece outfit, not just in songwriting and musicianship, but in production (recorded at Manta Sound) and presentation (4-colour graphics and complete liner notes). Any record company executive receiving this package should have little trouble taking **Walk** and turning it into a marketable product. But

enough about aesthetics, let's get to content. These girls can rock! Lead guitarist Ann Greenwood has had years of formal training in guitar, keyboards, and I'm told she is a pretty mean saxophone player. Rhythm guitarist Caroline Soucy also doubles on keyboards and is a former sound engineer. Bassist Lori Hoppenheit is classically trained on guitar, saxophone and flute, and drummer Tracey Hilderley has been playing drums since the age of eight. Songwriter and leader of the group Carole Couture has a well-trained voice that combines pop sensibilities with a powerful delivery. Stiletto is currently on tour promoting this EP and turning more than a few heads.



• **STILETTO** •  
**Style:** Rock  
**Contact:** Lapointe-Dubay Inc., 5117 Lakeshore Rd., Burlington, ON L7L 1C1 (416) 681-0101.

## LOVE EMPIRE

Although they now call Toronto home base, this Saskatchewan trio has already made great strides onto the music scene in their native province and on college radio charts across the country. An independently produced video for a song "When I Think About You" has been featured on **MuchMusic** and the group has opened for The Northern Pikes and The Skydiggers. Love Empire is the brainchild of songwriter/instrumentalist Ed Kien. This current demo, **The Unforgettable Cassette**, recorded at Saskatoon's Audio Art Studios, is actually the band's fourth independent EP release and their melodic pop/rock slightly REM-ish tunes are sure to bring them to

the attention of the industry big guys soon. Guitarist Kien is an accomplished musician — he played all instruments on this demo — and his songwriting talents are equally as strong. Rounding out the trio on stage are bassist Dave Barrett and drummer Greg Hargarten. Love Empire have toured extensively in the west and will undoubtedly become a welcome attraction in the east, now that they live in Toronto. A note to any young musicians out there, and any A&R reps that may be reading: grass does not grow under Eddy Kien's feet! While shopping their demos for that all-important "record contract", the band has nevertheless gone straight to radio with their independent



releases resulting in playlists and building an audience across Canada. Stay tuned for Love Empire.

• **LOVE EMPIRE** •  
**Style:** Rock  
**Contact:** Ed Kien, Love Empire, 107-710 Spadina Ave., Toronto, ON M5S 2J3 (416) 969-9314.

## DEBBIE BAKER

There is nothing quite as pleasant to the ear as the pure, unaffected vocal quality of a country singer, and Debbie Baker has one of the purest voices around. This 4-song demo recorded at Solar Audio in Halifax showcases not only Debbie's vocal talents but her songwriting talents as well. She wrote or co-wrote three of the four tracks. It's surprising that no Canadian record company has mined the country gold from Herring Cove, Nova Scotia, but the rest of the world is quickly discovering her. She is currently signed to Comstock Records, a small label out of Scottsdale, Arizona that distributed a promotional single to 150 stations in Canada and Europe. Even without a major label deal, Debbie has made country charts in Denmark, Germany and Belgium. Producer/manager Rick Gautreau predicts much success for Debbie Baker. Here's hoping Canadian



audiences will hear more from this talented singer/songwriter.

• **DEBBIE BAKER** •  
**Style:** Country  
**Contact:** Rick Gautreau, Hit Home Publishing, 41 Dahlia St., Dartmouth, NS B3A 2S4 (902) 469-5992

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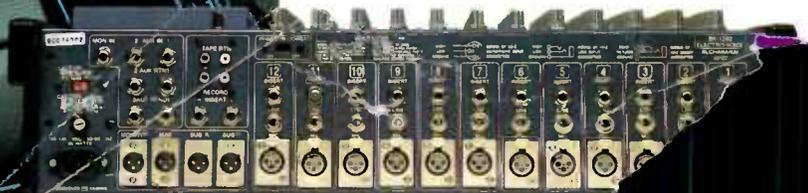
Further enhancing the BK-42's performance is a three-band EQ with sweepable parametric midrange. Great tonal variations are possible with a 15-dB boost or cut from 300 Hz to 5 kHz.

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In speaking of the Audio-Technica ATM25 dynamic hypercardioid he notes a "round" and "punchy" kick drum sound, and a "beefy" sound on the toms. He also likes the ATM25 because he gets this great sound without a lot of EQ, simplifying setup in the studio and on the road. And he values the ability of the ATM25 to perform cleanly in very high sound pressure fields.

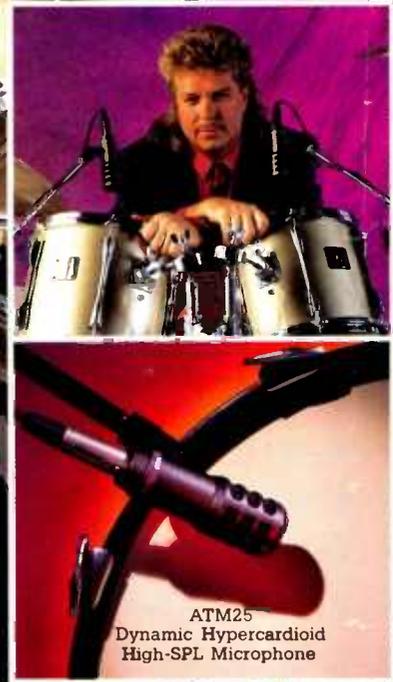
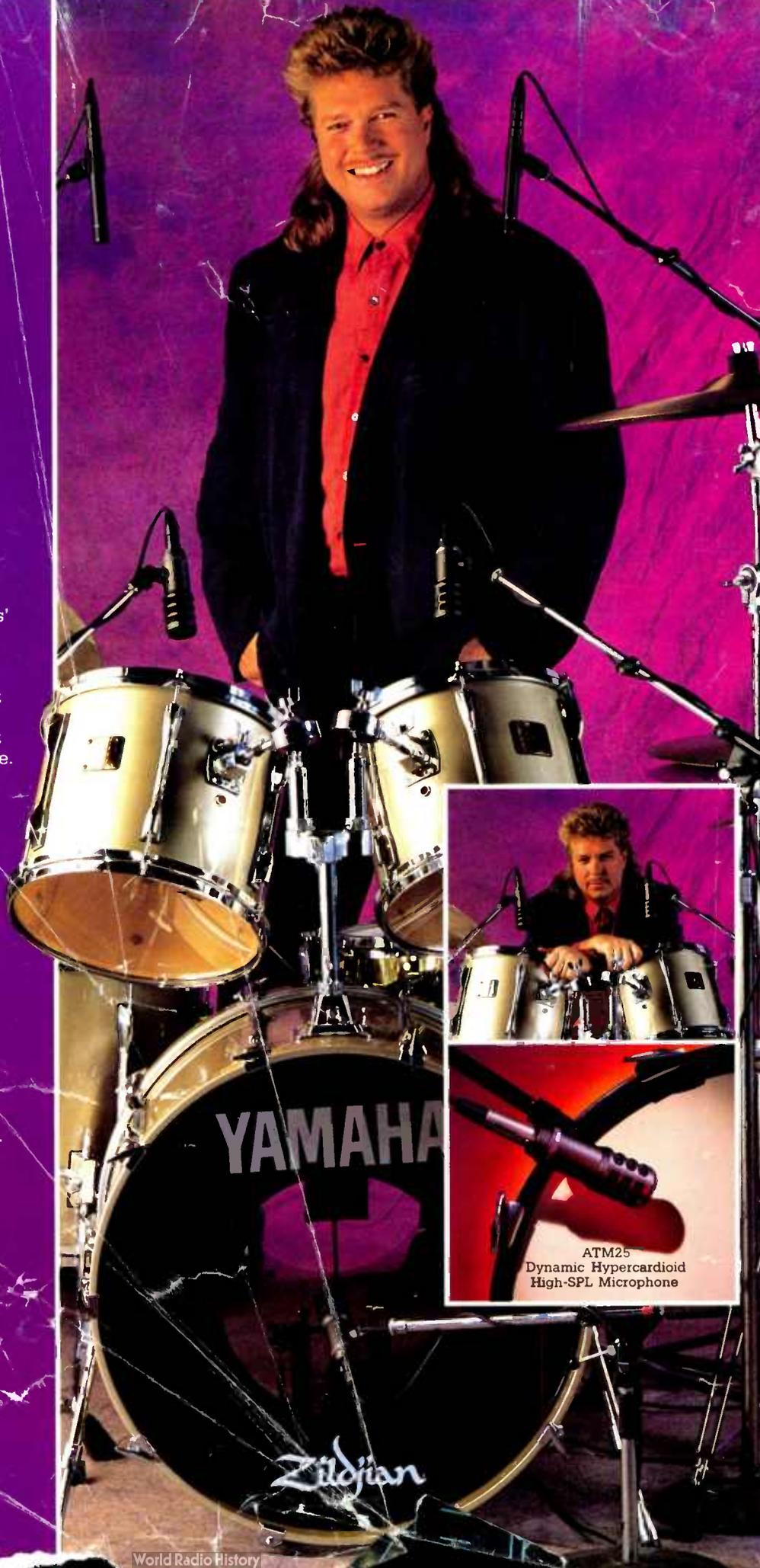
John Robinson also uses Audio-Technica 40 Series condenser microphones for cymbal and overall pickup, to further supplement the solid ATM25 sound.

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